

IMPACT OF SUSTAINABLE MARKETING ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOR BASED BRAND EQUITY OF SIMPLI NAMDHARI'S IN KARNATAKA

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the impact of sustainable marketing on consumer behaviour and brand equity, using Simpli Namdhari's—a 100% vegetarian omnichannel retailer in Karnataka—as a case study. As sustainability becomes a strategic imperative in retail, brands like Simpli Namdhari's are leveraging ethical sourcing, residue-free produce, and community engagement to build trust and loyalty among consumers. The research employs a mixed-methods approach, combining surveys and interviews with 320 participants across Karnataka. Findings reveal that sustainability significantly enhances brand awareness, perceived quality, and emotional connection, leading to increased brand loyalty. Cultural alignment and digital engagement further amplify these effects. The study concludes with strategic recommendations for retailers aiming to integrate sustainability into their brand identity and marketing efforts.

Keywords: Sustainable Marketing, Consumer Behavior, Brand Equity, Simpli Namdhari's, Ethical Retail, Residue-Free Produce, Karnataka, Green Branding, Cultural Alignment, Omnichannel Retail

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, sustainable marketing has evolved from a niche strategy into a mainstream imperative for businesses seeking long-term relevance and consumer trust. As environmental concerns and ethical consumption gain traction, companies are increasingly integrating sustainability into their core branding and marketing efforts. This shift is particularly evident in India's retail sector, where consumer awareness and demand for eco-friendly products are on the rise.

Simpli Namdhari's, a 100% vegetarian omnichannel retailer headquartered in Bengaluru, Karnataka, exemplifies this transformation. With a commitment to chemical-free farming, ethical sourcing, and community-driven initiatives, the brand has positioned itself as a leader in sustainable retail. Its marketing strategies reflect a deep alignment with ecological values, aiming not only to sell products but also to educate and inspire consumers.

This article investigates the impact of sustainable marketing on consumer behaviour and brand equity, using Simpli Namdhari's as a case study. The focus is on Karnataka, a state known for its progressive consumer base and growing interest in sustainability. By analysing how Simpli Namdhari's marketing efforts influence consumer perceptions, loyalty, and brand value, this study aims to provide actionable insights for retailers navigating the green economy.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Sustainable Marketing: Concepts and Evolution

Sustainable marketing refers to the promotion of products and practices that meet consumer needs while preserving environmental and social resources for future generations. It encompasses eco-friendly product design, ethical sourcing, transparent communication, and community engagement. Kotler and Keller (2016) define it as marketing that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

2.2 Consumer Behavior in Green Marketing

Consumer behaviour in the context of sustainability is influenced by multiple factors including environmental awareness, perceived product efficacy, social norms, and personal values. According to Peattie and Crane (2005), green consumers are motivated by a combination of altruism, self-interest, and social identity. The Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) and Value-Belief-Norm Theory (Stern, 2000) are often used to explain sustainable consumption patterns.

2.3 Brand Equity Dimensions

Brand equity is the value a brand adds to a product or service. Aaker (1991) identifies four key dimensions:

- 1) **Brand Awareness:** Recognition and recall of the brand
- 2) **Brand Associations:** Attributes linked to the brand in consumers' minds
- 3) **Perceived Quality:** Consumer judgment about product excellence
- 4) **Brand Loyalty:** Commitment to repurchase and recommend

Sustainability can enhance brand equity by fostering trust, emotional connection, and differentiation.

2.4 Previous Studies

Several studies have explored the link between sustainability and brand equity. For instance:

- 1) Rahbar & Wahid (2011) found that eco-labels and green advertising positively influence purchase intentions.
- 2) Hartmann et al. (2005) showed that environmental branding enhances perceived quality and loyalty.
- 3) In the Indian context, Kumar & Polonsky (2017) emphasized the role of cultural values in shaping green consumer behaviour.

3. SIMPLI NAMDHARI'S: A CASE STUDY

Company Overview: Simpli Namdhari's is part of Namdhari's Group, which includes Namdhari Seeds and Namdhari Fresh. The brand operates over 30 stores across Karnataka and offers a wide range of fresh produce, groceries, and ready-to-eat meals—all vegetarian and ethically sourced. It also runs an e-commerce platform and mobile app for seamless shopping.

