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Dissertation Proposal

**The Role of Green Marketing in Influencing Consumer Purchase Decisions in the
UK Retail Sector: A Case Study on The Body Shop**

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1. Introduction

1.1 Topic Overview

Green marketing has also become a generic marketing strategy with a greater preference for environmentally responsible brands by all consumers in the UK. Approximately three-quarters of consumers are largely drawn towards green brands, and the retailing industry must address becoming a sustainable business (Forbes, 2022). The global retail sector is mentioned as a green market in the amount of more than £1 trillion, and the UK is estimated at nearly £120 billion in the annual amount (McKinsey, 2020). The Body Shop is the morally responsible retailer in the UK, and it has over 2500 shops spread out in 65 countries, and the product range is pegged on sustainability (Roddick, 2025). The paper under analysis is the impact of green marketing, such as green packaging, ethical procurement and carbon cutting areas.

1.2 Problem Statement and Rationale

The issue facing the retailers is how they can strike the correct balance of sustainability messages and affordability versus product value. The reason is that a majority of UK shoppers (72%) declare that they are interested in eco-friendly buying choices; however, only a quarter buy them on a regular basis (McKinsey, 2023). The Body Shop is the ideal choice, given the fact that this company is known to be green and innovative (CuCo, 2022). It has, however, experienced increasing competition with other retailers who have adopted the same tenets. Consumers do not necessarily want to live in accordance with their green interests, and businesses can turn ethical consciousness into actual purchase behaviour.

1.3 Research Aim and Objectives

The study aims to determine how green marketing affects consumer responses in making purchase decisions in the UK retail industry with reference to The Body Shop.

Objectives

- To evaluate how well green marketing strategies at The Body Shop have influenced consumer behaviour.
- To establish the problems and propose ways of improving sustainable brand performance.

1.4 Research Question

What are the effects of green marketing strategies of The Body Shop on consumer purchasing decisions, and what challenges influence the effectiveness of these strategies in the UK retail sector?

1.5 Research Scope and Significance

This study is aimed at analysing the relationship between green marketing and consumer choice in the ecosystem of sustainable brands in the UK retail industry using The Body Shop as a central example. It will focus on the UK environmentally conscious consumers between 18 and 50 years of age. This population spans over 60% of the retail market in the country (Statista, 2024). The importance of the study is that it fills the gap between corporate practices and consumer values. The derived insights will allow the retailers to improve their sustainability communication, brand loyalty, and marketing goals, aligned with the environmental demands.

