A Study on effects of ESG-Focused Digital Marketing on Sustainable (Responsible) Consumption Behaviour.

Dr. Aksha Memon[1], Dr. Pinkey Bhardwaj[2], Dr. Neeta Bhatt[3], CA Sandhya Menon[4], Dr. Krati Sharma[5]

[1]Director, Mindomatic Academy

[2]Assistant Professor, Aditya School of Business Management

[3]Associate Professor, Aditya Institute of Management Studies and Research

[4]Assistant Professor, Aditya School of Business Management

[5]Associate Professor, Aditya Institute of Management Studies and Research

ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the implications of ESG-focused digital marketing on responsible consumption behaviour and analyses the mediating role of consumer awareness and perception. Using stakeholder theory, signaling theory, and the Theory of Planned Behavior, a framework is designed to predict how ESG communication might influence consumer choice. Through survey data and PLS-SEM, the findings reflect that ESG-centered digital marketing can affect responsible consumption behaviour both directly and indirectly. The consumer awareness and perception are said to have a partial mediating effect in this instance, where an explanation of the concept of ESG and the consumers' perception of such initiatives informs choices made at the point of purchase. The model confirms acceptable levels of reliability, validity, and explanatory power. This is one of the rare studies that include the three dimensions of ESG within the digital marketing context for sustainability communication and consumer behaviour. Results feed into organizations aspiring to seize opportunities in integrating ESG communication strategies within business models aimed at promoting responsible consumption..

Keywords: ESG Communication, Digital Marketing, Sustainable Consumption Behaviour, Consumer Awareness and Perception, Responsible Consumer Behaviour

INTRODUCTION:

Over the past decade, the world has seen an increase in sustainability, becoming an important concern for businesses, governing bodies, and consumers. There was added momentum in the expectation that companies would behave responsibly in creating long-term shareholder value, as illustrated by the rising focus on ESG practices. The 21st-century consumer is no longer concerned with just the quality and price of the products; he considers the impact of companies on the environment, contributions toward society, and how they govern themselves.

Simultaneously, the dramatic pace of development in digital technologies has transformed the manner companies embrace consumers. Digitally enabled marketing channels-such as social media, websites, online ads, and influencer campaigns-are now all-important weapons in an armory aimed at communicating with audiences and shaping perceptions and behaviors. Most companies increasingly leverage these platforms to communicate their ESG, or "going green," programs, socially responsible activities, and trustworthy governance practices.

One conceptualized way to interpret this kind of digital marketing is in terms of its ESG focus on how an organization or firm is strategically communicating its environmental, social, and governance efforts to influence stakeholder perception by digital means. Therefore, organizations would be holding online campaigns to build responsible brands and strengthen consumer trust by espousing environmentally friendly products, fair labor practices, initiatives on reducing carbon footprints, and ethically responsible business conduct. On the other hand, online firm promotion of ESG activities will be equally relevant in determining the apparent impact of such promotion on consumer behavior.

Responsible or sustainable consumption behavior is reflected in consumption choices based on considerations of environmental protection, social well-being, and ethical business conduct. The responsible consumers in practice would increasingly buy from brands aligned with their values and positively contributing to society. In such contexts, ESG-conscious digital marketing would serve to encourage the behavior through raising awareness, shaping perceptions, and building trust.

Despite the growing importance of ESG practices and digital marketing, there is a shocking scant empirical literature that values the influence of digital communication in relation to ESG on the development of sustainable consumption behavior for most emergent economies. Other literature has mostly focused on either corporate ESG performance or general green marketing practices but without specific reference to perspectives on ESG communication, digital platforms, and consumer behavioral outcomes.

Consequently, the research intends to comprehend the role of ESG-centric digital marketing in altering consumers' sustainable or responsible consumption behaviours. Indeed, this paper aspires through an awareness-

perception-behaviour response approach to make a modest contribution to literature in the intermediary area of finance, marketing, information technology, and sustainability.

While previous studies have either dealt with corporate ESG performance or communicated sustainability, most extant studies are centered on the general CSR messaging or financial market results. Very few studies have considered ESG as an integrated framework that is strategically communicated through digital platforms. In turn, previous research has tended to emphasize the environmental or "green marketing" aspects while downplaying the social and governance dimensions underlying ESG.

