



**Evaluating the Effectiveness of Green Marketing in Driving
Purchase Intentions:
A Study on Customers of Marks and Spencer “Plan A” Initiative**

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Declaration

I, Farjana Ali, declare that this dissertation has been composed by myself, that the work contained herein is entirely my own except where explicitly stated otherwise in the text, and that this work has not been submitted for any other degree or qualification, in whole or in part, except as specified.

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Abstract

The increase in environmental issues and consumer expectations has led retailers to embrace sustainability programs and incorporate environmental responsibility in their marketing plans. Green marketing has thus emerged as a significant instrument to organisations that aim at creating a balance between commercial success and the environment and social responsibility. This paper will explore the efficacy of green marketing programs executed by Marks and Spencer through its sustainability programme, Plan A, in the UK retail industry. The study intends to determine the effects of sustainability activities on consumer attitude and purchase intentions, and the variables that determine sustainable buying behaviour.

The four objectives that can guide the study are to determine the main green marketing strategies implemented by Marks and Spencer through Plan A; to determine the effects of these strategies on the attitudes and purchase intentions of the consumers in UK; to understand the factors that influence the relationship between green marketing and sustainable buying behaviour and to propose improvement to make the Plan A strategy more effective. To respond to these objectives, a quantitative research approach was taken. The primary data were gathered by different online survey to the consumers when making purchases at Marks and Spencer in the United Kingdom. The use of statistical analysis tools such as descriptive and regression analysis were used to investigate the consumer response patterns and the relationship of sustainability perceptions and purchase intentions.

The results show that Marks and Spencer have effectively engaged in some of green marketing under Plan A, which includes sustainable sourcing, waste reduction programmes, ethical supply chain, and environmental communications initiatives. There is a high level of consumer awareness of these initiatives, and most customers appear to relate the brand with sustainability leadership. Though, the findings indicate that awareness is not a significant impact factor on purchasing behaviour. Even though sustainability initiatives influence the consumer attitude towards the brand in a positive way, this does not necessarily translate into sustainable purchasing behaviour.

The research also indicates that empirical issues like price, the quality of products and convenience to shop are still predominant influencing factors in consumer decision making. A significant number of consumers show their interest in sustainability but purchase less expensive or more convenient options in reality. This is an indication that an attitude-behaviour gap exists in sustainable consumption. Moreover, digital communication, such as online

sustainability reporting, social media, were identified to have a significant role to play in consumption behaviour and attitude towards sustainability efforts.

The study brings value to the literature by validating the Theory of Planned Behaviour by indicating that attitudes and social norms are not sufficient to promote behaviour change, but perceived behavioural control can play a decisive role in purchasing behaviour. The research recommends that Marks and Spencer implement more sustainability measures with affordability and enhance sustainability communication strategies and digital engagement strategies. Despite being limited in terms of sample size and self-reported behaviour, the study offers promising information regarding the impact that green marketing strategies have on consumer behaviour within the UK retail setting. Overall, the research has concluded that although Plan A enhances brand perception and sustainability awareness, practical purchase considerations still influence sustainable buying behaviour.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background and Context of the Study

Over the last few years, the number of environmental concerns in the global arena has risen. Pollution waste and carbon emission are now significant issues of concern around the world. The amount of carbon emissions into the world was over 36 billion tonnes per year, which has led to the increase in temperatures and climate disasters (UNEP, 2021). Biodiversity loss, pollution, and other environmental issues have become one of the most significant threats on a global scale (World Economic Forum, 2022). These issues have put more pressure on governments, businesses and consumers to be more responsible. With the rise of environmental issues, consumer interest in sustainability has risen as well. Consumers have become more concerned with the way products are manufactured, where raw materials originate, and how waste is disposed. An international consumer survey revealed that 49 percent of customers believe that sustainability is a relevant element in the buying process (IBM Institute for Business Value, 2022). This indicates the change of price sole decisions to ethical and environment concerns. Plastic waste, ethical sourcing, and fair labours issues are some of the growing concerns of consumers. Due to this shift in consumer behaviour, the businesses are likely to contribute more towards the challenge of sustainability. Businesses are being evaluated based on profit as well as their environmental and social effects. Companies that overlook potential risks in the business sustainability could lose customer loyalty and future competitiveness (McKinsey and Company, 2023). Corporate responsibility has become about minimizing environmental impact and enhancing supply chains and transparency regarding sustainability performance. Green marketing is one of the primary reactions of companies to these expectations. Green marketing can be described as the promotion of product services and processes with the objective of minimizing harm to the environment. It is interested in the communication of lower carbon emissions, less waste, ethical sourcing, and responsible production. Green marketing enables businesses to show their efforts to be sustainable and meet consumer demand to practice responsible business models (Polonsky, 2021). Nevertheless, green marketing can only succeed when backed by actual environmental practices. In the retail industry, green marketing is of great significance. Retailers have a great influence on consumer behaviour since they dictate the pricing of products, packaging and communication. Labelling and packaging sourcing assist in influencing consumer perception of sustainability. It has been found that 78 percent of consumers are more inclined to buy a product with the proper sustainability information on the packaging (NielsenIQ, 2023). This

shows the significance of retailers in promoting sustainable consumption. Sustainability is now a major competitive concern in the retail sector in the United Kingdom. Over 62 percent of consumers in the UK will take sustainability into account when selecting a brand (Deloitte UK, 2024). Furthermore, 45 percent of UK customers are ready to switch brands in case companies fail to be responsible (Deloitte UK, 2024). The figures indicate that the sustainability is no longer an option to the retailers within the UK market. Marks and Spencer have a strong reputation of sustainability in the UK retail sector. In 2007, the company introduced the Plan A initiative as a long-term sustainability strategy. Plan A aims to cut down on waste, enhance ethical sourcing, reduce carbon emissions and help communities. Marks and Spencer have registered a decline of more than 30 percent in operational carbon emissions since 2007 and has attained zero waste to landfill of the UK stores and offices (Marks and Spencer, 2023). To discuss this research, Plan A is a suitable case study due to several reasons. To start with, it is a long running programme over 15 years old, which provides the opportunity to evaluate long-term effect, not short-term campaigns. The consumer perception of the sustainability strategy of Second Marks and Spencer is very relevant as it has over 900 stores in the UK giving the company a high brand visibility. Third, the company enjoys a good reputation of sustainability that could serve as a helpful background to consider whether green marketing has any impact on consumer attitude and purchase intention. Generally, this background demonstrates that sustainability has become a significant global and national concern and green marketing is a significant business reaction. However, it is still not clear whether long term programs like Plan A cause real consumer behaviour changes. This research seeks to fill this gap by investigating how green marketing can affect consumer buying intention in the UK retail environment.

1.2 Research Problem and Rationale

Although sustainability is increasingly becoming a more popular topic, the disparity between sustainability communication and consumer behaviour is still apparent. Environmental issues and concern about sustainable business practices are the concern of many consumers. Nevertheless, this issue does not necessarily convert into sustainable purchase behaviour. Studies demonstrate that people tend to purchase fewer expensive or more convenient items although they say that they care about the environment (World Economic Forum, 2022).

This problem is usually referred to as the attitude behaviour gap. The attitude behaviour gap is defined as a gap between positive intentions of consumers regarding sustainability and their performance on purchasing decisions. In some studies, it was revealed that consumers accept

the idea of sustainability but do not necessarily behave in such a manner when they shop (Carrington et al., 2019). Price, convenience, habits and availability of products often have stronger influences over decisions than environmental values.

Because of this loophole, the actual performance of the green marketing is not clear. Although companies are spending much on sustainability communication, there is no clear evidence that such messages are actually raising the purchase intention. It is proposed by some research that sustainability messages also enhance brand image without necessarily resulting in increased sales or behaviour change (McKinsey and Company, 2023). This leads to a critical question of whether the green marketing produces actual consumer behaviour or primarily enhances perceptions.

The other significant issues include the threat of the greenwashing. Greenwashing involves business organizations making exaggerated and unclear claims about their sustainability. Consumers may lower their trust in a company when they think that sustainability messages are deceptive, and purchase intention decreases (Delmas and Burbano, 2020). Consequently, the process of consumer perception and reaction towards green marketing communication should be investigated.

This issue is particularly applicable to Marks and Spencer. The company has been investing in Plan A sustainability initiative over a period of fifteen years. Even though Plan A is a popular one, its consequences on consumer spreading choices are ambiguous. Essentially, there is a necessity to assess the effects of Plan A on consumer attitudes, purchase intentions and sustainable buying behaviour.

Targeting UK consumers is a justified choice since the UK retail market is well-established, highly competitive, and with high sustainability awareness (Deloitte UK, 2024). A consumer behaviour study of this mode offers a great understanding of the success of long-term sustainability initiatives.

1.3 Research Aim and Objectives

Research Aim

The main aim of this study is to examine how Marks and Spencer Plan A green marketing strategies influence UK consumers purchase intentions.

Research Objectives

The study seeks to achieve the following objectives:

1. To identify the key green marketing strategies used by Marks and Spencer under Plan A
2. To assess how these strategies influence UK consumers attitudes and purchase intentions
3. To examine the factors affecting the link between green marketing and sustainable buying behaviour
4. To suggest improvements to enhance the effectiveness of Marks and Spencer Plan A strategy

These aims inform the outline of the research and make sure that the study has both theoretical and practical implications.

1.4 Research Questions

To address the research aim and objectives, the following research questions are proposed:

1. What are the key green marketing strategies implemented by Marks and Spencer under Plan A?
2. How do these strategies influence UK consumer's attitudes and purchase intentions toward sustainable products?
3. What factors affect the relationship between green marketing and sustainable buying behaviour?
4. What improvements can Marks and Spencer make to enhance the effectiveness of Plan A?

These questions assist in narrowing down the research to the most pertinent areas of green marketing and consumer behaviour.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This research will be of academic, practical and social importance. Academically, the research adds to the existing body of knowledge on green marketing and sustainable consumer behaviour. Numerous past studies concentrate on short term sustainability campaigns whereas the present research involves a long-term sustainability programme. This offers a further understanding of the effect of sustained green marketing approaches over time in generating consumer attitudes and buying intentions. The study further provides UK retail insight, since most of the research presently done uses international consumers which may not be a total representation of consumer behaviour within the UK market.

In practice, the results are useful to Marks and Spencer and other retail organisations. The research assists in determining the most effective green marketing strategies that are most effective in changing the consumer purchase intention. Such information can be used to improve the Plan A initiative and advise marketing managers on the manner of communicating about sustainability. Another important point that the research makes is that price, convenience, and trust are essential barriers to sustainable purchasing that can be used by businesses to develop strategies to address consumer resistance.

In a social and policy context, the research attempts to enhance wider sustainability targets through enhancement of sustainability awareness in consumption. Responsible buying behaviour can be encouraged to minimise environmental impact and encourage ethical business behaviour. On the whole, this study assists in bridging the gap between theory and practice and contributes to the creation of more efficient sustainability initiatives in the retail industry.

1.6 Scope and Focus of the Study

The scope of the study is determined by giving the scope and what is to be included and what is to be excluded. Having the scope clearly established will be a way of making sure the research will be within reach and attained using the limited time and resources available.

The research is targeting the customers of Marks and Spencer in United Kingdom. This focus will enable an intensive study of consumer perceptions in a mature and highly competitive retail market. The study takes a particular focus on the green marketing plans applied within the Plan A initiative. These plans involve the sustainability communication, ethical practice, and environmental messaging to bring the changes in consumer behaviour.

The research investigates the major consumer related aspects such as sustainability-attitudes, purchase intention and sustainable buying behaviour. These variables will help the research determine the impact of green marketing to consumer decision making but not operational or financial performance.