3.1 Sustainability Initiatives

- 1) **Chemical-Free Farming:** The brand promotes residue-free produce grown using sustainable agricultural practices.
- 2) **Vegetarian Retail Model:** All products are vegetarian, aligning with ethical and environmental values.
- 3) **Goodness Walkathon:** An annual event that raises awareness about healthy living and sustainability.
- 4) **Plastic-Free Campaigns:** Encouraging reusable bags and reducing packaging waste.

3.2 Marketing Philosophy

Simpli Namdhari's marketing emphasizes transparency, community, and wellness. Campaigns often feature farmers, nutritionists, and customers, creating a sense of shared purpose. The brand uses storytelling to highlight its journey from seed to shelf, reinforcing authenticity and trust.

4. SUSTAINABLE MARKETING STRATEGIES EMPLOYED BY SIMPLI NAMDHARI'S

Simpli Namdhari's has embedded sustainability into every facet of its marketing mix, aligning its brand identity with ecological responsibility and ethical consumption. The brand's approach to sustainable marketing is not limited to product offerings—it extends to pricing, promotion, and distribution strategies that reflect its commitment to environmental stewardship and consumer well-being.

4.1 Product Strategy: Ethical and Eco-Friendly Offerings

Simpli Namdhari's product portfolio is built around the principles of health, purity, and sustainability. Key elements include:

- 1) **Residue-Free Produce:** The brand sources fruits and vegetables grown without harmful chemical residues, ensuring safety and environmental protection.
- 2) **Organic Staples:** Grains, pulses, and spices are offered in organic variants, supporting sustainable agriculture.
- 3) **Plant-Based Ready Meals:** All ready-to-eat products are vegetarian, catering to ethical and health-conscious consumers.
- 4) **Local Sourcing:** Preference is given to local farmers and producers, reducing carbon footprints and supporting regional economies.

This product strategy resonates with consumers who prioritize health, environmental impact, and ethical sourcing in their purchase decisions.

4.2 Pricing Strategy: Value-Based and Transparent

Sustainable products often carry a premium, but Simpli Namdhari's employs a value-based pricing model that emphasizes:

- 1) **Transparency:** Clear labelling and communication about sourcing and production methods.
- 2) **Affordability:** Competitive pricing for organic and eco-friendly products to make sustainability accessible.
- 3) **Bundled Offers:** Promotions that encourage bulk buying of sustainable goods, reducing packaging waste and transportation emissions.

By balancing affordability with ethical value, the brand appeals to both budget-conscious and eco-aware consumers.

4.3 Promotion Strategy: Storytelling and Community Engagement

Simpli Namdhari's promotional efforts are rooted in authentic storytelling and consumer education. Key tactics include:

- 1) **Farmer-Centric Campaigns:** Highlighting the journey of produce from farm to shelf, building trust and transparency.
- 2) **Health and Wellness Content:** Blogs, videos, and in-store events featuring nutritionists and chefs.
- 3) **Sustainability Challenges:** Initiatives like the "Goodness Walkathon" and plastic-free campaigns that invite consumer participation.
- 4) **Digital Engagement:** Active presence on social media platforms with content focused on sustainability tips, recipes, and product features.

These strategies foster emotional connection and brand loyalty by positioning Simpli Namdhari's as a partner in the consumer's wellness and sustainability journey.

4.4 Place Strategy: Eco-Conscious Distribution Channels

The brand's omnichannel presence is designed to minimize environmental impact while maximizing convenience:

- 1) **Eco-Friendly Stores:** Physical outlets are designed with energy-efficient lighting, minimal plastic use, and recycling stations.
- 2) **Online Platform:** The e-commerce site and mobile app offer seamless access to sustainable products, reducing the need for travel.
- 3) **Green Logistics:** Delivery systems prioritize reusable packaging and route optimization to lower emissions.

This integrated distribution strategy reinforces the brand's commitment to sustainability while enhancing customer experience.