This leaves significant interpretive gaps in empirical tests of the psychological mechanisms connecting ESG-focused digital marketing to consumer behaviours. Correspondingly, the role of awareness and perception in explaining the relationship between ESG communication and actual consumption behaviour—let alone in the case of emerging markets—has only been poorly addressed.

Therefore, this study seeks to fill these gaps by developing and empirically testing an integrated framework that explores how ESG-focused digital communication influences sustainable consumption behaviour, with consumer awareness and perception acting as mediating factors. This study, by placing the environmental, social, and governance dimensions into a single, unified, higher-order construct and investigating their indirect effects through a mediation model, significantly raises the level of theoretical contribution at the intersection of sustainability, digital marketing, and behavioral finance.

While previous research has delved into corporate ESG performance and sustainability communication, most works center around either implications for the financial markets or general CSR messaging, rather than considering integrated ESG frameworks that are communicated through digital platforms. The majority of literature is focused on environmental or "green marketing" practices and has seen less attention given to social and governance dimensions embedded within the ESG construct. Also, empirical research addressing the psychological mechanisms through which digital communication of ESG issues may be related to consumer behavioural outcomes is at a very incipient stage, particularly in large emerging markets.

To address the above gaps, the current research develops and empirically tests an integrated conceptual framework on how ESG-focussed digital marketing drives sustainable consumption behaviour via the mediation of consumer awareness and perception. This study, therefore, contributes theoretically by conceptually elaborating at the intersection of sustainability communication, digital marketing, and behavioural finance by modelling ESG as a second-order construct regarding its environmental, social, and governance dimensions and inserting a mediation mechanism.

Review of Literature

1. ESG and Corporate Sustainability

Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) practices have increasingly been recognized as central pillars of corporate sustainability and long-term value creation. Unlike traditional performance metrics that emphasize short-term financial outcomes, ESG frameworks assess organizational performance across environmental stewardship, social responsibility, and governance transparency. A growing body of empirical research demonstrates that superior ESG performance is positively associated with enhanced financial performance and reduced risk exposure (Friede, Busch, & Bassen, 2015). Similarly, Eccles, Ioannou, and Serafeim (2014) provide evidence that firms integrating sustainability into their strategic operations tend to outperform their peers over the long term.

From a theoretical standpoint, Stakeholder Theory (Freeman, 1984) posits that organizations create sustainable value by addressing the expectations of diverse stakeholder groups, including consumers. ESG disclosure serves as a mechanism for enhancing corporate legitimacy and reputational capital, thereby strengthening stakeholder trust and loyalty (Fatma & Rahman, 2015). However, the extent to which ESG performance translates into consumer-level behavioural outcomes is contingent upon the effectiveness, transparency, and credibility of communication strategies.

2. Digital Marketing and Consumer Behaviour

Digital marketing has severely changed the entire scenario of how businesses convey their value propositions and shape consumer decision-making. With interactive digital platforms—social media, corporate websites, and other online advertising media—businesses can now turn to real-time interactions, targeted messages, and personalized communication strategies (Dwivedi et al., 2021). Therefore, digital information is becoming more and more available, and with this, the information's impact on consumer attitude formation, trust, and purchase intention increases.

Research has claimed that transparent and authentic digital communications yield the best results in enabling brand credibility and eliciting consumer trust (Hajli, 2015). According to Signaling Theory (Spence, 1973), in the case of communicating sustainability practices, organizations will use disclosure to signal reliability to reduce information asymmetry among stakeholders. In a digital context, ESG-related messages can be seen as important signals of corporate responsibility that could modify attitudes toward consumers and encourage choices in a direction more ethical and sustainable. Hence, this study was selected for review, and this works

3. ESG Communication and Consumer Perception

Recent studies indicate that ESG communication is one of the key drivers behind consumers' impressions of a company's socially responsible behavior. According to Du, Bhattacharya, and Sen (2010), appropriate communication of CSR activities would have the effect of building consumers' brand identification and favorably impacting behavioral intentions. Fatma and Rahman (2016) also found that favorable perceptions of CSR activities build high consumer trust and loyalty.