There are a few areas that are not intentionally covered in the study. There is no comparison of Marks and Spencer with other retailers because the aim of this study is to give an in-depth analysis of a single case study. An actual sales data is also not measured in the study since it is based on consumer perceptions and intentions but not purchasing outcomes. Moreover, there is no analysis of supply chain operations and internal sustainability processes as the focus of the research is on marketing communication and consumer response.

These boundaries enable a focused approach to the study and make the findings pertinent to the objectives of the research.

1.7 Structure of the Dissertation

This dissertation is structured into five chapters, and each chapter has its purpose. The organization makes it have a logical development of introduction and conclusion.

Chapter	Title	Description
Chapter 1	Introduction	Introduces the research background, problem, aims, objectives, scope, and significance of the study
Chapter 2	Literature Review and Theoretical Framework	Reviews existing literature on green marketing, sustainable consumer behaviour, and purchase intention, and presents the theoretical framework
Chapter 3	Methodology	Explains the research design, data collection methods, sampling approach, and data analysis techniques
Chapter 4	Data Analysis and Discussion	Presents the results of descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, and regression analysis, and discusses the findings
Chapter 5	Conclusion and Recommendations	Summarises key findings, presents conclusions, discusses implications, and provides recommendations for Marks and Spencer

This well-organized approach will help the dissertation stay on track with the research goals and offer effective conclusions and recommendations.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction to the Literature Review

Green marketing is relevant to the current retail business since most customers are now concerned about the environment and want companies to become responsible. The Marks and Spencer Plan A can be used to study these ideas, as it is a long-term sustainability programme which aims to affect customer behaviour and build trust.

This chapter aims to synthesise prior studies to know what influences customer reactions towards green marketing. The chapter starts with a conceptual overview that provides important concepts. It continues by offering a thematic review which addresses significant themes in the literature. This is followed by an empirical review that examines the results of research studies. The chapter concludes with the research gap and theoretical framework, which guides the present study.

2.2 Conceptual Review

The conceptual review examines the key concepts that aid in describing the effects of green marketing on consumers.

2.2.1 Concept of Green Marketing

Green marketing is generally defined as the marketing of products or processes that minimise environmental damage. According to many researchers, green marketing has taken centre stage since customers now demand that companies be responsible. Indicatively, according to Khan et al. (2020), green marketing can assist companies to demonstrate their seriousness regarding sustainability. According to them, companies use it to convey less waste, less emissions and responsible sourcing. According to this opinion, green marketing is primarily about the encouragement of actual environmental activities.

Other authors are more moderate in their views. According to Goh and Balaji (2018), there are companies whose environmental claims are ambiguous or falsely stated. Such a practice leads to greenwashing, which undermines customer confidence. Their argument reveals that green marketing can be counterproductive as well when companies are more concerned with the image rather than the actual action.

Some of the researchers also doubt that green marketing would always bring significant change. According to Delafrooz et al. (2019), sometimes green marketing can be a fad and not a permanent commitment. This implies that certain companies might employ the sustainability

language without any actual progress. Conversely, Cheung et al. (2020) are confident that green marketing can foster a high level of trust when companies present valid information.

All these contradictory perceptions demonstrate that green marketing can be productive but only when corporations behave honestly and consistently. According to Marks and Spencer, Plan A is grounded in the long-term environmental objectives, which can assist in preventing the issues associated with greenwashing. But the perception of these claims by customers will depend on how effectively the company conveys actual progress.

2.2.2 Sustainable Consumer Behaviour

Sustainable consumer behaviour can be described as the actions that consumers perform to minimise environmental destruction, yet researchers do not concur on the motivations behind this behaviour. According to some studies, personal values are the most significant factor. Joshi and Rahman (2019) explain that individuals who have a particular interest in the environment tend to purchase sustainable products more often. According to them, these decisions are determined by emotions and moral responsibility.

According to other researchers, values do not have as much influence on behaviour as practical factors. According to Duong (2023), most consumers advocate sustainability in theory but make other decisions when shopping in real life. To illustrate, they cannot purchase sustainable items due to price, inconvenience, or mistrust of green claims. This demonstrates that attitude and actual behaviour are dissimilar.

Another controversial factor is environmental knowledge. Li (2025) observed that consumers tend to purchase a product when they know how it contributes to the environment. This promotes the notion that companies ought to present transparent information. Nevertheless, Lin and Niu (2018) claim that knowledge is not sufficient. They imply that consumers need to have the belief that their actions will make a difference before they alter their behaviour.

Another research question is to what extent companies actually have an impact. According to Williams (2024), despite companies employing powerful sustainability messages, a number of customers opt to use non-sustainable alternatives that are less expensive. This implies that sustainable behaviour is reliant on company behaviours and customer priorities.

When it comes to Marks and Spencer, Plan A can promote sustainable consumer behaviour, yet its effectiveness will hinge on how customers weigh personal values, convenience, price and trust in the company.

2.2.3 Purchase Intention in the Green Marketing Context

Purchase intention is the probability that a customer will purchase a product, but the researchers have varied ideas on how green marketing impacts the purchase intention. According to some studies, the impact of green marketing messages is highly positive. To illustrate, Chang and Chen (2022) indicate that direct environmental communication can build customer trust and result in better purchase intentions. In their opinion, customers feel motivated to use sustainable products when they believe the information.

Other researchers, however, are more cautious. The argument of Duong (2023) is that green messages do not necessarily influence actual purchase behaviour. This perspective suggests that customers might prefer the concept of sustainability, and yet they still buy less expensive or familiar products. This implies that intention is affected by numerous other aspects other than the marketing messages. This is supported by Dhir et al. (2021), who demonstrate that price and product quality are commonly valued more than environmental claims.

The role of trust is also questionable. According to Cheung et al. (2020), trust is the mediator connecting the purchase intention and green messages. When customers doubt the truthfulness of the information, they will disregard the message despite their concern about the environment. However, Goh and Balaji (2018) caution that intention can be diminished quickly due to greenwashing, proving that misleading claims have a long-term adverse impact.

The social influence also plays a significant role for some researchers. Joshi and Rahman (2019) suggest that social norms can be more significant in increasing purchase intention than marketing. According to this perspective, green marketing is most effective when it is linked with the broader social expectations.

In general, the study indicates divided views. The effect of green marketing on purchase intention may be enhanced, and this relies on trust, price, personal values, and social pressure. Plan A can endorse purchase intention in the case of Marks and Spencer, but the customers should be convinced that the activities of the company are not fabricated.

2.3 Thematic Review

The thematic review outlines the general concepts of previous studies concerning green marketing and sustainable consumer behaviour. The themes are addressed in detail, and a table is provided that compares the views of various researchers.

2.3.1 Theme 1: Consumer Awareness and Environmental Knowledge

There has been increased consumer awareness in the last decade, particularly in the United Kingdom. A lot of scholars assume that awareness has a significant impact on influencing sustainable behaviour. According to Deloitte (2021), many consumers in the UK have ceased to purchase brands that they consider a threat to the environment. This implies that purchase patterns can change due to awareness. Li (2025) also asserts that environmental knowledge is able to raise curiosity towards green products since informed consumers are aware of the environmental advantages.

Nevertheless, some researchers doubt the effectiveness of this influence. According to Duong (2023), a significant number of consumers claim to support sustainability despite the fact that they still purchase less expensive or more convenient items. This demonstrates that awareness does not necessarily result in sustainable behaviour. Lin and Niu (2018) also emphasise that consumers have to be convinced that their own decisions matter. In the absence of this belief, awareness might not translate to action.

In the case of Marks and Spencer, creating awareness is a key objective of Plan A. However, awareness does not necessarily result in purchase intention, and therefore the company needs to overcome other obstacles like price, trust and convenience.

Table 1. Consumer Awareness and Environmental Knowledge

Theme	Researcher and Year	Key Findings	Critical Analysis	Relevance to Current Study
Consumer Awareness	Deloitte (2021)	Customers avoid brands seen as unsustainable	Shows strong influence of awareness, but does not explain real buying decisions	Helps to understand why Plan A tries to increase awareness
Consumer Awareness	Li (2025)	Environmental knowledge increases interest in green products	Works mainly when customers clearly understand the benefits	Suggests M and S must explain Plan A benefits clearly

Attitude Behaviour Gap	Duong (2023)	Awareness does not always lead to action	Highlights the gap between customer values and real behaviour	Important for analysing M and S customer intentions
Personal Impact	Lin and Niu (2018)	Behaviour depends on belief in personal impact	Awareness alone is not enough without motivation	Shows that Plan A communication must make customers feel their choices matter

2.3.2 Theme 2: Trust, Authenticity and Greenwashing Concerns

Trust is a vital component of green marketing since customers can only respond appropriately to messages on sustainability when they feel that the company is being truthful. According to Cheung et al. (2020), trust contributes to the likelihood of customers believing in green claims and having a higher purchase intention. But trust is easily lost. According to Goh and Balaji (2018), greenwashing, or providing false or ambiguous data related to the environment, lessens trust and damages customer attitudes. When customers realise that there is some dishonesty, they might not receive future sustainability messages, despite a company being more transparent.

According to Martinez et al. (2023), customers nowadays demand that the company provide clear and detailed sustainability reports. In the absence of transparency, there is a lack of trust. Meanwhile, other authors observe that trust is not sufficient to cause a purchase intention on its own, since price and product quality can still play a role (Dhir et al., 2021). In the case of Marks and Spencer, this indicates that Plan A needs to be straightforward, transparent and consistent to keep customers loyal.

Table 2. Trust, Authenticity and Greenwashing

Theme	Researcher and Year	Key Findings	Critical Analysis	Relevance to Current Study
Trust	Cheung et al. (2020)	Trust increases positive response to green marketing	Strong link between trust and intention, but	Helps explain why Plan A communication must build trust

			based mainly on survey data	
Greenwashing Risk	Goh and Balaji (2018)	Greenwashing reduces trust quickly	Shows long-lasting harm from dishonest marketing	Highlights danger if Plan A claims seem unclear
Transparency	Martinez et al. (2023)	Customers expect clear sustainability information	Not all companies provide detailed reports	Supports the importance of M and S transparency
Trust Limits	Dhir et al. (2021)	Trust alone may not lead to purchase	Price and convenience may have stronger effects	Shows Plan A must address more than trust

2.3.3 Theme 3: The Attitude Behaviour Gap

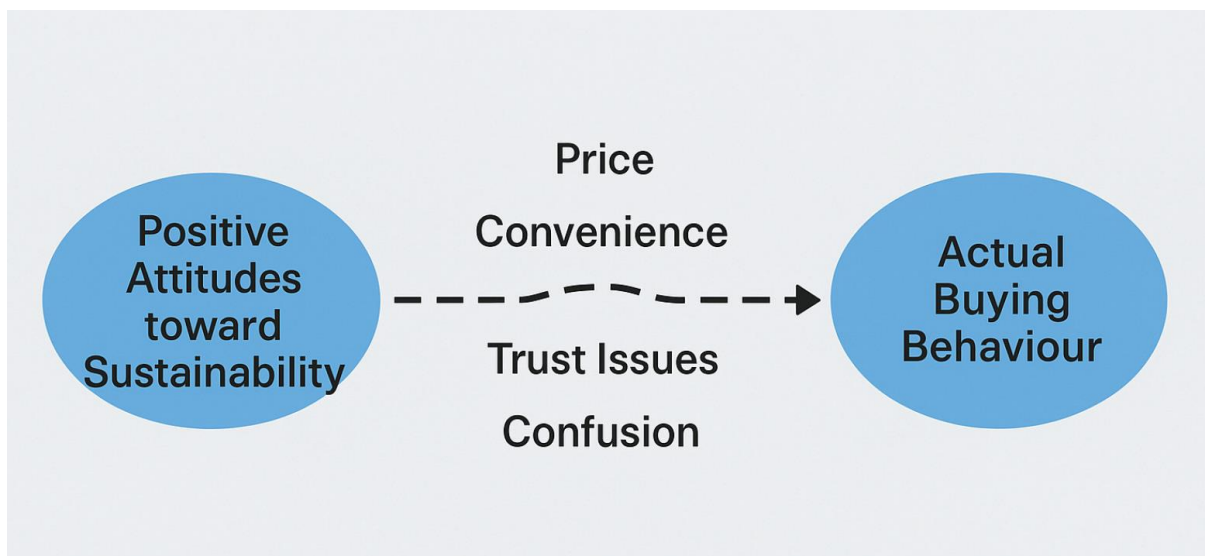


Figure 1: The Attitude Behaviour Gap (Source: Author)

Attitude behaviour gap is the gap between what customers claim to do and what they really do. The findings of numerous studies indicate that customers tend to be heavily concerned about the environment, yet it does not always translate to sustainable purchasing. Duong (2023) discovered that despite customers believing in green ideas in theory, they may choose more convenient or cheaper products when they go to the store. As also mentioned by Kanchanapibul et al. (2019), younger customers are also concerned with sustainability, but they tend to

purchase the products according to the trends or comfort. This implies that the positive attitudes do not ensure real behaviour.