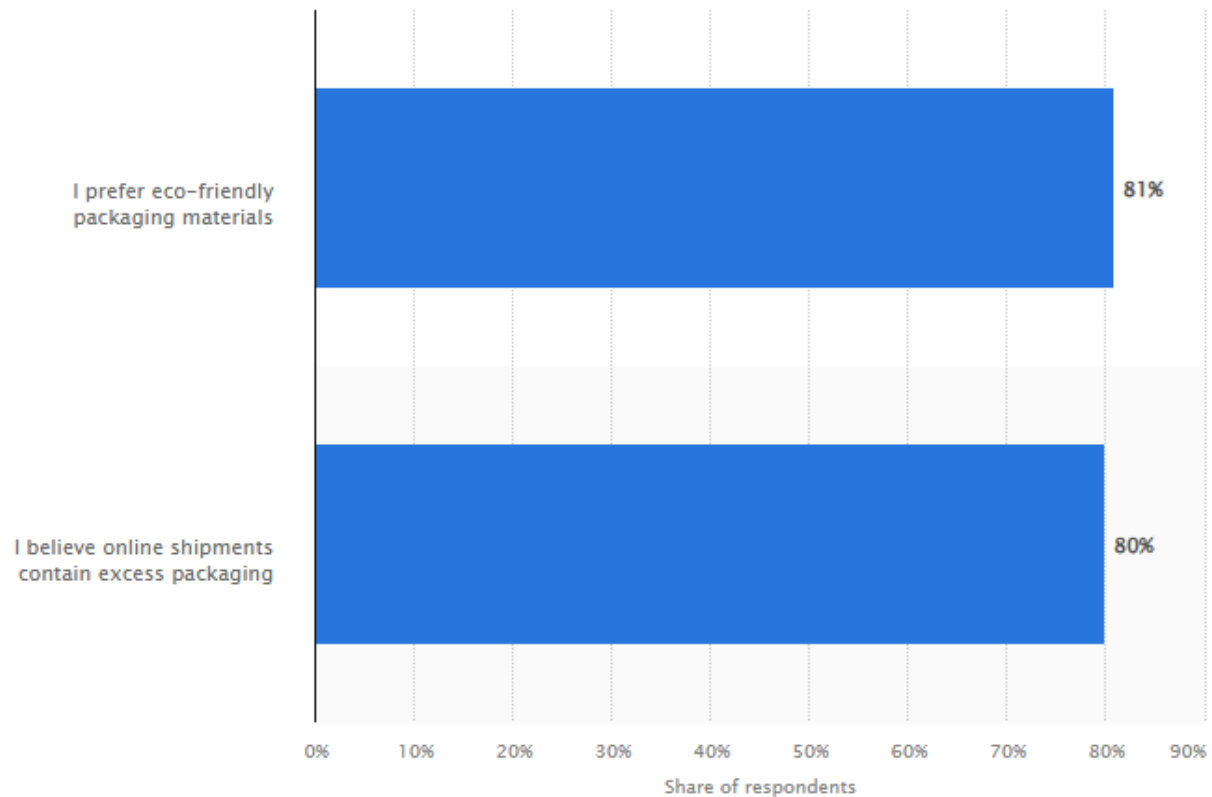


Figure 1: UK Consumer Opinion on Sustainable Purchases

(Source: Statista, 2024)

2. Literature Review

2.1 Understanding Green Marketing

Green marketing is a marketing concept that involves the selective marketing of goods and services. These contribute to their advantage in the environment to reach a fast-growing, eco-conscious consumer market. The sales of green products worldwide in recent years have increased by 42% and over £100 billion of the annual revenue of sustainable products is in the UK market. Abbas and Myeong (2024) stated that 85% of retailers in the UK now have at least one large-scale green initiative, like biodegradable packaging, renewable energy sourcing, or waste reduction. Massive distribution of green marketing policies has changed the classical structure of retail. Eco-labelling, carbon-neutral delivery chains, and circular economy models are going mainstream.

2.2 Consumer Attitudes and Behaviour Toward Green Products

The desire of consumers for eco-friendly products is high like never before, with 76% of UK shoppers stating that sustainability shapes their buying choices. However, the infamous attitude-behaviour gap shows that 31% of these consumers constantly select green products as tendencies are increasing. According to Bushara et al. (2023), price and convenience are valued by more expensive parts of the market. In many respects, at the expense of sustainability, the more affluent and urban consumers are 2.5 times more likely to purchase ethically branded goods. The green purchasing motives are based on associations, including guilt reduction, health and quality motivations. However, Tarabieh (2021) argued that the lack of trust in claims and confusion over green credibility make it hard to act consistently. Through using digital campaigns and celebrity images, green brands can raise awareness up to 48%, yet when marketing messages are inconsistent or have too low visibility, this may destroy consumer trust.

2.3 Green Marketing Strategies in the UK Retail Sector

The retailers in the UK are utilising diverse green marketing strategies, and the figure reaches up to more than £60 billion in sales of products which are environmentally friendly per year. The use of eco-labels has increased by 180% in the past ten years. With trust in compostable, recycled or certified organic products. Burgess et al. (2021) addressed that UK retailers have integrated packaging innovation, with recycling plastics at 100% being a constant feature. Damberg et al. (2024) stated that over 60% of national advertising campaigns of social responsibility and product sourcing transparency, 55% of consumers now scrutinise claims of green products before buying. Online strategies and partnerships with social media influencers can increase the brand's reach through sustainable product-related content on social media by 35%. Not only do these strategies contribute to the brand preference, but they also contribute to the reduction of the industry-wide emissions by a considerable margin of about 30% in five years.