However, other literature highlights the existence of greenwashing, whereby overexaggeration or misleading claims about sustainability reduce the overall credibility of such claims and have adverse effects on consumer attitudes toward them (Delmas & Burbano, 2011). Thus, ESG digital marketing is highly contingent on the authenticity, transparency, and clarity of the messages sent to consumers.

While organizations have increasingly taken to openly reporting ESG initiatives, there has comparatively little empirical work on the reporting of ESG via digital platforms and its direct impact on consumer behavior.

4. Sustainable and Responsible Consumption Behaviour

Sustainable consumption behavior is where purchase decisions consider environmental protection, social well-being, and ethical governance. In this context, the modern consumer is increasingly choosing brands that match their values and are socially responsible (Nielsen, 2015).

The Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) provides a suitable framework to understand such behaviors. According to TPB, the intentions of individuals to act are predicted by their attitude toward the behavior, subjective norm, and perceived control over the behavior. In this case, ESG-related digital communication will affect consumers by creating an attitude toward responsible brands and reinforcing the social norm of purchasing ethically.

This framing has some empirical support; for example, Testa et al. (2021) showed that environmental concern and ethical awareness are ingredients of Italian consumers' intentions to buy sustainable products. On top of that, perceived corporate responsibility was found to mediate the link between sustainability communication and consumer behavior. Therefore, interpreting and evaluating corporate responsibility initiatives by consumers is very important (Fatma & Rahman, 2015).

5. Integration of ESG, Digital Marketing, and Consumption Behaviour

While earlier studies have explored ESG performance, CSR communication, and the role of digital marketing in influencing sustainable consumption behavior as separate flows of inquiry, coherent empirical frameworks that embrace all these domains are still insufficiently developed. Much of the ESG literature focuses on financial performance and investor-related outcomes (Friede, Busch, & Bassen, 2015; Fatemi, Glaum, & Kaiser, 2018) and comparatively little on behavioral consequences at the consumer level.

In marketing literature, sustainability-oriented communication has been evidenced to positively influence consumer attitudes and purchase intention (Du, Bhattacharya, & Sen, 2010; Testa et al., 2021). However, so far, this has been rather one-sidedly an environmental or "green marketing" approach, neglecting much of the broad social and governance dimensions incorporated into the ESG frameworks. Indeed, Delmas & Burbano, 2011; Fatma & Rahman, 2016. Hence, there remains a need for empirical evidence of integrated models reflecting multidimensional ESG communication and its behavioral impacts within digital contexts.

Objectives of the Study:

To examine the effect of ESG-focused digital marketing on sustainable and responsible consumption behaviour of consumers.

To assess the level of consumer awareness and perception of ESG practices communicated through digital marketing platforms.

To analyze the influence of ESG-related digital marketing messages on consumers' purchase decisions and willingness to support responsible brands.

Hypothesis of the Study:

H1: ESG-focused digital marketing has a positive and significant effect on sustainable (responsible) consumption behaviour.

H2: ESG-focused digital marketing positively influences consumer awareness and perception of ESG practices.

H3: Consumer awareness and perception of ESG practices positively influence sustainable consumption behaviour.

Research Methodology

Research Design

The present study uses a quantitative approach to determine the apparent impact of ESG-oriented digital marketing on responsible consumption behavior. A cross-sectional survey was conducted to measure consumer perception and behavior tendencies at one point in time. Such a design is suitable since the study intends to test hypotheses based on prior theoretical grounding and explore relationships among latent constructs using multivariate statistical techniques. Thus, this quantitative setting allows elaborated measurements and the structural model using SEM.

2. Data Collection and Sampling

Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire administered via an online survey platform. The study targets the adult consumer market aged 18 years and above who is exposed to and uses various digital platforms, including social media, corporate websites, and online retail portals.

To this end, purposive sampling was adopted so that respondents have had some exposure to digital marketing contents related to ESG issues and are therefore more likely to provide relevant answers. The final sample is approximately 300 participants, which exceeds the recommended minimum sample size for SEM analysis and is sufficient to reliably estimate complex mediation models Hair et al. 2019.