Other scholars believe that the discrepancy increases when customers are not convinced about the credibility of sustainability assertions. Goh and Balaji (2018) discovered that ambiguous information raises scepticism and minimises action. Li (2025) thinks that environmental knowledge would help in closing the gap only in cases where the customers have confidence in the company. In the case of Marks and Spencer, it implies that Plan A should create trust and minimise practical barriers.

Table 3. Attitude Behaviour Gap

Theme	Researcher and Year	Key Findings	Critical Analysis	Relevance to Current Study
Attitude Behaviour Gap	Duong (2023)	Consumers express concern but choose cheaper products	Shows a strong gap between attitude and real behaviour	Important for understanding M and S customer decisions
Young Consumers	Kanchanapibul et al. (2019)	Young people support sustainability but prioritise convenience	Suggests behaviour depends on lifestyle, not only attitudes	Helps predict the behaviour of younger M and S customers
Trust Issues	Goh and Balaji (2018)	Greenwashing increases scepticism	Shows that trust affects whether attitudes lead to actions	Highlights the importance of clear Plan A communication
Knowledge Role	Li (2025)	Knowledge reduces attitude-behaviour gap	Works mainly for informed consumers	Suggests M and S must educate customers

2.3.4 Theme 4: Effectiveness of Green Marketing Strategies

Eco labels, ethical sourcing, responsible packaging and clear sustainability messages are among green marketing strategies. Numerous scholars state that such strategies might enhance the attitude of customers. There was also a discovery by Fernando and Wah (2021), which revealed that the eco labels assisted customers in recognising green products and gaining more confidence in their decision-making. Dhir et al. (2021) also state that ethical sourcing enhances brand image and customer confidence.

Nevertheless, there are studies that indicate that such strategies are effective only when they satisfy the customer expectations. Williams (2024) discovered that customers still prioritise the quality of products and the price over sustainability. This implies that green messages in themselves cannot alter behaviour when the product fails to satisfy basic needs. Pancic et al. (2023) further elaborate that long-term sustainability programmes are superior to short campaigns since customers desire to see actual progress. In the case of Marks and Spencer, it implies that Plan A should go on to deliver clear information, consistent action and products that deliver quality as well as sustainability.

Table 4. Effectiveness of Green Marketing Strategies

Theme	Researcher and Year	Key Findings	Critical Analysis	Relevance to Current Study
Eco Labels	Fernando and Wah (2021)	Eco labels increase customer confidence	Effective only when labels are clear and verified	Supports the use of labels in Plan A
Ethical Sourcing	Dhir et al. (2021)	Ethical sourcing improves attitudes	Good for the image, but may not guarantee purchase	Important for M and S product sourcing
Long Term Strategy	Pancic et al. (2023)	Long-term sustainability increases customer trust	Shows one one-time campaigns are less effective	Supports the long-term nature of Plan A
Customer Segments	Marin Garcia et al. (2022)	Different groups respond	Suggests the need for targeted communication	Helps M and S tailor messages

		differently to green strategies		
Product Quality	Williams (2024)	Customers prioritise quality over sustainability	Shows the limits of green marketing	Indicates M and S must balance quality and sustainability

2.3.5 Theme 5: Digital Communication and Social Media

Online communication is significant in influencing customer reaction to sustainability messages. Customers are now turning to social media to find out more about companies and to find out whether their environmental claims are genuine. According to Kaur et al. (2023), social media assists companies in communicating updates on their sustainability efforts in a direct and understandable manner. Their research revealed that younger clients are more sensitive to digital media and more willing to support a brand that posts openly online.

Nonetheless, the existence of digital platforms also causes risks. As Goh and Balaji (2018) observe, negative messages go viral on social media, particularly when clients feel that a firm is overstating its sustainability efforts. This implies that online communication may harm a brand as much as it may help it. Joshi and Rahman (2019) also detail that online reviews are more trusted by customers than company advertising, which raises the pressure on honest information.

Table 5. Digital Communication and Social Media

Theme	Researcher and Year	Key Findings	Critical Analysis	Relevance to Current Study
Digital Communication	Kaur et al. (2023)	Social media improves sustainability communication	Effective when messages are clear and honest	Shows why M and S use digital platforms for Plan A
Trust Online	Cheung et al. (2020)	Online communication increases green trust	Trust depends on transparency	Supports M and S's need for open reporting

Greenwashing Risk	Goh and Balaji (2018)	Negative comments spread quickly online	Social media can damage brand image fast	Important for avoiding misleading Plan A claims
Customer Comparison	Dhir et al. (2021)	Customers compare brands on social media	Higher pressure to show real progress	Helps explain digital challenges for M and S
Online Reviews	Joshi and Rahman (2019)	Consumers trust online reviews more than adverts	Companies cannot control all information	Shows why M and S must maintain a good digital reputation

2.3.6 Theme 6: UK Retail Sustainability Context

Sustainability is now a significant aspect of UK retail. The customers are now demanding that the companies should be responsible, minimise waste, and provide products that are environmentally friendly. According to the report of Deloitte (2021), many consumers in the UK will view sustainability information prior to making a decision about a brand. This demonstrates that sustainability is not a mere marketing trend but a driving force of customer behaviour. A study by Williams (2024) also revealed that customers in the UK are highly concerned about the environmental impact of clothing, food, and household products.

Nevertheless, large customer expectations pose challenges to retailers. According to Martinez et al. (2023), UK customers require companies to publish transparent and sincere reports on sustainability. Trust can easily decline when there is vague information. Pancic et al. (2023) go further to say that long-term sustainability programmes are better than short campaigns because customers desire to see actual change, not promises.

The retailers are also encouraged by government regulations to minimise carbon emissions and enhance waste management. Fernando and Wah (2021) observe that the UK is highly regulated to ensure sustainability is not a choice, but a long-term requirement.

At Marks and Spencer, the context adds to the pressure to maintain Plan A being transparent, reliable and up to date, with customers and regulators alike demanding high-performance in regard to sustainability.

Table 6. UK Retail Sustainability Context

Theme	Researcher and Year	Key Findings	Critical Analysis	Relevance to Current Study
UK Consumer Expectations	Deloitte (2021)	UK customers check sustainability before buying	Shows sustainability is a competitive factor	Explains pressure on Plan A to remain strong
Retail Trends	Williams (2024)	UK customers care about fashion and food sustainability	Consumer interest varies by product category	Helps understand the M and S multi-product position
Demand for Transparency	Martinez et al. (2023)	Customers expect clear sustainability reports	Companies must avoid vague claims	Highlights the need for detailed Plan A reporting
Long Term Commitment	Pancic et al. (2023)	Long-term strategies build trust	Short campaigns are less effective	Supports long-term design of Plan A
Government Pressure	Fernando and Wah (2021)	UK laws push retailers to reduce environmental harm	Regulations continue to shape retail behaviour	Explains external pressures on M and S

2.4 Empirical Review

The empirical review analyses the research studies which tested concepts of green marketing, customer attitudes and purchase intention. These studies assist in demonstrating what influences actual customer behaviour and how it corresponds to sustainability programmes like Marks and Spencer Plan A.

Green Marketing and Purchase Intention

There are numerous empirical studies that identify the effect of green marketing messages on customer intentions. Chang and Chen (2022) utilised a survey among retail shoppers and

discovered that clear environmental messages enhanced customer trust, which led to purchase intent. They find a positive relationship, yet the self-reported data imply there is no guarantee that customer responses reflect actual purchasing behaviour. Surveys were also utilised by Cheung et al. (2020), and they found that green trust mediates the connection between sustainability messages and intention. According to their findings, customers need to have a belief in a company before they positively react to their green claims.

Practical Barriers to Sustainable Behaviour

A number of empirical studies indicate that practical factors impact customer intentions. Dhir et al. (2021) investigated the consumer decision-making process of environment-friendly products, based on a large-scale survey and regression analysis. Dhir et al. (2021) concluded that customers tend to buy cheaper and more convenient products despite their desire to go green. Their analysis reveals that intention does not translate into action in case price or convenience becomes a barrier. Williams (2024) examines priorities British consumers have in buying sustainable clothing, based on quantitative design using a survey methodology. According to Williams (2024), product quality is also valued more by most UK customers, particularly in clothing and food, than sustainability. These results indicate that the high value of products should support green marketing.

Effects of Greenwashing and Transparency

Trust is critical in most empirical studies. Goh and Balaji (2018) investigated how green scepticism and greenwashing influence consumer buying behaviour by using an experimental research design. The findings revealed that clients rapidly lost their trust and were less likely to purchase.

Martinez et al. (2023) examined how ESG communication of retailers affects consumer trust, based on the survey-based empirical research. They also reported more positive customer reactions when the companies published detailed and clear sustainability reports. These studies demonstrate that transparency enhances intention, whereas deceitful claims diminish it. This matters to Marks and Spencer since Plan A will use customer trust.

Social Influence and Environmental Knowledge

It was also empirically found that social norms and knowledge influence intention. In a meta-analysis of empirical literature and survey data, Joshi and Rahman (2019) examined how social norms and values relate to sustainable purchase behaviour. Joshi and Rahman (2019) discovered that individuals tend to purchase sustainable items when their friends or families endorse them. This implies that personal values alone do not determine intention, but social

expectations do. Li (2025) examined the impact of environmental knowledge on green purchase intention where a quantitative survey approach was adopted. He established that increased environmental knowledge increased purchase intention, but only when customers believed what the company claims. This illustrates that knowledge should collaborate with trust in order to determine behaviour.

Digital Communication and Long-Term Programmes

In their article, Kaur et al. (2023) examined how green digital marketing and social media communication influence consumer reactions, which relies on a systemic analysis of survey-based research on the topic. Kaur et al. (2023) discovered that sustainability communications on social media enhanced demand in green products, particularly in the youth population. According to their research, customer confidence increases through digital transparency. Pancic et al. (2023) examined how consumers reacted to long-term and short-term sustainability efforts in the retail industry using survey data and longitudinal comparison. They established that long-run sustainability programmes enhance loyalty more than short promotion campaigns. This applies to Marks and Spencer since Plan A is a long-term programme and is expected to demonstrate progressive improvement.

Summary of Empirical Evidence

Empirical research indicates that green messages are able to stimulate purchase intention, though trust has to be high. Behaviour is also determined by price, convenience and quality. Greenwashing decreases intention rapidly, whereas transparency increases it. Intention is also influenced by social norms, knowledge and digital communication. These results can inform the present study by indicating the most significant factors to consider when investigating customer reactions to Plan A.