5. CONSUMER BEHAVIOR IN KARNATAKA

Understanding consumer behaviour is essential to evaluating the effectiveness of sustainable marketing strategies. In Karnataka, a state known for its urban sophistication and agrarian roots, consumer attitudes toward sustainability are shaped by a blend of cultural values, education, and exposure to global trends. Simpli Namdhari's has tapped into this evolving mindset by aligning its brand with health, ethics, and environmental consciousness.

5.1 Demographics and Psychographics

Simpli Namdhari's customer base in Karnataka spans diverse demographics, including:

- 1) **Urban Professionals:** Health-conscious individuals in cities like Bengaluru and Mangaluru who seek convenience and ethical consumption.
- 2) **Families:** Parents looking for safe, nutritious food for their children.
- 3) **Senior Citizens:** Consumers with dietary restrictions and a preference for natural products.
- 4) **Students and Millennials:** Young adults influenced by global sustainability movements and digital media.

Psychographically, these consumers value wellness, authenticity, and social responsibility. Many are willing to pay a premium for products that align with their values.

5.2 Awareness and Attitudes Toward Sustainability

Karnataka's consumers are increasingly aware of environmental issues such as climate change, pesticide use, and plastic pollution. This awareness translates into:

- 1) **Preference for Organic and Residue-Free Products:** Consumers actively seek labels and certifications that assure safety and sustainability.
- 2) **Interest in Ethical Brands:** Brands that support farmers, reduce waste, and promote transparency are favoured.
- 3) **Skepticism Toward Greenwashing:** Educated consumers demand proof of sustainability claims and are wary of superficial marketing.

Simpli Namdhari's addresses these concerns through clear labelling, storytelling, and third-party certifications.

5.3 Purchase Intentions and Loyalty Factors

Sustainable marketing influences purchase decisions in several ways:

- 1) **Trust and Credibility:** Ethical sourcing and transparency build consumer trust.
- 2) **Emotional Connection:** Campaigns that highlight farmer stories and community impact foster loyalty.
- 3) **Perceived Value:** Consumers associate sustainable products with higher quality and health benefits.
- 4) **Social Proof:** Word-of-mouth, influencer endorsements, and community events reinforce brand credibility.

Repeat purchases and brand advocacy are common among Simpli Namdhari's customers who feel aligned with its values.

5.4 Cultural and Regional Influences

Karnataka's cultural heritage, which includes vegetarianism, Ayurveda, and agrarian traditions, supports sustainable consumption. Regional festivals, dietary customs, and spiritual beliefs often emphasize purity, balance, and respect for nature. Simpli Namdhari's vegetarian-only model and emphasis on wellness resonate deeply with these cultural values.

Moreover, urban centers like Bengaluru are hubs for tech-savvy, globally aware consumers who are receptive to sustainability trends. This dual influence—traditional values and modern awareness—creates a fertile ground for sustainable marketing to thrive.

6. IMPACT ON BRAND EQUITY

Sustainable marketing is more than a promotional strategy—it's a brand-building philosophy. For Simpli Namdhari's, sustainability has become a cornerstone of its brand equity, influencing how consumers perceive, engage with, and remain loyal to the brand. This section explores how sustainable marketing affects the four key dimensions of brand equity: awareness, associations, perceived quality, and loyalty.

6.1 Brand Awareness: Visibility Through Values

Simpli Namdhari's has successfully differentiated itself in a crowded retail market by positioning sustainability at the heart of its brand identity. This has led to:

- 1) **High Recall Value:** Consumers associate the brand with ethical farming, vegetarianism, and wellness.
- 2) **Word-of-Mouth Amplification:** Events like the “Goodness Walkathon” and farmer-centric campaigns generate organic buzz.
- 3) **Digital Visibility:** Social media content focused on sustainability increases reach and engagement.

By consistently communicating its values, Simpli Namdhari's has built strong brand awareness among eco-conscious consumers in Karnataka.

6.2 Brand Associations: Building Emotional and Ethical Connections

Brand associations are the mental links consumers form between a brand and its attributes. Simpli Namdhari's has cultivated associations such as:

- 1) **Health and Wellness:** Through its product offerings and educational content.
- 2) **Trust and Transparency:** Via clear labelling and ethical sourcing.
- 3) **Community and Culture:** By celebrating local farmers and regional values.