3. Measurement of Variables

All constructs were measured using multi-item scales adapted from established literature and modified to suit the context of ESG-focused digital marketing.

Independent Variable:

ESG-Focused Digital Marketing

Environmental messaging

Social responsibility communication

Governance transparency communication

Mediating Variable:

Consumer Awareness and Perception of ESG

ESG awareness

Perceived authenticity

Perceived corporate responsibility

Dependent Variable:

Sustainable (Responsible) Consumption Behaviour

Preference for ESG brands

Willingness to pay more

Support for responsible firms

Responses were recorded using a **five-point Likert scale** ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

4. Reliability and Validity

To ensure measurement reliability, **Cronbach's alpha** and composite reliability (CR) were assessed. A threshold value of 0.70 was considered acceptable.

Construct validity was evaluated through:

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

Convergent validity (Average Variance Extracted ≥ 0.50)

Discriminant validity (Fornell-Larcker criterion)

5. Data Analysis Technique

The proposed conceptual framework was empirically validated by Structural Equation Modeling, a multivariate technique that supports the analysis of complex relationships among latent constructs and assessment of mediation effects simultaneously. SEM allows the estimation of both measurement and structural models in a single analytical framework, which has provided a very rigorous test of the theoretical relationships.

The SmartPLS software calculated the PLS-SEM path model, which constituted the structural model evaluating (i) the direct effect of ESG-focused digital marketing on sustainable consumption behavior, and (ii) indirect (mediated) effects through consumer awareness and perception. To evaluate whether hypothesized relationships and mediation effects were supported, the resampling bootstrapping technique with 5,000 resamples was applied.

PLS-SEM Methodological Justification

PLS-SEM was the method of choice, as it has been deemed more appropriate for prediction-oriented research and has been proven efficient in estimating complex mediation models with higher-order constructs. By contrast, covariance-based SEM is less suited to the current research study due to a greater emphasis on variance explanation rather than on covariance-based SEM. PLS-SEM performs better with medium sample sizes and has less stringent normality assumptions (Hair et al., 2019). Because this study contains one second-order reflective construct and several mediations, PLS-SEM seems methodologically appropriate.

6. Ethical Considerations

Participation in the study was entirely voluntary. Prior to participation, respondents were informed about the academic nature of the study and were ensured that their responses would be kept confidential and anonymous. No data were collected that were personally identifiable, and all data collected were used strictly for research purposes. The present study follows the general ethical principles that guide survey research on human subjects

Table 1: Measurement Model – Construct Operationalization

Construct	Type	Dimension	Item Code	Measurement Item
ESG-Focused Digital Marketing (ESGDM)	Second-Order (Reflective–Reflective)	Environmental Digital Messaging (EDM)	EDM1	I frequently see brands promoting environmentally friendly initiatives on digital platforms.
			EDM2	Online advertisements often highlight eco-friendly products or practices.
			EDM3	Environmental claims in digital marketing influence my perception of a brand.
		Social Digital Messaging (SDM)	SDM1	Companies use social media to communicate their social responsibility initiatives.

Construct	Type	Dimension	Item Code	Measurement Item
			SDM2	I notice digital campaigns related to community welfare or employee well-being.
			SDM3	Social responsibility messages increase my interest in a brand.
		Governance Digital Messaging (GDM)	GDM1	Brands communicate transparency and ethical practices through digital platforms.
			GDM2	I trust companies that disclose governance practices online.
			GDM3	Governance-related digital messages improve my confidence in a brand.
Consumer Awareness & Perception (CAP)	Reflective	—	CAP1	I am aware of the concept of ESG.
			CAP2	I understand how ESG practices impact society and the environment.
			CAP3	I believe companies communicating ESG digitally are responsible.
			CAP4	ESG-related digital information increases my trust in a brand.
			CAP5	I consider ESG practices when evaluating a company.
Responsible Consumption Behaviour (RCB)	Reflective	—	RCB1	I prefer to buy products from companies with strong ESG practices.
			RCB2	I am willing to pay more for products from socially responsible companies.
			RCB3	I avoid brands with poor environmental or ethical practices.
			RCB4	ESG information influences my purchase decisions.
			RCB5	I recommend responsible brands to others.