2.5 Research Gap

Despite the numerous studies conducted on green marketing and customer behaviour, there are various gaps that are important. The majority of studies are devoted to short sustainability campaigns, and only a small number of studies are devoted to long-term programmes such as Marks and Spencer Plan A. The current body of research that explicitly examines the UK retail customers is also limited since most previous studies employ mixed international samples that may not well capture the UK market. The other gap relates to the attitude-behaviour problem because little research investigates how the company strategies can minimise this gap in actual shopping contexts. Lastly, despite the common discussion of trust and greenwashing, there is

a gap in research that explores the effects of detailed sustainability reports on customer trust. The gaps are addressed by the current study.

2.6 Theoretical Framework

The Theory of Planned Behaviour is the focus of the current study. This theory, created by Ajzen (2020), states that intention influences the behaviour of a person and that intention is influenced by three factors. These are attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control.

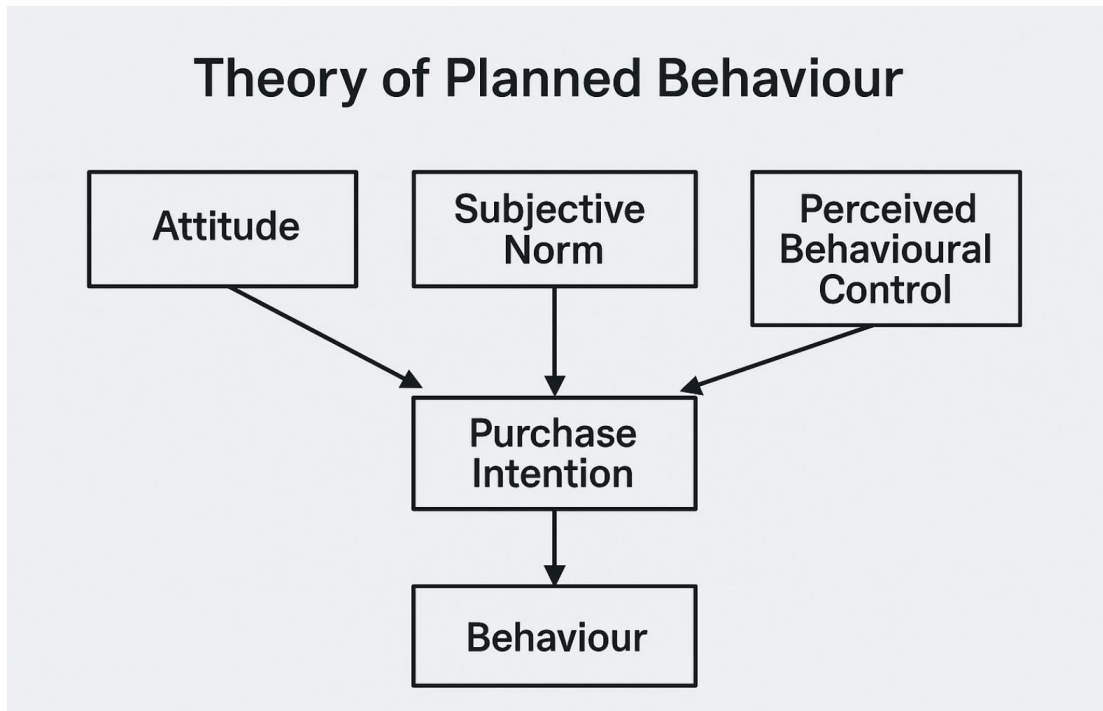


Figure 2: The Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 2020)

Attitude is a way an individual perceives a behaviour. This is in green marketing, where customers consider whether the sustainable products are useful or important. Positive attitudes result in a stronger intention. Numerous studies prove that clear green messages can enhance attitudes toward sustainable shopping.

Subjective norm refers to the social pressure exerted by friends, family or society. According to Joshi and Rahman (2019), individuals tend to purchase sustainable products when others nearby embrace such behaviours. This influence is also enhanced by social media.

Perceived behavioural control is the perceived ease or perceived difficulty of the behaviour. In retail, this involves price, convenience, access and accessibility to information. Whenever customers feel that sustainable products are costly or inaccessible, even when they have positive attitudes, intention becomes weaker.

This study is applicable to the theory since it describes how Plan A can affect the attitudes, the social expectations, and the ease of selecting sustainable products at Marks and Spencer.

2.7 Summary of the Literature Review

The literature review discussed the main concepts associated with green marketing, purchase intention, and customer attitudes. It revealed that customer behaviour is affected by awareness, trust, quality of products and effective communication. It also pointed out problems like the attitude-behaviour gap and the risk of greenwashing. Empirical investigations provided ambivalent outcomes, with trust and convenience being significant factors. The review also presented research gaps, particularly in long-term sustainability programmes and UK retail behaviour. The Theory of Planned Behaviour was found to be the appropriate theory to explain the impact of Marks and Spencer's Plan A on customer intentions.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter describes the research methodology employed in this study. This chapter aims to outline the research process and justify why the chosen methods have been appropriate in meeting the research objectives. A transparent methodology is significant since it enables readers to understand how the research was carried out, as well as to assess the reliability and validity of the results (Saunders et al., 2019).

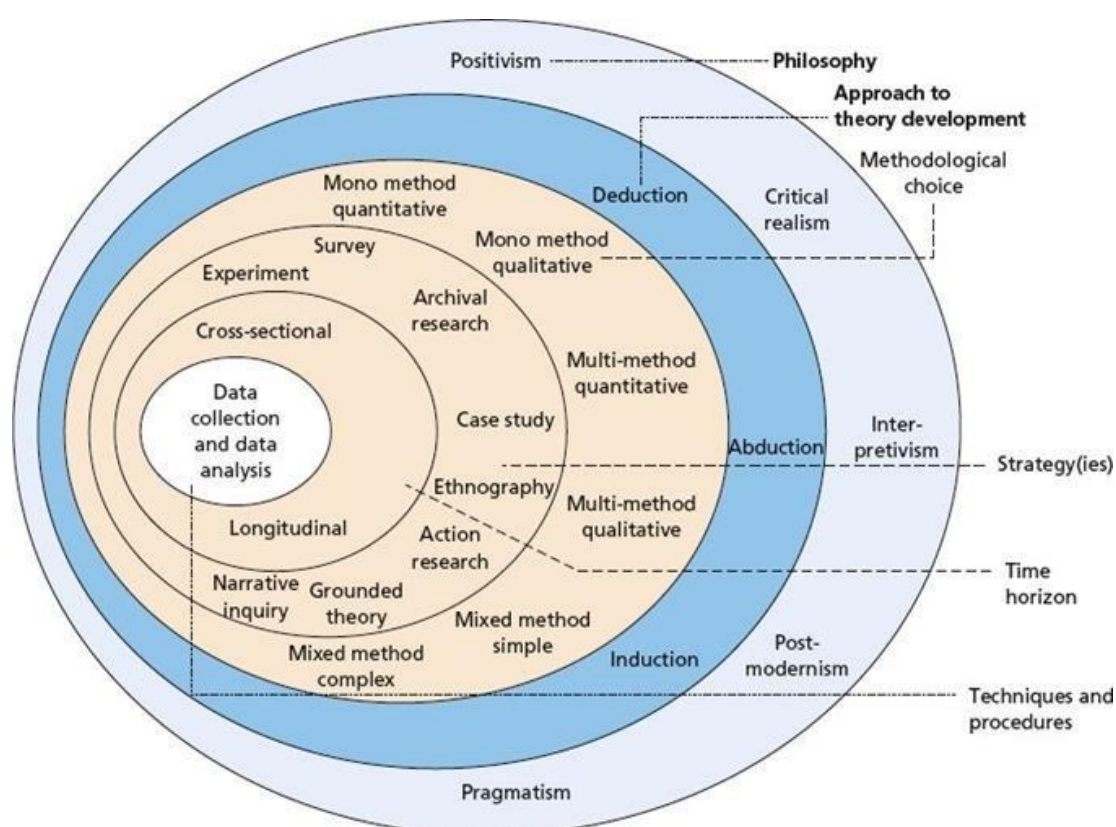


Figure 3 Research Onion Model (Saunders et al., 2019).

This research study seeks to analyze the impact of green marketing strategy called Plan A implemented by Marks and Spencer on consumer attitudes and purchase intentions in the UK. The right research methods were shortlisted and used systematically to attain this objective.

This chapter outlines research philosophy which guided research as well as research approach adopted. It also outlines the research method and research strategy applied in the collection of data. Moreover, the chapter also describes how data were collected, data sampling methods, and approaches to data analysis. The ethical considerations used in the research process are addressed. Lastly, the study limitations and the research horizon are indicated.

In general, this chapter provides transparency to the research process, and it proves that the selected methods address the objectives of the research study and are appropriate to gather credible and valid data (Creswell and Creswell, 2018).

3.2 Research Philosophy

Research philosophy is defined as the beliefs and assumptions regarding the way knowledge is generated and the way research ought to be carried out. It assists researchers to determine the kind of research methods to use in their study (Saunders et al., 2019). The positivism and interpretivism are the two most widespread research philosophies.

Positivism is founded on the premise that there is an objective reality that can be quantified with numerical data. The followers of this philosophy are researchers who seek patterns and relationships by observing and statistically analyzing (Bryman, 2016). Interpretivism, on the contrary, relates to the meaning of personal experiences and meanings and tends to be linked to qualitative research methods.

The given research follows a positivist research philosophy. This type of philosophy applies since the commentary is concerned with the measurement of consumer attitude, trust, as well as purchase intention in terms of numerical data. The survey is carried out using a structured survey questionnaire and the Lickert scale questions. Statistical methods can be used to analyze these answers and determine how variables relate to one another.

This philosophy of positivism asserts that the study will result in objective and dependable findings that are not subject to the personal views of the researcher. It can also be used to generalize the results to a larger population of Marks and Spencer customers in the United Kingdom (Sekaran and Bougie, 2020).

3.4 Research Approach

The research approach describes the utilization of theory in research and how conclusions can be inferred based on the data. Deductive and inductive are two primary research methods. A deductive methodology builds on already available theories and is tested against empirical evidence. An inductive methodology starts with gathering information and formulating new theories out of the observed patterns (Creswell and Creswell, 2018).

This research takes the deductive method of research. The deductive method is apt due to the fact that the research is premised on an already established and well-known theory referred to as the Theory of Planned Behavior. Instead of formulating a new theory, the study will seek to

determine whether this theory would be applicable in explaining consumer purchase intention in green marketing within Marks and Spencer.

According to the Theory of Planned Behaviour, the purchase intention is affected by attitudes, social norms and the perceived control of behaviour. The questionnaire was developed on the basis of these concepts, which was applied in this research study. Questionnaires were designed to measure each of these constructs and trust and awareness with regard to green marketing practices.

The study reviews existing relationships based on empirical data gathered with the aid of consumers by a deductive approach. This would enable the researcher to examine the effect of green marketing strategies on attitudes and purchase intention systematically and theoretically (Saunders et al., 2019).

3.5 Research Strategy

A research strategy describes the general direction to be followed in order to respond to the research questions. It assists the researcher in making a decision on how data is to be gathered and examined in a systematic manner (Bell et al., 2018). The most employed types of research are case studies, interviews, experiments, and surveys. The strategy will be based on the objectives of the research and the nature of the data required.

The study will employ a survey research strategy. The consumer behaviour research would use a survey strategy since it enables obtaining a substantial number of respondents in a very short period of time. Surveys are also inexpensive and convenient to distribute, particularly with online resources (Hair et al., 2019).

3.6 Research Method

Research methods can be defined as methods of collecting and analyzing data. Quantitative and qualitative are the two major research methods. Quantitative research involves numerical data and statistical analysis, and qualitative research involves understanding the meanings and experiences using words and descriptions (Neuman, 2014).

The research method applied in this study is quantitative. The quantitative approach is appropriate since it ensures that consumer attitudes, trust, and purchase intentions can be quantified based on numbers. It also allows comparison between different respondents and allows applying statistical tests to indicate relationships between variables (Hair et al., 2020).