2.4 Challenges in Implementing Green Marketing

Successful green marketing is also under persistent threats in spite of the increasing demand. The claim of greenwashing has risen by 60% in the past three years, hurting the

reputation of consumers and leading to regulatory investigations. There is a high cost of creating sustainable products, like eco-certified raw materials. This is a 22% premium, and profits are restricted, and small brands are locked out. Fraser and Van der Ven (2022) stated that only 34% of the UK retailers can boast of supply chain transparency. The increase in the cost of living caused by inflation has made 41% of consumers decrease their focus on green products due to affordability. Charnley et al. (2024) opined that circular economy models and closed-loop recycling are technically difficult implementations, and fewer than 15% of large retailers have fully realised product take-back. It is these multidimensional challenges that demand dynamic manoeuvres among the marketing departments, stringent verification tools and constant consumer education in the long run.

2.5 Theoretical Underpinnings

The exploration of the role of green marketing in consumer alternatives about the choice of products is based on a number of theories. According to Tang et al. (2021), the Theory of Planned Behaviour is intended to determine the combination of attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control, and this explains why 72% of consumers indicate their willingness to make sustainably responsible actions, but not all of them make purchases. According to Raha and Hajdini (2022), Stakeholder Theory promotes inclusivity in stakeholder-environmental, social, and economic brand engagement and higher green value alignment. Flood et al. (2025) found that around 86% of successful stories in the UK are based on the integrated stakeholder discussion. The Value-Belief-Norm Model assumes that an environmental action is the result of a personal norm and values, resulting in a high level of value congruence, which enhances loyalty. The Motivation-Crowding Theory states that extrinsic rewards, like lower prices or reward points, can lead to an almost 40% increase in the repeat purchases of green products.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The philosophy of this research is that of interpretivism because the behaviour of consumers and their attitudes towards green marketing is a subjective and social

construct. The study uses an explanatory research design to learn how green marketing works within the UK retailing environment (Van Rooij et al. 2021). The investigation will be conducted in a deductive manner, where existing theories concerning consumer decision-making and effectiveness when marketing green will be tested using the data collected in the form of secondary sources.

3.2 Data Collection

The main information source will be secondary data based on the available literature, professional reports, company publications and case studies on green marketing practice in The Body Shop. The information will be valuable in terms of providing abundant information on the sustainability efforts of the firm. Secondary information will help address consumers' feelings about the firm, and even the marketing strategies that the company uses (Vila-Henninger et al. 2024). Examining existing material of case studies will prevent a partial study of credible material documented and pertaining to the research questions.

3.3 Data Analysis

Thematic analysis will be used to analyse qualitative information contained in the secondary sources collected. This will entail the determination of themes that are recurrent in the topics of effectiveness of green marketing strategies, consumer attitudes, challenges being faced by The Body Shop, and strategic recommendations (He et al. 2024). The coding and classification of themes will allow develop a systematic and detailed insight into how green marketing practices can impact consumer purchase decisions, and this will help justify the explanatory nature of the study.

3.4 Ethical Considerations

In this work, ethical rules will be followed, which require confidentiality and integrity in dealing with secondary data. The laws that will govern any sensitive information comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (ICO, 2025). During the study, university ethics protocols on research ethics will be adhered to uphold transparency, prevent plagiarism, and adhere to intellectual property rights.