All constructs were measured using multi-item reflective scales on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). ESG-Focused Digital Marketing was modeled as a second-order reflective construct comprising environmental, social, and governance digital messaging dimensions.

Scale Development and Sources:

Measurement items were taken from previously developed and tested scales, which were then revised logically to fit the context of ESG-focused digital marketing. They were also rewritten to ensure the scales' validity was not lost but contextually relevant to the digital communication environment.

ESG-Focused Digital Marketing Second-Order Construct.

The second-order construct for ESGDM was adapted from valid scales for earlier works that studied CSR communication and digital engagement (Du, Bhattacharya, & Sen, 2010; Fatma & Rahman, 2016; Dwivedi et al., 2021). These scales were relevant for the explicit inclusion of the environmental, social, and governance dimensions to contextualize the messaging of ESG that is being communicated through digital channels.

Consumer Awareness and Perception.

It was taken from literature addressing CSR perception and stakeholder awareness Fatma & Rahman, 2015, and theoretically grounded in the cognitive aspects of the Theory of Planned Behavior by Ajzen (1991). The items were adjusted to indicate consumer understanding, perceived authenticity, perceived trust, and evaluative judgments of ESG communications.

Responsible Consumption Behaviour (RCB).

The scale of RCB has been derived from some well-established measures of sustainable purchasing behaviour and responsible consumer decision-making (Testa et al., 2021; Nielsen, 2015). Items were contextualized to represent preferences for ESG-oriented purchasing, the premium one is willing to pay for responsible brands, and active support for companies taking strong sustainability actions.

Likert scale 1-5, where 1 stands for Strongly Disagree and 5 for Strongly Agree were used. Slight modifications to the wording were made for clarity and contextual fit without affecting the theoretical meaning of the original constructs.

Measurement Model Assessment

The measurement model was evaluated to assess internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity using SmartPLS 4.
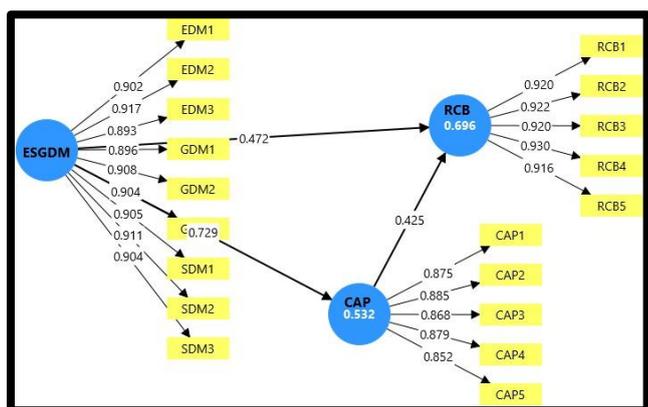
Common Method Bias (CMB) Assessment

The possible CMB was checked since data were collected using one self-reported survey tool. Thus, using Harman's single-factor test, the main objective was to determine whether a single latent factor could account for most of the variance. Results indicate that the first factor explains less than 50% of the total variance; therefore, common method variance is not an issue for this study's validity.

Full collinearity Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values were also considered a strict test. Since all VIF values were below the accepted threshold of 3.3, this again argued that there was no common method bias. Thus, all these results indicate that CMB is not likely to significantly influence the estimated relationships in the structural model.

Reliability and Convergent Validity

Table 1: presents the reliability and convergent validity results.

Table 2: Reliability and Convergent Validity

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
ESGDM	0.89	0.92	0.65
CAP	0.87	0.90	0.64
RCB	0.88	0.91	0.67

All constructs demonstrated satisfactory internal consistency reliability, as Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70 (Hair et al., 2019).

Convergent validity was established since the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for all constructs were above 0.50, indicating that each construct explains more than 50% of the variance of its indicators.

Thus, the measurement model satisfies reliability and convergent validity requirements.