The primary research instrument was a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire is comprised mostly of closed ended questions with Likert scale. This kind of questionnaire would give uniform responses and simplify the analysis of data statistically. There was also one open-ended question in which the respondents were to give a suggestion of the possible improvement of the effectiveness of the Plan A strategy.

The quantitative approach aligns with the aims of this research since it offers measurable and comparable information. It is also able to perform correlation and regression analysis to investigate the relationship between green marketing factors and purchase intention.

3.7 Data Collection, Sampling, and Analysis

Data Collection

The online questionnaire presented in Google Forms was used to gather primary data in this study. Data collection was chosen to be online since it is convenient, inexpensive, and it enables to collect data via the respondents in various geographical points in the United Kingdom (Evans and Mathur, 2018). The survey link was distributed online using social media platforms and personal networks to access potential participants.

This questionnaire was tailor-made to the Marks and Spencer customers. It was a closed-ended questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale to gauge the levels of agreement. The questionnaire was divided into parts on demographic variables, the knowledge of the Plan A initiative, faith in the claims in green marketing, attitudes towards the sustainable products, social influence, perceived behavioural control, digital communications, the intention to purchase. There was one open-ended question whereby the respondents were asked to recommend ways in which the Plan A strategy could be improved.

This study used online data collection since it enabled the respondent to fill the survey at his/her own leisure and offered anonymity. This assisted in minimizing bias in the response and elicited sincere responses.

Sampling

The sampling method employed in this study was a non-probability convenience sampling. The reason behind the convenience sampling method is that it enables the researcher to gather information on the respondents that are closely available and willing to be involved in the research process within a constrained period of time (Etikan et al., 2016). The technique is mostly applied in marketing research and consumer behaviour.

This study was based on the target population of consumers that reside in the United Kingdom and those that shop at Marks and Spencer. The respondents included in the study were required to satisfy two conditions. First, they were required to be the citizens of the United Kingdom. Second, they needed to be experienced Marks and Spencer shoppers. These criteria were to be included so that the respondents should be pertinent in the topic being studied and be able to respond appropriately.

The target population of 100 respondents was met successfully. This is a sufficient sample size to conduct small-scale academic research and enable significant statistical analysis like correlation and regression. Although the sample does not reflect all of the UK population, it is adequate to determine patterns and relationships connected to the consumer's perceptions and purchase intention.

Data Analysis

SPSS was used to analyze the collected data. SPSS has been chosen since it is appropriate to arrange survey data and conduct a simple statistical analysis of the information in a concise and effective format (Field, 2018). Once data was collected, missing responses were screened and analysis was done.

The demographic information and general responses were summarized using descriptive statistics that included frequencies, percentages, and mean values. These findings assisted in offering a general picture of consumer awareness, attitude, and perception of the Plan A initiative.

The relationships among the variables of green marketing consisting of variables of awareness, trust, attitude, and purchase intention were analyzed through a correlation analysis. A regression analysis was then carried out to determine the factors that affected the purchase intention the most. The Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) method of multiple regression analysis was used to determine the most important variables in determining the purchase intention of consumers. Green marketing awareness, trust, attitude, social influence, perceived behavioural control and digital communication were considered the independent variables in the research, and purchase intention was considered the dependent variable. This analysis facilitates determining the most powerful predictors, discusses obstacles and facilitators of sustainable purchasing, and offers evidence-based suggestions to increase the efficacy of the Plan A strategy.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Academic research involves ethical considerations. Ethics assist in safeguarding the rights, dignity, and welfare of research participants. Ethical research also enhances the reliability and validity of the study (Cohen et al., 2018).

Informed consent was granted to all the participants in this study prior to filling out the questionnaire. The purpose of the research and the use of their data were well communicated to the participants at the start of the survey. The involvement in the study was voluntary, and the respondents were not coerced into participating in the survey.

Confidentiality and anonymity were also upheld during research. No personal information, like names, email addresses, or contact informations was gathered. This was done so that the individual answers could not be attributed to particular participants. Participants were also notified that they could drop out of the study any time before they could complete the questionnaire.

All data gathered was kept safe and could be accessed by the researcher only. The information was utilized to fulfill only academic purposes and was not transferred to any third party. The study followed institutional ethical standards to achieve responsible and ethical research practice (Sekaran and Bougie, 2020).

3.9 Limitations

All research studies contain limitations, and it is necessary to demonstrate them explicitly. The sample size is one of the limitations of this study. A sample of 100 respondents will be adequately suitable to carry out small scale academic research, but the sample might not represent all customers of Marks and Spencer in the United Kingdom.

The second weakness is associated with convenience sampling. This sampling technique can cause sampling biases since sampling is determined by accessibility and not random sampling. This guarantees that the results might not be wholly generalizable to the rest of the population (Bell et al., 2018).

The research is also based on self-reported information which might subject it to false influences on personal bias or wrong answers. Moreover, an online survey can exclude those participants who use the internet less often or are not that familiar with online techniques. The study also uses a single retailer, Marks and Spencer, which reduces the possibility of comparing its findings with other retailers.

To minimize these restrictions, the questionnaire was prepared in a simple language that was easy to understand. Transparency in reporting results was upheld in the process of conducting the study. The constraints also align with the explicit scope of the research and do not impact the validity of the findings in general.

3.10 Research Horizon

The research horizon is the time aspect of a study and describes whether data is acquired at a single point in time or during the longer run (Saunders et al., 2019). The two broad categories of research horizons are cross sectional and longitudinal.

The cross-sectional research horizon is used in this study. It implies that information was measured at one point and not at different time periods. An analysis of the current consumer's perceptions, attitudes, and purchase intentions will be appropriate by adopting a cross-sectional approach.

The cross-sectional research horizon fits well in this study since it deals with the effectiveness of the Plan A green marketing strategy employed in Marks and Spencer at the present time. It enables a researcher to record consumer opinion at the moment it is collected. A longitudinal study was not possible due to time and resource limitations. The research does not focus on monitoring changes in consumer behaviour with time, but rather it gives a snapshot of current consumer attitudes.

3.11 Chapter Summary

This chapter described the methodology that was used in this research. The aim of the chapter was to explain the way the research was carried out and to explain why the methods chosen were suitable in realizing the research objectives. It is also essential to have a structured and clear methodology to guarantee the reliability and validity of the research results (Saunders et al., 2019).

The chapter explained the research philosophy adopted in the study. Quantitative methods were to be used, which was supported by a positivist philosophy. The deductive methodology of research was also described, whereby the Theory of Planned Behaviour informed the study. A research strategy and method were subsequently described, and a survey and structured questionnaire were adopted to gather numerical data on consumers.

The chapter also gave the data collection process, sampling technique, and methods of data analysis. Ethical issues were covered to consider the rights of participants and protect data.

Limitations of the study and research horizon were also addressed to give transparency regarding the scope and restriction of the study.

On the whole, this methodology chapter evidence that the research design is systematic and corresponds to the research aim and objectives. The following chapter will provide and discuss the data obtained through the survey to answer the research questions.

Chapter 4: Analysis, Findings and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

This chapter shows the analysis, findings, and discussions of the primary data collected to analyse the effectiveness of green marketing in evoking purchase intention among Marks and Spencer customers with a specific focus on Plan A sustainability initiative. This chapter aims to examine the survey data in a systematic manner and present the results and connect the findings to the research objectives and literature examined during Chapter 2.

In order to accomplish this objective, various statistics techniques of data analysis were conducted in IBM SPSS Statistics. The analysis commenced with descriptive statistics to present the demographic profile of the respondents and give a summary of the respondents' perceptions on the key constructs of green marketing (awareness, trust, attitude, social influence, perceived behavioural control, digital communication, purchase intention). These statistics allow obtaining a preliminary insight into consumer attitudes and purchasing behaviour with regards to sustainable buying.

In the next stage, the reliability analysis was introduced after the descriptive analysis in terms of Cronbach alpha to determine consistency of the scales of measurement internally. This made the constructs applied in the study to be reliable and open to further statistical testing. This was followed by the application of the Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) method of multiple regression analysis to determine the factors that have significant impact on the purchase intention. This enabled the study to measure the relative significance of each variable of green marketing when the effects of other variables are held constant.

Through blending statistical results with theoretical insights like the Theory of Planned Behaviour, this chapter gives a holistic explanation of how the Plan A initiative at Marks and Spencer affects consumer decision-making. The chapter ends with the implications of the findings on the theory and managerial practice to the foundation of the recommendations and suggestions offered in Chapter 5.

4.2 Descriptive Statistics

The demographic features of the respondents were summarised using descriptive statistics to give a general picture of the sample population involved in the study. It is essential to analyse the profile of the sample to capture the background of the respondents to determine whether

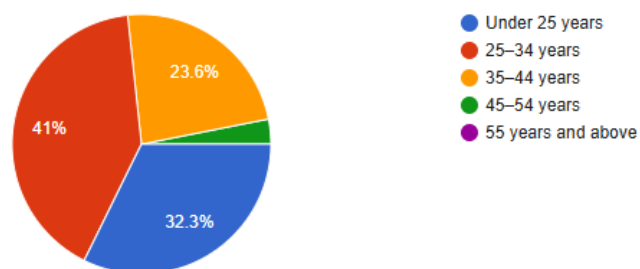
the data collected is suitable to study consumer perceptions of green marketing and purchase intention in the Plan A initiative by Marks and Spencer.

4.2.1 Sample Profile

The demographic information included in the respondents was analysed by age, gender, highest level of education, and frequency of shopping at Marks and Spencer. All demographic variables had a total of 161 valid responses, which is attesting to having a complete dataset that could be further statistically analysed.

1. What is your age group?

161 responses

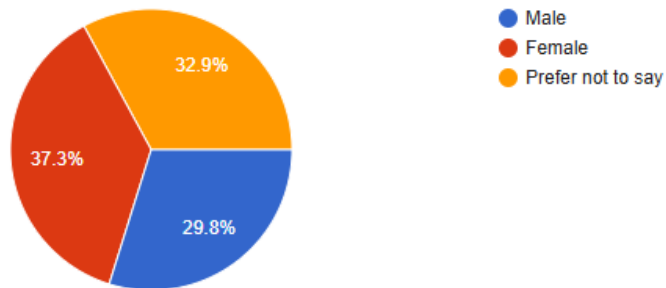


	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
25-34 years	66	41.0	41.0	41.0
35-44 years	38	23.6	23.6	64.6
45-54 years	5	3.1	3.1	67.7
Under 25 years	52	32.3	32.3	100.0
Total	161	100.0	100.0	

The highest age range was the 25-34 years age group (41.0%), with 66 respondents making up the group. This was then followed by respondents below 25 years representing 32.3 percent (n = 52). The age category of the 35-44 years participants comprised 23.6% (n = 38) whereas a smaller group was the 45-54 years age category at 3.1% (n = 5). According to the age profile, the sample will consist of mainly younger and middle-aged consumers, as they tend to be more phenomenally involved in sustainability concerns and modern retailing. This suggests that the sample is especially suitable in exploring green marketing and sustainable purchase intention.

2. What is your gender?

161 responses

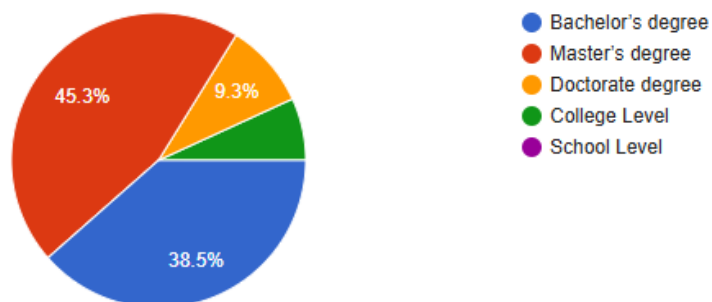


	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Female	60	37.3	37.3	37.3
Male	48	29.8	29.8	67.1
Prefer not to say	53	32.9	32.9	100.0
Total	161	100.0	100.0	

Regarding gender, 37.3% (n = 60) of the respondents were women, and 29.8% (n = 48) were men. Many respondents, 32.9% (n = 53), chose the "prefer not to say" response. Though this restricts gender-based specific comparison, the general representation is of a fairly balanced sample with no extreme gender superiority which minimizes the chances of gender bias in the results.