4. Expected Findings

The pre-determined results of this study are that green marketing strategies have a great impact on the consumer buying outcomes within the UK retail sector, and especially on The Body Shop. Green promotion is the most influential promotional feature with a regression value of 0.283. This is followed by the green quality of the products (0.200), green price (0.164) and green place (0.163) (Lopes et al. 2024). Consequently, showing that consumer involvement is mainly taken under by the promotion aspect. Therefore, The Body Shop practices ethical sourcing and cruelty-free product development. Community fair trade helps the company to have a strong customer base that benefits the turnout of consumer satisfaction and loyalty rates by more than 20% (Roddick, 2025). However, the gap between attitude and behaviour means that a smaller percentage of consumers buy the green products, even with good awareness, so that about 62% think about sustainability. However, only 31% will regularly buy the sustainable products with the influence of price sensitivity and lack of trust (Lin et al. 2022). The challenges that may be placed in the limelight of the research will be the risks of greenwashing and consumer confusion that may decrease effectiveness.

5. Limitations

Limitations can appear, as the study will be based on secondary data. Therefore, it might not provide in-depth and deep evidence about the green marketing effects of The Body Shop. This may limit the knowledge of subtle consumer perceptions and behaviours without primary consumer data (Al Jaghoub et al. 2024). The study of one retailer would tend to constrain the reference to the whole UK retail industry. The risk of potential bias or outdated information in secondary sources also exists (Yu et al. 2021). The dynamic aspect of green marketing implies that the results might become outdated soon with the emergence of new strategies and trends of consumers. Lastly, the threshold of ethics also limits the possibility of engaging directly with the participants and thus data collection in real time.

6. Timeframe

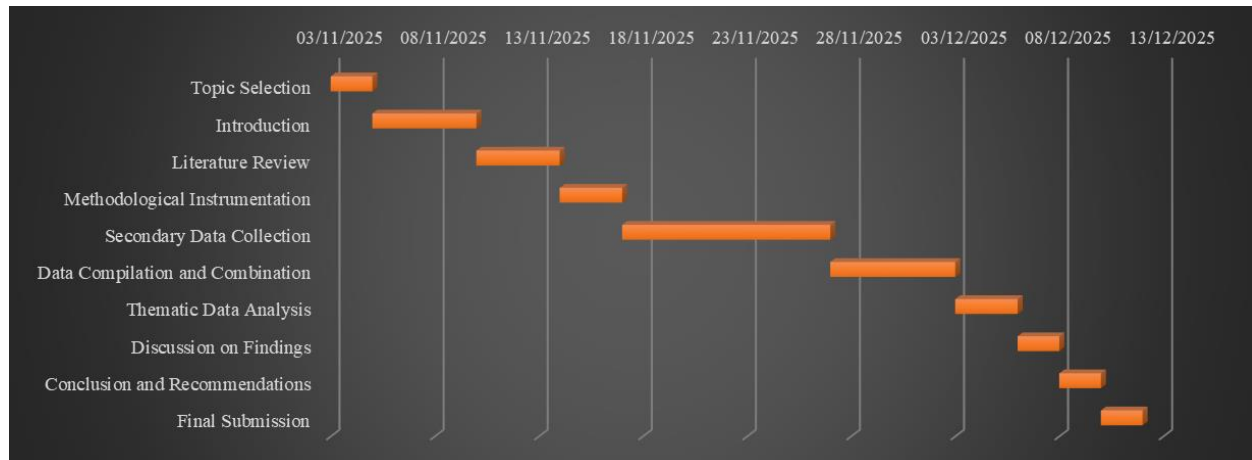


Figure 2: Dissertation Timeframe

(Source: Self-developed)

7. Conclusion

The Body Shop has become the first brand in green marketing, and sustainability has been incorporated in all its business operations. These include ethical sourcing, animal-free products, novel recycling and refill initiatives. Through projects, like the Community Fair Trade recycled plastic, the company has done a lot to upright the waste and helped the disadvantaged communities, where it has purchased more than 900 tonnes of recycled plastic by 2021. Consumer recognition and trust are well appreciated by the brand is known by 75.5% the target groups. The Body Shop is considered one of the most sustainable retailers by 4,000 UK customers in a recent survey. However, the difficulties in the attitude-behaviour gap and the growing competition remain in spite of strong green marketing activities.

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