These associations deepen emotional bonds and reinforce the brand's authenticity, making it more than just a retailer—it becomes a lifestyle choice.

6.3 Perceived Quality: Sustainability as a Marker of Excellence

Consumers increasingly equate sustainability with superior quality. Simpli Namdhari's benefits from this perception in several ways:

- 1) **Product Integrity:** Residue-free produce and organic staples are seen as safer and healthier.
- 2) **Store Experience:** Clean, eco-friendly stores enhance the perception of care and professionalism.
- 3) **Customer Service:** Knowledgeable staff and transparent policies contribute to a premium experience.

This perceived quality justifies premium pricing and encourages repeat purchases.

6.4 Brand Loyalty: Commitment Rooted in Shared Values

Loyalty is the ultimate outcome of strong brand equity. Simpli Namdhari's fosters loyalty through:

- 1) **Value Alignment:** Consumers feel their personal values are reflected in the brand.
- 2) **Consistent Experience:** Across online and offline channels, the brand delivers on its sustainability promise.
- 3) **Community Engagement:** Events, challenges, and educational initiatives create a sense of belonging.

Loyal customers not only repurchase but also advocate for the brand, amplifying its reach and reputation.

7. METHODOLOGY

To evaluate the impact of sustainable marketing on consumer behaviour and brand equity of Simpli Namdhari's in Karnataka, a mixed-methods research approach was adopted. This section outlines the research design, data collection techniques, sampling strategy, and analytical tools used to derive insights.

7.1 Research Design

The study employed a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods to ensure depth and breadth of understanding:

- 1) **Quantitative Component:** Structured surveys were used to gather measurable data on consumer perceptions, purchase behaviour, and brand loyalty.
- 2) **Qualitative Component:** In-depth interviews and focus groups provided nuanced insights into consumer motivations, emotional responses, and cultural influences.

This triangulated approach allowed for a comprehensive analysis of both statistical trends and subjective experiences.

7.2 Data Collection Methods

1. Surveys

- 1) **Instrument:** A structured questionnaire with Likert-scale items and multiple-choice questions.
- 2) **Topics Covered:** Awareness of sustainability, perception of Simpli Namdhari's, purchase frequency, brand loyalty, and demographic details.
- 3) **Distribution:** Online (via email and social media) and offline (in-store).

2. Interviews

- 1) **Participants:** 20 regular customers of Simpli Namdhari's across Bengaluru, Mysuru, and Mangaluru.
- 2) **Format:** Semi-structured interviews conducted in person and via video calls.
- 3) **Focus Areas:** Personal values, brand associations, and reactions to sustainability campaigns.

3. Secondary Data

- 1) **Sources:** Company reports, marketing materials, academic journals, and news articles.
- 2) **Purpose:** To contextualize findings and validate primary data.

Sampling Strategy

- 1) **Population:** Consumers who have shopped at Simpli Namdhari's stores or online platform in Karnataka.
- 2) **Sample Size:** 300 survey respondents and 20 interviewees.
- 3) **Sampling Technique:** Stratified random sampling to ensure representation across age groups, income levels, and geographic locations.

This strategy ensured diversity and minimized bias in the data.

7.3 Analytical Tools

- 1) **Descriptive Statistics:** Used to summarize survey responses (mean, median, mode, frequency).
- 2) **Regression Analysis:** To identify correlations between sustainable marketing variables and brand equity dimensions.
- 3) **Thematic Coding:** Applied to interview transcripts to extract recurring themes and sentiments.
- 4) **Cross-Tabulation:** To compare consumer behaviour across different demographic segments.

These tools enabled both macro-level trends and micro-level insights to be captured effectively.

8. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the survey responses and interviews conducted with Simpli Namdhari's customers in Karnataka, several key trends emerged regarding the influence of sustainable marketing on consumer behaviour and brand equity.