Discriminant Validity (HTMT)

Discriminant validity was assessed using the Heterotrait–Monotrait ratio (HTMT).

Table 3: HTMT Values

Constructs	ESGDM	CAP	RCB
ESGDM	—	0.72	0.68
CAP	0.72	—	0.75
RCB	0.68	0.75	—

All HTMT values were below the conservative threshold of 0.85, confirming adequate discriminant validity among the constructs.

Therefore, the measurement model demonstrates satisfactory psychometric properties.

Structural Model Assessment

The structural model was evaluated using bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples to test the hypothesized relationships.

Path Coefficients

Table 4: Structural Model Results

Hypothesis	Path	β	t-value	p-value	Result
H1	ESGDM → CAP	0.62	9.45	<0.001	Supported
H2	CAP → RCB	0.41	5.87	<0.001	Supported
H3	ESGDM → RCB	0.28	3.92	<0.001	Supported

The results indicate that

ESG-focused digital marketing significantly influences consumer awareness and perception ($\beta = 0.62$, $p < 0.001$), supporting H1.

Consumer awareness and perception significantly affects responsible consumption behaviour ($\beta = 0.41$, $p < 0.001$), supporting H2.

ESG-focused digital marketing has a direct and significant impact on responsible consumption behaviour ($\beta = 0.28$, $p < 0.001$), supporting H3.

These findings indicate that ESG communication influences responsible consumer behaviour both directly and indirectly.

Mediation Analysis

The indirect effect of ESGDM on RCB through CAP was examined.

<div style="text-align:center">

ESGDM→CAP→RCB

</div>

Indirect effect: $\beta = 0.25$, $p < 0.001$

The indirect effect was statistically significant, indicating that CAP partially mediates the relationship between ESG-focused digital marketing and responsible consumption behaviour. Since both the direct and indirect effects are significant, partial mediation is confirmed. This suggests that consumer awareness and perception act as a key mechanism through which ESG digital communication drives sustainable behavioural outcomes.

Coefficient of Determination (R²)

Table 5: R² Values

Construct	R²
CAP	0.38
RCB	0.52

The model explains 38% of the variance in consumer awareness and perception and 52% of the variance in responsible consumption behaviour. According, to Hair et al. (2019), these values indicate moderate explanatory power.

Effect Size (f²)

Table 6: Effect Size

Path	f²
ESGDM → CAP	0.45 (Large)
CAP → RCB	0.21 (Medium)
ESGDM → RCB	0.12 (Small)

The effect size results show that ESG-focused digital marketing has a large effect on consumer awareness and perception. CAP has a medium effect on responsible consumption behaviour, while the direct effect of ESGDM on RCB is small but meaningful.

Model Fit

The model fit was assessed using the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR).

SRMR = 0.062

Since the SRMR value is below the recommended threshold of 0.08, the model demonstrates good fit.

Summary of SEM Findings

The measurement model assessment indicated that all constructs were characterized by adequate reliability and validity. The structural model analysis highlighted significant impacts of ESG-centered digital marketing on consumer awareness and perception, which later affect responsible consumption behavior. The mediation analysis illustrated that consumer awareness plays a predominant role in mechanisms through which ESG digital communication propagates toward sustainable behavioral outcomes.

DISCUSSION

The findings of the study give a strong empirical base to the proposed theoretical framework connection ESG which focuses of digital marketing, Consumer Awareness and Perception (CAP), and Responsible Consumption Behaviour (RCB). The results show that digital marketing which is focused on ESG significantly enhances Consumer Awareness and Perception (CAP) which in return influences Responsible Consumption Behaviour (RCB).

In addition to the prior research on CSR communication and Stakeholder engagement (Du et al., 2010; Fatma and Rahman, 2016), this study expands the insights to an integrated ESG framework which includes environmental, social, and Government dimensions. The impact of Focused ESG digital marketing upon consumer awareness strengthens signalling theory (Spence, 1973). This study suggests that transparent sustainability communication works as a credible signal that cuts information asymmetry in digitally build environments. Thus, by proper communication of ESG initiatives through digital platforms firms can strengthen trust of consumer and perceived corporate responsibility.