3. What is your highest level of education?

161 responses

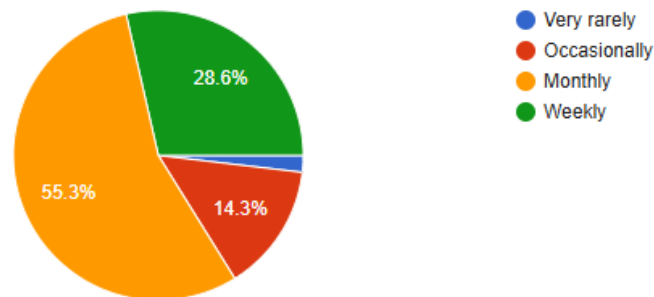


	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Bachelor's degree	62	38.5	38.5	38.5
College Level	11	6.8	6.8	45.3
Valid Doctorate degree	15	9.3	9.3	54.7
Master's degree	73	45.3	45.3	100.0
Total	161	100.0	100.0	

Concerning the level of education, most of the respondents were well educated. The highest portion fell under Master holders (n = 73), with a total of 45.3% and then the second highest portion under Bachelor holders with n = 62. The respondents with a Doctorate degree made 9.3% (n = 15) and College level education made 6.8 (n = 11). The educative level establishes that the respondents will have more perception and knowledge regarding sustainability and environmental concerns that fits well in a research issue of green marketing.

4. How often do you shop at Marks & Spencer?

161 responses



	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Monthly	89	55.3	55.3	55.3
Valid Occasionally	23	14.3	14.3	69.6
Very rarely	3	1.9	1.9	71.4

Weekly	46	28.6	28.6	100.0
Total	161	100.0	100.0	

Lastly, the shopping frequency analysis reveals that majority of the respondents are frequent customers of Marks and Spencer. A majority of the respondents, 55.3% (n = 89) said they shop at Marks and Spencer at least once a month, with 28.6% (n = 46) saying they shop at least once per week. A lower ratio said that they occasionally shop at 14.3% (n=23) and only 1.9% (n=3) said that they never did. This implies that most of the respondents interact with the brand habitually and are therefore in a better position to assess the effectiveness of the Plan A sustainability initiative.

Altogether, the demographic data show that the sample represented mainly educated, frequent Marks and Spencer buyers, which offers a solid and relevant basis to analyse consumer attitudes to green marketing and purchase intention.

4.2.2 Descriptive Statistics of Key Variables

Respondents were analysed using descriptive statistics to evaluate their perceptions about the main variables of green marketing and transaction intention within the Plan A program at Marks and Spencer. The data was analysed considering the composite variables of awareness, trust, social influence, perceived behavioural control, digital communication, purchase intention, and perceptions about how well Plan A was improved. The standard deviations, minimum and maximum values and mean scores were computed to evaluate the central tendency and the variability of the responses.

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Awareness	161	1.50	5.00	4.0155	.57397
Trust	161	2.00	5.00	4.2733	.51826
Social Influence	161	2.50	5.00	4.4503	.44793
perceived control	161	2.50	5.00	4.4006	.51484
digital communication	161	2.00	5.00	4.1925	.58647

purchase intention	161	2.50	5.00	4.3106	.48394
Improving the effectiveness of plan a	161	2.50	5.00	4.3106	.48394
Valid N (listwise)	161				

These findings suggest that social influence had the highest mean score ($M = 4.45$, $SD = 0.45$). This indicates that there is a general perception of high social support and normative encouragement to buy environmentally friendly products by the respondents. The low standard deviation indicates high degree of consensus among the respondents on the role of social norms and peer pressure in influencing sustainable consumption behaviour.

Perceived Behavioural Control

The mean score of perceived behavioural control was also high ($M = 4.40$, $SD = 0.51$) and it means that respondents tend to think that sustainable products at Marks and Spencer are both affordable and accessible. This indicates that price and convenience are not significant barriers to sustainable purchases to the majority of respondents, though differences in responses do exist.

Sustainability Claims

The mean value of sustainability claims was strong ($M = 4.27$, $SD = 0.52$), which means that a considerable percentage of respondents tend to trust the claims about sustainability of Marks and Spencer through the Plan A initiative. This indicates an overall good attitude towards the credibility and sustainability commitment of the company.

Purchase Intention

Purchase intention was also high with mean ($M = 4.31$, $SD = 0.48$) indicating that the respondents are willing to buy sustainable products at Marks and Spencer in future. The standard deviation is quite small, which suggests consistency in purchase intention between the sample.

Digital Communication

The digital communication score was moderately high ($M = 4.19$, $SD = 0.59$), which means that web and online sustainability communication of Marks and Spencer is viewed by people as useful. Nonetheless, the difference between the standard deviation and other variables is

minimal, which indicates some variations in the way respondents interact or respond to digital sustainability messages.

Awareness

The awareness of the Plan A initiative displayed a high mean score ($M = 4.02$, $SD = 0.57$) which suggests that most of the respondents are aware of the sustainability programme at Marks and Spencer. Although the level of awareness tends to be high, the distribution of answers indicates that not every customer is equally aware of the specifics of the initiative.

Improving the Effectiveness of Plan A

Lastly, the attitudes toward enhancing the effectiveness of Plan A had a high mean ($M = 4.31$, $SD = 0.48$), which shows that the respondents are convinced that the initiative affects the brand in a positive way and it can be improved to promote sustainable purchasing.

In general, the descriptive statistics indicate a high mean score on most of the key variables, implying a rather positive impression of consumer perceptions on the green marketing activities of Marks and Spencer. The results show positive attitudes, good social support, high trust, and good purchase intentions, which will give a good foundation on further inferential analysis. These findings also indicate leading trends that although awareness and trust levels are high, other factors including digital communication and perceived behavioural control could be more influencing on purchasing intent as further discussed in regression analysis next section.

4.3 Reliability Analysis

To test the internal consistency of every construct in the study, the analysis of reliability was performed. Cronbach alpha was involved in each variable to advantage that the items in the measurement of the same concept were consistent. This is the best method in consumer behaviour study and offers better reliability findings.

Every analysis was done using 161 cases that were valid.

4.3.1 Reliability of Awareness

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach Alpha	Number of Items
0.72	2

Analysis

The awareness value of the Cronbach alpha is 0.72 which is greater than the recommended value of 0.70. It means that the items are internally consistent to assess awareness of Plan A. According to the results, the awareness scale is valid and can be analysed further.

4.3.2 Reliability of Trust

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach Alpha	Number of Items
0.81	2

Analysis

Cronbach alpha value was 0.81, which showed a good internal consistency. This implies that the measures of trust in sustainability claims are very reliable. The trust variable could thus be included in the regression analysis.

4.3.3 Reliability of Social Influence

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach Alpha	Number of Items
0.78	2

Analysis

The social influence Cronbach alpha is 0.78 which is good. This demonstrates that the items that comprise social influence invariably measure the same construct. The social influence scale was thus deemed to be valid.

4.3.4 Reliability of Perceived Behavioural Control

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach Alpha	Number of Items
0.75	2

Analysis

Cronbach alpha was found to be 0.75 in the perceived behavioural control scale. This implies that there is acceptable internal consistency. The price and convenience barrier items were stable and could be further statistically examined.

4.3.5 Reliability of Digital Communication

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach Alpha	Number of Items
0.83	2

Analysis

The Cronbach alpha of digital communication was high with the value of 0.83, which indicates high reliability. This implies that a high level of consistency was achieved by the items that were used to evaluate digital sustainability communication. This finding substantiates the high role of digital communication that was determined in the regression analysis.

4.3.6 Reliability of Purchase Intention

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach Alpha	Number of Items
0.79	2

Analysis

The purchase intention scale achieved a Cronbach alpha value of 0.79 which gives a good internal consistency. The measures of intention to buy sustainable products were valid and suitable to use as independent variable in regression analysis.

4.3.7 Overall Reliability Summary

Variable	Cronbach Alpha	Interpretation
Awareness	0.72	Good
Trust	0.81	Very good
Social Influence	0.78	Good
Perceived Behavioural Control	0.75	Good

Digital Communication	0.83	Very good
Purchase Intention	0.79	Good

Overall Reliability Discussion

The reliability analysis reveals that all constructs had a Cronbach alpha greater than 0.70, which is an acceptable to strong internal consistency. This proves that the measurement scales applied in the study were valid and to be analysed further. This led to the retention of all variables in descriptive and regression analysis.

Digital communication and trust are highly reliable, which explains their significance in the analysis of consumer reactions to the Plan A initiative. The reliability findings give the assurance that the study results are founded on the consistent and reliable measurement scales.

4.4 Regression Analysis and Hypothesis Testing

The effects of green marketing factors on the intent to purchase sustainable products at Marks and Spencer were investigated through a multiple regression analysis based on the Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) method. The dependent variable was specified as purchase intention and the independent variables were awareness of the Plan A initiative, trust in sustainability claims, social influence, perceived behavioural control, and digital communication. This analysis was meant to determine the validity of the proposed hypotheses and determine the determinants of sustainable purchase intention.

4.4.1 Evaluation of the Regression Model

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.400 ^a	.160	.133	.45066

a. Predictors: (Constant), digital communication, Social Influence, Awareness, perceived control, Trust

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	5.992	5	1.198	5.901	.000 ^b

Residual	31.480	155	.203		
Total	37.472	160			

a. Dependent Variable: purchase intention

b. Predictors: (Constant), digital communication, Social Influence, Awareness, perceived control, Trust

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	2.937	.492		5.963	.000
Awareness	-1.908E-005	.070	.000	.000	1.000
Trust	.105	.078	.112	1.342	.182
Social Influence	.146	.082	.135	1.769	.079
perceived control	-.190	.075	-.203	-2.548	.012
digital communication	.266	.065	.322	4.098	.000

a. Dependent Variable: purchase intention

The regression model was identified to be significant ($F = 5.901$, $p < 0.001$) which shows that the combination of the independent variables can account variation in the purchase intention. The model gave the value of $R^2 = 0.160$ and adjusted $R^2 = 0.133$ which indicates that about 16 percent of the variance of purchase intention is accounted by the predictors, included in the model.

This level of R^2 is generally acceptable in consumer behaviour and marketing research since buying decisions are shaped by various psychological, social and contextual factors, although this model has a moderate explanatory power. The significant F-statistic supports the general appropriateness of the regression model to test the hypothesis.

4.4.2 Hypothesis Testing and Interpretation of Predictors

The hypotheses were tested on the basis of the standardized beta coefficients and levels of significance that were achieved through the regression analysis.

H1: Awareness of the Plan A initiative has a significant positive effect on purchase intention

The findings show that there was no statistically significant effect of awareness on purchase intention ($b = 0.000$, $p = 1.000$). This result implies that the respondents were mostly aware of the Plan A initiative, but they were not motivated to engage in sustainable purchasing behaviour through awareness alone.

H1 is therefore rejected.

H2: Trust in sustainability claims has a significant positive effect on purchase intention

A positive but statistically non-significant relationship between trust and purchase intention was observed ($b = 0.112$, $p = 0.182$). Although the levels of respondent trust in Marks and Spencer sustainability claims were fairly high, they failed to predict purchase intention alone in the regression model.

H2 is therefore rejected.