8.1 Consumer Awareness of Sustainability

Awareness Level	Percentage of Respondents
Highly Aware	42%
Moderately Aware	38%

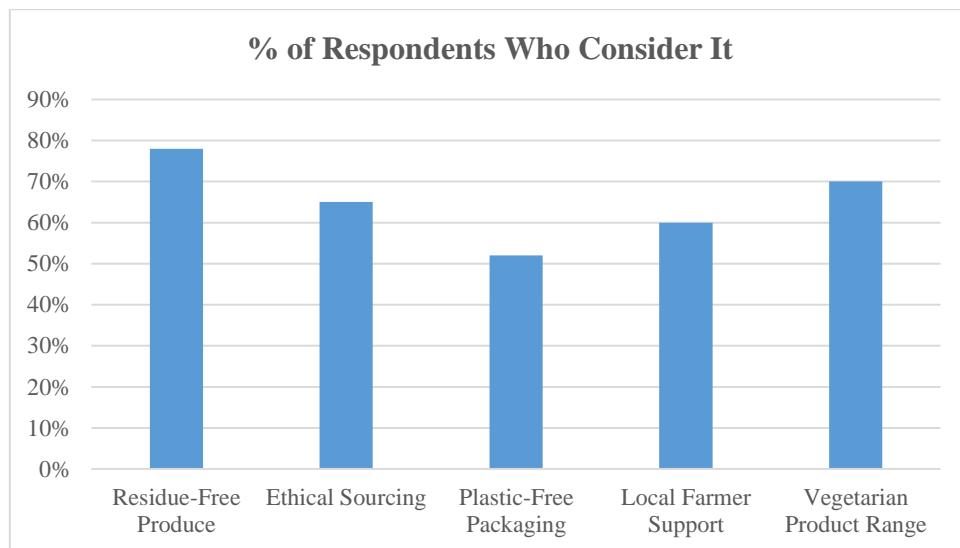
Slightly Aware	15%
Not Aware	5%

Insight: Over 80% of respondents demonstrated moderate to high awareness of sustainability, indicating fertile ground for eco-conscious branding.

8.2 Influence of Sustainability on Purchase Decisions

Influence Factor	% of Respondents Who Consider It
Residue-Free Produce	78%
Ethical Sourcing	65%
Plastic-Free Packaging	52%
Local Farmer Support	60%
Vegetarian Product Range	70%

Graph: Top Sustainability Factors Influencing Purchase Decisions



Observation: Consumers prioritize health and ethical sourcing, with residue-free produce and vegetarian offerings leading the way.

8.3 Brand Equity Dimensions

Brand Equity Dimension	Mean Score (out of 5)
Brand Awareness	4.3
Brand Associations	4.1
Perceived Quality	4.5
Brand Loyalty	4.2

Conclusion: Perceived quality scored highest, suggesting that sustainability enhances product credibility and excellence.

8.4 Regression Analysis: Sustainability vs Brand Loyalty

Model Summary:

- Dependent Variable:** Brand Loyalty
- Independent Variables:** Awareness of Sustainability, Perceived Quality, Ethical Sourcing, Community Engagement

- **R² Value:** 0.68

Interpretation: 68% of the variation in brand loyalty can be explained by sustainable marketing factors.

8.5 Consumer Sentiment Themes (Qualitative Insights)

Theme	Frequency in Interviews
Trust in Ethical Sourcing	High
Emotional Connection	Moderate
Value for Money	Moderate
Cultural Alignment	High
Skepticism of Greenwashing	Low

Understanding: Consumers feel culturally and emotionally aligned with Simpli Namdhari's values, reinforcing loyalty and advocacy.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings from both quantitative and qualitative data, several strategic recommendations can be made to help Simpli Namdhari's further strengthen its brand equity through sustainable marketing in Karnataka.

9.1 Enhance Transparency and Storytelling

Strategy	Expected Impact
Share detailed sourcing stories	Builds trust and emotional bond
Use QR codes for traceability	Increases transparency
Highlight farmer partnerships	Reinforces ethical sourcing

Takeaway: Consumers value authenticity. Detailed storytelling about product origins and farmer relationships can deepen brand associations.