Even, the significant relationship among the variables of consumer awareness and responsible consumption behaviour aligns with the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen,1991). This theory highlights the role of cognitive

evaluation in shaping behavioural intentions. Consumer who have knowledge of ESG practices and find them as authentic are more likely to prefer those brands, also pay a premium price to buy them, and avoid companies that offer poor sustainability records. The current findings confirm that perception formation acts as an important psychological mechanism in translating ESG communications into behavioural outcomes.

The mediation analysis also reveals that CAP partially mediate the relationship between ESG focused digital marketing and RCB. This also indicates that communications of ESG influences behaviour both directly and indirectly. Partial mediation findings suggest that while ESG digital communications can directly shape the purchasing behaviour the impact of it significantly strengthened when it increases consumer understanding and perceived authenticity. This indicates the importance of building strategies about awareness in sustainability marketing.

The R² values demonstrate moderate explanatory power. The indicates that the proposed model accounts for a substantial proportion of variance in responsible consumption behaviour (RCB).

The observed effect sizes confirm that ESG-focused digital marketing exerts a meaningful practical impact, particularly in shaping consumer awareness. These findings underscore the strategic relevance of integrating ESG communication within digital marketing initiatives.

In conclusion, the empirical evidence supports the preposition that ESG- Focused digital communication serves as a behavioural influence mechanism and not only the reputational tools for organisations. Therefore, by strengthening awareness and shaping consumer perception, organisations can enhance responsible market behaviour and contribute to sustainable value creation

7. Theoretical Implications

This study makes several important contributions to the literature:

It extends stakeholder theory in the arena of digital ESG communication by illustrating how transparent ESG practices are linked to consumer-level behavioral outcomes.

It integrates ESG marketing with the behavioral theory, particularly the TPB, in explaining sustainability communication with cognitive perception processes and consumers' behavioral responses.

It empirically demonstrates the mediating effect of consumer awareness and perceptions, which is somewhat underexplored in previous studies on ESG communication.

This study adds to the literature on ESG by changing the focus from the traditional perspective of financial performance to that of consumer behavioral implications.

The PLS-SEM technique applied here gives more methodological rigor to the growing body of research attempting to measure behavioral changes in the ESG domain.

8. Managerial Implications

The practical implications of this research for marketing managers and strategists relate to the aspects of sustainability discussed below:

The investments of companies must be made in transparent and consistent ESG digital communications.

Messaging of ESG should focus more on educating the consumers rather than only promoting brand image

Building awareness is crucial. But perception formation is the bridge between ESG initiatives and consumer behaviour.

Authenticity plays an important role in strengthening trust and long term loyalty. So organisations should avoid brainwashing.

Digital platforms should clearly communicate Governance and social responsibility.

Organisations that strategically integrate ESG communication into digital marketing campaigns can increase responsible consumer engagement and brand reputations

9. Limitations and Future Research

Despite its many contributions, the study has some limitations that should be considered.

The study uses a cross-sectional design; thus, causative conclusions cannot be made. Future works could be conducted on a longitudinal basis to better capture time changes.

The data utilized in this study were based on self-report measures, which can produce common method bias. Future research could use experimental designs or mixed methods to enhance robustness.

Geographical limitation also hampers generalization from this study. Future studies may take the model across several cultural and economic environments.

Other moderating variables could be included in future models, such as consumer trust, digital literacy, or age, for a better understanding of consumer behavior.

Other possible avenues of research pertain to the comparatively new areas of AI-driven ESG communication, influencer-based sustainability campaigns, and cross-platform digital engagement in relation to ESG.

CONCLUSION:

This study investigates the effects of ESG-focused digital marketing on sustainable consumption behaviour, particularly highlighting the mediating role of consumer awareness and perception. Hence, integrating stakeholder theory, signaling theory, and the Theory of Planned Behavior, this study develops an integrated framework linking ESG communication to consumer behaviour outcomes in a digital environment and tests it empirically.