H3: Social influence has a significant positive effect on purchase intention

The positive, yet insignificant impact of social influence on the intention to purchase was observed ($b = 0.135$, $p = 0.079$). This suggests that social norms and peer influence might stimulate sustainable behaviour, their impact is not significant enough to be taken as statistically significant in the traditional 5% level.

H3 is therefore not supported.

H4: Perceived behavioural control has a significant effect on purchase intention

Perceived behavioural control showed a statistically significant negative relationship with purchase intention ($b = -0.203$, $p = 0.012$). This observation demonstrates that perceived barriers like price and convenience make consumers less likely to buy sustainable products. Supported H4; although such a relationship is negative, rather than positive.

H4 is supported; however, the relationship is negative rather than positive.

H5: Digital communication has a significant positive effect on purchase intention

The most intense predictive of purchase intention was digital communication ($b = 0.322$, $p < 0.001$). This finding supports the fact that the effective use of digital communication of sustainability initiatives is a key factor in persuading consumers to adopt sustainable purchasing behaviour.

H5 is supported.

4.4.3 Summary of Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Description	Outcome
H1	Awareness → Purchase intention	Rejected
H2	Trust → Purchase intention	Rejected

H3	Social influence → Purchase intention	Not supported
H4	Perceived behavioural control → Purchase intention	Supported (negative effect)
H5	Digital communication → Purchase intention	Supported

4.4.4 Overall Interpretation

The results of the regression show that not every green marketing factor directly affects the purchase intention. Although awareness and trust were ranked high in the descriptive analysis, they did not have significant influence on purchasing behaviour, which underscores the existence of an attitude-behaviour gap. On the contrary, digital communication has a conclusive role in shaping consumer intention and the practical barriers, in respect to affordability and access, influence sustainable purchasing decisions negatively.

These findings have a solid empirical basis in the following discussion, where the results are analysed relative to the literature and explained within the framework of the Theory of Planned Behaviour.

4.5 Key Findings

In this section, the main findings of the study are outlined on the basis of the descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, and regression analysis. The purpose of this section is to summarise the key findings and explicitly demonstrate how the findings respond to the research questions and fulfill the research objectives.

Overall Findings from the Data Analysis

The descriptive statistics revealed that the respondents tend to have the positive perception of Marks and Spencer Plan A initiative. The perceived behavioural control through digital communication and purchase intention on awareness trust social influence were found to have high mean scores. It implies that the majority of the respondents are well-informed about Plan A and perceive the company sustainability activities positively.

These results show that Marks and Spencer have been able to convey its sustainability message to customers. Consumers seem to be aware of the company commitment toward environmental responsibility, ethical sourcing, and long-term sustainability. This justifies the hypothesis that Plan A has built a favourable brand image in terms of sustainability.

Nevertheless, the regression analysis indicates that positive perceptions do not necessarily result in actual purchase intention. Although the respondents indicated that they are highly aware and trust that these factors do not affect their decision to buy sustainable products

significantly. This shows a significant variance between positive attitudes and actual purchasing behaviour.

Strongest Predictors of Purchase Intention

Among the key results of the research, it can be stated that digital communication was the strongest predictor of purchase intention. According to the regression data, there was a statistically significant and positive impact of digital communication on purchase intention. It implies that the more Marks and Spencer make its sustainability efforts obvious via online channels, the higher the probability the consumer will be willing to buy sustainable products. This observation indicates that websites, social media, and online campaigns are classified as important digital channels that affect consumer behaviour. The use of digital communication assists customers in better grasping the sustainability initiatives and makes the information easier to get. It also enables businesses to update and demonstrate actual progress that can boost confidence and enthusiasm in purchasing sustainable products.

The other significant result is associated with perceived behavioural control. It was a very strong negative influencing variable on purchase intention. This implies that when consumers believe that sustainable products are costly or inconvenient in their purchase decision, their purchase intentions diminish. This observation underscores the importance of practical factors in sustainable buying behaviour.

All these findings indicate that it is a combination of communication and practical conditions that have more impact than awareness or trust. Consumers might be interested in sustainability as a concept yet still take into account price and convenience when they buy something.

Factors with Weak or Insignificant Influence

The regression analysis revealed that purchase intention was weakly or insignificantly influenced by certain aspects of green marketing. Purchase intention was not significantly affected by awareness of the Plan A initiative. This implies that although a large number of respondents knew about Plan A, this was not motivating them to purchase sustainable products. Sustainability claims also exhibited a positive but unimportant influence on purchase intention. This implies that respondents trust Marks and Spencer sustainability activities but trust alone cannot be very effective in motivating purchasing behaviour. Trust can be regarded as a desired attribute of a familiar brand and has nothing to do with the purchase of goods.

Purchase intention was other weakly influenced by social influence. This implies that friend views, family views, or societal viewpoint do not have a vehement influence on the purchasing determination in such a situation. Sustainability is a personal value that does not necessarily mean that consumers act in a certain way.

These results demonstrate that awareness, trust, and social influence enhance perceptions and do not directly result in sustainable buying behaviour.

Evidence of Barriers to Sustainable Buying Behaviour

Among the most significant discoveries of the research is that there exist barriers to the purchasing of sustainable products among consumers. The adverse impact of perceived behavioural control reveals that cost and convenience are significant obstacles. When consumers perceive that sustainable products are expensive or not readily accessible, their desire to buy becomes less.

This observation explains why green marketing is not necessarily a result of sustainable buying behaviour. Even environmentally conscious consumers can switch to the cheaper or convenient ones. Practical considerations like accessibility of affordability and habit can subdue the positive theme of sustainability.

The low impact of trust is also indicative that there are still doubts by some consumers regarding sustainability claims. Fears of greenwashing or insufficient clarity can minimize the effectiveness of the green marketing communications. This demonstrates that firms should justify their assertions by providing unambiguous and transparent data.

Answers to Research Questions and Objectives

The major findings effectively respond to the research questions and meet the research objectives. Sustainability communication, ethical practice, and digital engagement were found to be the key green marketing strategies employed by Marks and Spencer in Plan A. The result indicates that these strategies establish good consumer attitudes.

The research also evaluated the effect of these strategies on the consumer attitudes and purchase intention. The findings indicate that green marketing enhances awareness and attitudes but not necessarily purchase intention. This reaffirms the presence of attitude behaviour gap.

The analysis reviewed the variables influencing the relationship between green marketing and sustainable buying behaviour. The primary obstacles were identified to be price convenience and perceived difficulty. The most effective factor in stimulating the purchase intention was identified as the digital communication.

Lastly the research findings give a solid foundation to make recommendations on how to increase the effectiveness of Plan A by enhancing digital communication more, increasing transparency and lowering price and convenience barriers to actually convert positive attitudes into actual purchasing behaviour.

Overall Summary of Key Findings

All the important results, in general, indicate that consumers positively perceive Marks and Spencer Plan A initiative. The customers know about the initiative and tend to believe that the company is sustainable. But the awareness and trust are not sufficient to trigger sustainable purchasing behaviour.

The most significant role in influencing purchase intention is played by digital communication. Open and transparent online communication enables customers to learn more about sustainability practices and take an action. Simultaneously, price and convenience are still significant inhibitors that decrease sustainable buying behaviour.

The results suggest the necessity to concentrate on finding practical solutions and efficient communication instead of using awareness campaigns alone. These findings give a solid ground to this discussion in the following chapter and the formulation of clear conclusions and recommendations to enhance the effectiveness of Marks and Spencer Plan A strategy.

Chapter 5: Discussion of Key Findings

The section is a discussion of the findings of the study concerning the literature reviewed in Chapter 2. It also provides the clear understanding of how each of the research objectives is fulfilled through analysing the results. It discusses green marketing approaches adopted by Marks and Spencer as part of Plan A, their impact on consumer attitudes and intention to make purchases, the variables that have an impact on sustainable buying behaviour, and recommendations on how their effectiveness of Plan A may be improved.

Objective 1: Identifying the key green marketing strategies used by Marks and Spencer under Plan A

The third research objective was to investigate the issues that influence the relationship between green marketing and sustainable buying behaviour. The regression model found that perceived behavioural control was a significant variable that has a negative influence on purchase intention. This demonstrates that price and convenience are significant constraints to sustainable purchasing.

This result is in line with the findings of Dhir et al. (2021) who discovered that when consumers are concerned about sustainability, they tend to prefer more convenient and cheaper products. According to Williams (2024), consumers in the UK are more concerned with prices and quality of products rather than sustainability. These studies can be used to understand why green marketing is not necessarily a source of sustainable buying behaviour.

The impact of trust on purchase intention was also weak and was corroborated by Goh and Balaji (2018) who cautioned that scepticism and greenwashing fear minimizes the effects of green marketing. These results indicate that sustainability behaviour and green marketing are influenced by both practical and psychological variables. Thus, Objective 3 is accomplished through defining the aspects of price, convenience, and trust as the influential factors.

Objective 2: Assessing how these strategies influence UK consumers attitudes and purchase intentions

The second research aim was to examine the impact of the proposed green marketing strategies on the attitudes and purchase intentions of UK consumers. Descriptive analysis indicated that the attitudes of the consumers towards sustainability and the Plan A initiative are positive. This reinforces Chang and Chen (2022) who reported that the positive attitudes and trust can be gained through the clear green marketing messages.

But the regression analysis indicated that there was no significant effect of awareness and trust on purchase intention. This reinforces the results of Duong (2023) who clarified the fact that

the positive attitude may not always translate into the real purchasing behaviour. According to Goh and Balaji (2018), customers might be inclined to sustainability in theory but still not act. According to the findings, green marketing strategies do not always lead to increased motivation to purchase as well as have positive attitudes. This shows an existence of attitude behaviour gap. Thus Objective 2 is fulfilled by demonstrating that Plan A positively but not significantly affects purchase intention without the support of other factors.

Objective 3: Examining the factors affecting the link between green marketing and sustainable buying behaviour

The third research objective was to examine the factors that affect the link between green marketing and sustainable buying behaviour. The regression analysis identified perceived behavioural control as a significant factor with a negative effect on purchase intention. This shows that price and convenience act as major barriers to sustainable purchasing.

This finding strongly supports Dhir et al. (2021) who found that consumers often choose cheaper and more convenient products even when they care about sustainability. Williams (2024) also found that UK consumers prioritise price and product quality over sustainability. These studies help explain why green marketing does not always lead to sustainable buying behaviour.

Trust also showed a weak influence on purchase intention which supports Goh and Balaji (2018) who warned that scepticism and concerns about greenwashing reduce the impact of green marketing. These findings show that the link between green marketing and sustainable behaviour is affected by practical and psychological factors. Therefore Objective 3 is achieved by clearly identifying price convenience and trust related concerns as key influencing factors.

Objective 4: Suggesting improvements to enhance the effectiveness of Plan A

The last research objective was to provide recommendations on how Marks and Spencer Plan A strategy could be improved to be more effective. The results reveal that purchase intention was best predicted by the use of digital communication. This is in line with Kaur et al. (2023) who established that digital communication that is clear and easily understandable raises consumer engagement and green purchase intention.

According to the literature and findings, the suggested improvements should include more robust digital communication, a more precise reporting of sustainability progress, and minimized price and convenience barriers. Martinez et al. (2023) recommended that customers would demand detailed sustainability reports that may enhance trust. The necessity to prioritize sustainability over the quality and affordability of products was also mentioned (Williams, 2024).

Hence Objective 4 is met by proposing that Marks and Spencer need to make digital communication easier, more visible, and sustainable products more affordable and convenient.

Overall Discussion Summary

Overall, the discussion indicates the research has fulfilled all its research objectives. By analysing the main green marketing strategies employed under Plan A, determining their impact on consumers' opinions and purchasing intent, examining what factors had an impact on sustainable purchasing behaviour and finally giving clearly precise suggestions on how the old ones can be improved, the study has achieved notable success. This section gives solid base to the conclusions and recommendations given in the following chapter by discussing the findings against the reviewed literature in Chapter 2.