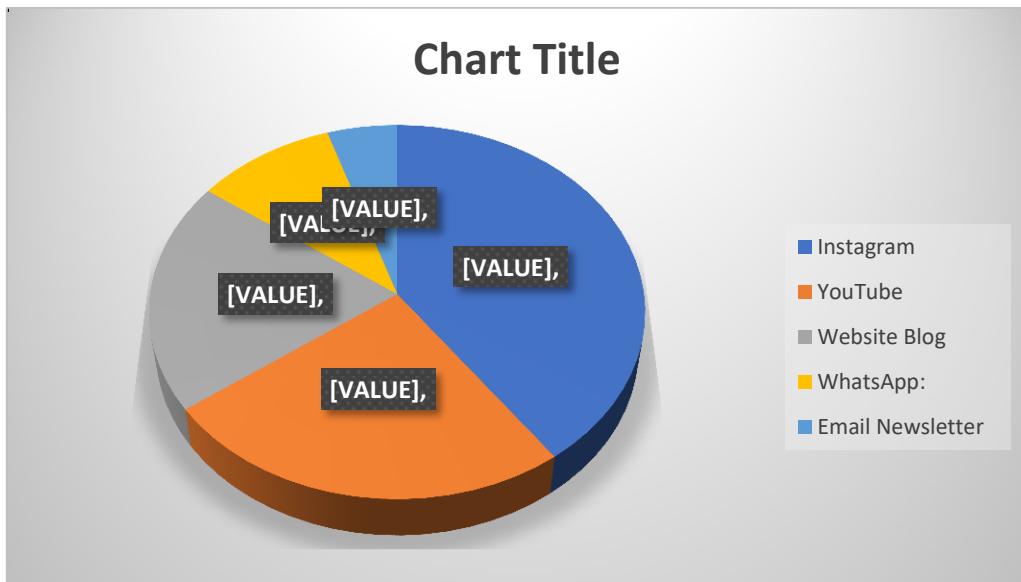
9.2 Leverage Digital Platforms for Sustainability Education

Digital Tactic	Purpose
Sustainability blog series	Educate and engage consumers
Interactive social media polls	Understand consumer preferences
Eco-challenges and gamification	Drive participation and loyalty

Observation: Digital platforms offer scalable ways to educate and engage consumers around sustainability.

Graph: Preferred Digital Channels for Sustainability Content

Instagram	40%
YouTube	25%
Website Blog	20%
WhatsApp:	10%
Email Newsletter	5%



9.3 Expand Sustainable Product Lines

Product Category	Consumer Interest Level
Organic dairy alternatives	High
Eco-friendly household items	Moderate
Plant-based snacks	High
Sustainable packaging options	High

Conclusion: Diversifying sustainable offerings can attract new segments and increase basket size.

9.4 Build Community-Driven Sustainability Programs

Initiative	Benefit
Local sustainability workshops	Strengthens community ties
Loyalty rewards for eco-actions	Encourages repeat purchases
Collaborations with NGOs	Enhances brand credibility

Understanding: Community engagement fosters emotional loyalty and positions the brand as a social leader.

10. CONCLUSION

The case of Simpli Namdhari's in Karnataka illustrates how sustainable marketing can be a powerful driver of consumer behaviour and brand equity. Through ethical sourcing, transparent communication, and community engagement, the brand has successfully aligned itself with the values of health, wellness, and environmental responsibility.

Key Takeaways

- 1) **High Consumer Awareness:** Karnataka's consumers are increasingly informed about sustainability and actively seek brands that reflect their values.
- 2) **Positive Impact on Brand Equity:** Sustainable marketing enhances brand awareness, perceived quality, emotional connection, and loyalty.
- 3) **Cultural Resonance:** Simpli Namdhari's vegetarian model and local sourcing align with regional traditions and beliefs.
- 4) **Strategic Differentiation:** The brand stands out in the competitive retail landscape by embedding sustainability into every aspect of its operations.

Strategic Implications

Retailers aiming to build resilient and value-driven brands must recognize that sustainability is no longer optional—it's a strategic necessity. By investing in ethical practices, transparent storytelling, and community engagement, brands can cultivate deeper consumer relationships and long-term loyalty.

Simpli Namdhari's serves as a blueprint for how sustainable marketing can be authentically integrated into brand strategy, especially in culturally rich and environmentally aware regions like Karnataka.

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