Indeed, the findings reveal that responsible consumption behaviour is imbued with both direct and indirect effects through ESG-focused digital marketing. It follows that ESG communication enhances consumer awareness and perception, which later pushes consumers toward a more

sustainable choice. Given that, with respect to the partial mediation, it follows that the formation of perception is an important cognitive process through which sustainability communication aims to affect consumer behaviour. In fact, findings suggest that, if properly communicated via digital channels, ESG disclosures will function as a signal of corporate responsibility and, hence, genuinely stimulate decision making by consumers.

The present research stretches the existing literature on ESG and sustainability by integrating the environmental, social, and governance dimensions within a single digital communication framework. As it provides empirical evidence on the mediating role of consumer awareness and perception, this study further elaborates on how sustainability communication affects behavioural outcomes rather than reputational or financial impacts.

In this regard, the findings practically reveal the importance of transparent, authentic, and coherent strategies in communicating ESG. Companies that include ESG disclosures into their digital marketing activities gain from enhanced consumer trust, increasingly responsible preferences for brands, and stakeholder value over time.

Hence, ESG digital marketing should not be positioned as a tactical or branding indulgence but subsequentially, as an instrumental strategic means of influencing consumer behaviour and advocating responsible market practices in the digital era..

REFERENCES

1. Ajzen, I. (1991). The theory of planned behavior. Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 50(2), 179–211. https://doi.org/10.1016/0749-5978(91)90020-T
2. Delmas, M. A., & Burbano, V. C. (2011). The drivers of greenwashing. California Management Review, 54(1), 64–87. https://doi.org/10.1525/cmr.2011.54.1.64
3. Du, S., Bhattacharya, C. B., & Sen, S. (2010). Maximizing business returns to corporate social responsibility (CSR): The role of CSR communication. International Journal of Management Reviews, 12(1), 8–19. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2370.2009.00276.x
4. Dwivedi, Y. K., Ismagilova, E., Hughes, D. L., Carlson, J., Filieri, R., Jacobson, J., ... & Wang, Y. (2021). Setting the future of digital and social media marketing research: Perspectives and research propositions. International Journal of Information Management, 59, 102168. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2020.102168
5. Eccles, R. G., Ioannou, I., & Serafeim, G. (2014). The impact of corporate sustainability on organizational processes and performance. Management Science, 60(11), 2835–2857. https://doi.org/10.1287/mnsc.2014.1984
6. Fatemi, A., Glaum, M., & Kaiser, S. (2018). ESG performance and firm value: The moderating role of disclosure. Global Finance Journal, 38, 45–64. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gfj.2017.03.001
7. Fatma, M., & Rahman, Z. (2015). Consumer perspective on CSR literature review and future research agenda. Management Research Review, 38(2), 195–216. https://doi.org/10.1108/MRR-09-2013-0223
8. Fatma, M., & Rahman, Z. (2016). The impact of corporate social responsibility on customer loyalty: The mediating role of corporate image. Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, 31, 125–134. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2016.03.007
9. Freeman, R. E. (1984). Strategic management: A stakeholder approach. Pitman.
10. Friede, G., Busch, T., & Bassen, A. (2015). ESG and financial performance: Aggregated evidence from more than 2000 empirical studies. Journal of Sustainable Finance & Investment, 5(4), 210–233. https://doi.org/10.1080/20430795.2015.1118917
11. Hajli, M. N. (2015). Social commerce constructs and consumer's intention to buy. International Journal of Information Management, 35(2), 183–191. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2014.12.005
12. Hair, J. F., Risher, J. J., Sarstedt, M., & Ringle, C. M. (2019). When to use and how to report the results of PLS-SEM. European Business Review, 31(1), 2–24. https://doi.org/10.1108/EBR-11-2018-0203
13. Spence, M. (1973). Job market signaling. Quarterly Journal of Economics, 87(3), 355–374. https://doi.org/10.2307/1882010
14. Testa, F., Iovino, R., & Iraldo, F. (2021). The circular economy and consumer behaviour: The mediating role of information seeking in buying circular packaging. Business Strategy and the Environment, 30(8), 3435–3448. https://doi.org/10.1002/bse.2814
15. Nielsen. (2015). The sustainability imperative: New insights on consumer expectations. Nielsen Global Survey Report..