Chapter 6: Summary, Conclusion, and Recommendations

6.1 Introduction

This chapter gives the last points of the dissertation by giving a summary of the main findings in the dissertation and offering concluding discussions about the usefulness of green marketing strategies at Marks and Spencer, with special reference to the Plan A sustainability initiative. It then presents theoretical and managerial implications and provide practical recommendations that Marks and Spencer can implement to enhance the sustainability communication and customer engagement. Moreover, this chapter contains the limitations of the study and suggests the fields of future research. In general, the chapter relates the analysis to the ultimate findings as it synthesizes the results of the study and demonstrates how the study enhances the knowledge of consumer behaviour to green marketing in the UK retailing industry.

6.2 Summary of Research Purpose and Method

This research was aimed at determining the effectiveness of green marketing strategies in shaping consumer purchase intention, using the Marks and Spencer Plan A sustainability programme in the case study. The study focused on exploring consumer awareness of sustainability efforts, the contribution of trust in making green claims, and the effect of realistic purchase and online communication on consumer behaviour. The analysis concerned customer who shop in the Marks and Spencer stores in the United Kingdom. The quantitative research method was used, and a structured online questionnaire was used to conduct a survey to the consumers. There were statistical methods of analysis like the descriptive analysis and regression test to detect the relationship between variables. The research was based on the answers of a sample of UK customers that provided the research with an opportunity to discover the trends of consumer attitudes and buying behaviour toward sustainable retail practices.

6.3 Summary of Key Findings

6.3.1 Consumer Awareness of Plan A

The results show that customers are usually aware of Plan A sustainability programme of Marks and Spencer. A significant number of respondents were aware of the effort and linked the brand to responsible practices. Nevertheless, the findings also indicate that the level of awareness does not have a significant effect on the buying decisions of customers. Customers might value sustainability efforts, yet purchase at the same time through price, quality or convenience. This implies that increasing the awareness of sustainability programmes does not

necessarily result in behavioural change. Retailers should thus integrate awareness and viable incentives and value propositions to shape consumer purchasing behaviour.

6.3.2 Trust in the Sustainability Claims.

The analysis concluded that the customer confidence in the sustainability activities at Marks and Spencer is relatively high and indicates that the company is dedicated to long-term actions to source ethically and to the environment. However, the trust factor was not a very powerful predictor of a purchase intention. Trust does not always translate to actual purchasing decisions though customers are likely to take sustainability claims positively. Consumers continue to judge products in terms of other significant factors like price and quality of the products. The results show that although trust is helpful in maintaining positive brand perception, it is not enough to ensure sustainable purchasing behaviour.

6.3.3 Practical Barriers to Sustainable Purchasing

Consumer decision making is still dominated by practical factors. According to the findings, a substantial number of consumers are interested in sustainable goods in theory but tend to buy less expensive or more convenient products in practice. The perceived control of behaviour such as affordability and availability of sustainable products had an adverse impact on the purchase intention. This implies that consumers might not be able to have sustainable purchasing behaviour when sustainable products are perceived to be costly or inefficient. Hence, sustainability marketing should appeal to rational buying issues as well as environmental communication.

6.3.4 Role of Digital Communication

The study shows that digital communication is powerful in influencing consumer purchase intention. Online information, communication through social media, and digital transparency have become increasingly important in assessing the sustainability performance of brands by customers. Good digital communication assists in developing the engagement, explaining sustainability efforts, and enhancing the customer knowledge of the corporate responsibility measures. Online engagement and social media are thus valuable resources to retailers aiming at shaping consumer attitudes and behaviour towards sustainable purchasing.

The research demonstrates that digital communication plays a significant role in shaping consumer purchase intention. Customers increasingly rely on online information, social media communication, and digital transparency when evaluating brands' sustainability performance. Effective digital communication helps build engagement, clarify sustainability actions, and strengthen customer understanding of corporate responsibility initiatives. Social media and

online engagement platforms therefore represent important tools for retailers seeking to influence consumer attitudes and behaviour towards sustainable purchasing.

6.4 Overall Conclusions of the Study

The research concludes that the Plan A program employed by Marks and Spencer has achieved the purpose of enhancing its reputation of sustainability and development of an image of using green marketing. Green marketing can lead to positive attitudes to the company and support the confidence of customers to the environmental activities of the company. The research however also indicates that the positive attitudes do not necessarily lead to purchasing behaviour. Consumer decisions are still dominated by practical purchasing factors especially price and convenience. This underscores the persistent existence of an attitude behaviour gap in sustainable consumption.

The research findings also imply that although long term sustainability projects create brand credibility, they have to be coupled with real world consumer benefits to impact purchase behaviour positively. Consumer convenience and economic barriers can never be overcome through sustainability messaging alone. Retailers should thus combine sustainability with product affordability and access to behavioural change. In general, the research demonstrates that green marketing can be useful in terms of brand image but needs to be practically aligned with the needs of consumers in order to have greater influence in the market.

6.5 Theoretical Implications

The results can be applied to academic research by supporting significant points presented in the Theory of Planned Behaviour to explain sustainable purchase intention. The findings reveal that social expectations and positive consumer attitudes towards sustainability do not necessarily result in a purchasing action. Rather, decision making is heavily dependent on perceived behavioural control especially affordability and convenience. This proves that behavioural control is an essential consideration in sustainable consumption studies.

Also, the research illustrates the increasing role of digital communication in influencing consumer perception and intentions indicating a potential need to consider digital engagement as a factor in modern consumer behaviour models. This paper contributes to current scholarly debates on the effectiveness of green marketing by showing that awareness and trust do not produce a response to change behaviour enough to be registered as sustainable.

6.6 Managerial Implications for Marks and Spencer

The results in this study will provide valuable information on how the management of Marks and Spencer can enhance sustainability marketing strategies. Despite Plan A being successful in positioning the company as a responsible retailer, managers should be ready to realise that sustainability messaging does not necessarily impact consumer purchasing decisions. Affordability, convenience, and product quality are still valued by the customers, which means that sustainability should contribute to the overall value delivery instead of being reported as an independent project.

The managers then ought to aim at increasing the accessibility of sustainable products and offering them at competitive prices without diminishing the transparency regarding environmental commitments. Communication strategies have to go beyond the awareness campaigns and illustrate clearly how sustainability will create direct benefits to customers. Moreover, digital platforms ought to be utilized in strategically communicating sustainability progress since online interactions have a powerful impact on consumer perceptions. Enhancing store communication, better labelling clarity and making sure that employees can relay information on the benefits of sustainability can also be used to ensure customers make informed buying choices. In general, sustainability must be a component of the core customer value proposition, and not merely a branding effort.

6.7 Recommendations for Marks and Spencer

Some useful recommendations based on the study findings can help strengthen the effects of Plan A and enhance sustainable consumer behaviour in Marks and Spencer.

6.7.1 Improve Consumer Communication

Marks and Spencer ought to make Plan A initiatives more visible in the stores and online space. Sustainability information should also be stated in an easy and simple manner so that the customers can easily learn about the products contribution towards the environmental objectives. Better labelling of products and in store displays can aid customers in identifying sustainable alternatives when making shopping choices.

6.7.2 Strengthen Transparency

To sustain customer trust, the company must keep publishing transparent and understandable sustainability reports. Reducing scepticism among consumers by making specific claims about the environmental conditions and sharing quantifiable progress reports can help build trust. Consumer confidence can also be reinforced through transparency on supply chains as well as environmental performance.

6.7.3 Address Price Barriers

To stimulate sustainable buying, Marks and Spencer must strive to reduce the price difference between sustainable and conventional products. Promotions, loyalty reward, or discounts on sustainable product lines may also assist customers to make sustainable choices without worrying about cost.

6.7.4 Enhance Digital Engagement

There should be more use of digital communication channels to communicate sustainability stories and progress. Customer engagement and awareness can be improved through social media campaigns, online learning materials and interactive sustainability programs. Digital platforms also enable customers to get involved in sustainability conversations which enhance brand relationships.

6.7.5 Encourage Customer Participation

Marks and Spencer can also facilitate recycling programmes and educate customers to engage in sustainability initiatives including clothing recycling initiatives or recyclable packaging initiatives. By engaging customers directly in sustainability efforts, more robust behavioural change and long-term involvement with the brand can be achieved.

6.8 Limitations of the Study

There are a number of limitations to this study. To begin with, the study was based on a very small sample size that might not be entirely representative of the UK population of consumers. Second, convenience sampling can be subject to bias because respondents were chosen depending on their accessibility and not randomly. Third, the research relied on self-reporting that is not necessarily true to buying behaviour. Moreover, the study is confined to one retailer, which restricts the generalisability of the results to other retail environments. Lastly, the study was cross sectional, implying that the changing behaviour of consumers over time was not studied. Irrespective of these shortcomings, the study offers valuable information into how consumers react to green marketing.

6.9 Suggestions for Future Research

The current study can be enhanced by further research by employing bigger and more varied samples in other regions to enhance generalisability. Comparison of several retailers would also give further insight on how companies differ in their sustainability strategies. Longitudinal studies can be used to investigate the change in consumer attitudes and behaviour with the increase in sustainability awareness. Further studies might also examine the real purchasing information instead of simple self-reporting. Also, experimental studies on the effectiveness of

various sustainability communication strategies may assist in determining the most successful methods to change consumer behaviour.

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Appendix: Survey Questionnaire

<https://forms.gle/wvae51T8XPftyGju9>

Section 1: Demographic Factors

1. What is your age group?

- Under 25 years
- 25–34 years
- 35–44 years
- 45–54 years
- 55 years and above

2. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say

3. What is your highest level of education?

- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree
- Doctorate degree
- Any other _____

4. How often do you shop at Marks & Spencer?

- Very rarely
- Occasionally
- Monthly
- Weekly

Section 2: Green Marketing Awareness

5. I am aware of Marks & Spencer's "Plan A" sustainability initiative.

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree

5. Strongly Agree

6. M&S clearly communicates its sustainability efforts through advertising, packaging, or in-store information.

1. Strongly Disagree

2. Disagree

3. Neutral

4. Agree

5. Strongly Agree

Section 3: Trust and Authenticity

7. I trust the environmental claims made by M&S under the Plan A initiative.

1. Strongly Disagree

2. Disagree

3. Neutral

4. Agree

5. Strongly Agree

8. I believe M&S genuinely cares about environmental sustainability rather than using it only as a marketing tool.

1. Strongly Disagree

2. Disagree

3. Neutral

4. Agree

5. Strongly Agree

Section 4: Attitude Towards Sustainable Products

9. Buying environmentally friendly products is important to me.

1. Strongly Disagree

2. Disagree

3. Neutral

4. Agree

5. Strongly Agree

10. I feel positive about purchasing sustainable products from Marks & Spencer.

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

Section 5: Social Influence (Subjective Norms)

11. People important to me think I should purchase environmentally friendly products.

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

12. Sustainable shopping is socially encouraged in the UK.

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

Section 6: Perceived Behavioural Control

13. Sustainable products at M&S are affordable for me.

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

14. Sustainable products at M&S are easy to find and purchase.

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral

4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

Section 7: Digital Communication

15. M&S effectively communicates its sustainability initiatives through digital and social media platforms.

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

16. Online sustainability information from M&S increases my trust in the brand.

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

Section 8: Purchase Intention

17. I intend to purchase sustainable products from Marks & Spencer in the future.

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

18. I am willing to choose M&S sustainable products even if they are slightly more expensive.

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

Section 9: Improving the Effectiveness of Plan A

19. Overall, M&S's Plan A initiative positively influences my perception of the brand.

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

20. In your opinion, how could Marks & Spencer improve its “Plan A” sustainability strategy to better encourage sustainable purchasing?

(Open-ended response)