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A Study on Awareness of Greenwashing Among the Generational Differences in Bengaluru

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Abstract

In today's world, everyone is seeking organic or sustainable products for their daily life. We are all concerned about leading a healthy life, so we look for green, sustainable products. However, the manufacturing of these products often involves misleading claims, also known as "greenwashing." Greenwashing refers to misleading claims that create the illusion of environmental friendliness, but the reality is quite different. This is a serious issue, and it can be difficult to identify greenwashing claims as misleading. Factors that influence trust in a company's green claims include the company's reputation, product certifications, third-party audits, ingredients/materials used, and influencer endorsements. The rising tide of sustainability concerns brought with it a cloudy crosscurrent: Greenwashing. In the hectic metropolis of Bengaluru, India, this research takes center stage, pointing to understanding how different generations perceive and navigate false marketing tactics. In this paper, we approached different age groups and collected their perspective on the greenwashing concept, the factors influencing consumer buying behavior, corporate responsibility, and the evolving scenery of environmental consciousness. By understanding the heterogeneous dimensions of greenwashing, we desire to pave the way for informed argumentation and actions that promote actual sustainability in this vibrant metropolis.

Keywords: Sustainable Products, Greenwashing, Generations Perceive, Misleading, Environmental Consciousness.

Introduction

In today's world, everyone is seeking organic or sustainable products daily. We are all concerned about leading a healthy life, so we look for green, sustainable products. However, the manufacturing of these products often involves misleading claims, also known as "greenwashing."

Greenwashing refers to misleading claims that create the illusion of environmental friendliness, but the reality is quite different. This is a serious issue, and it can be difficult to identify greenwashing claims as misleading. Factors that influence trust in a company's green claims include the company's reputation, product certifications, third-party audits, ingredients/materials used, and influencer endorsements.

This paper focuses on understanding the awareness of greenwashing among different generations in Bengaluru. The levels of awareness and concern for environmental issues vary across generations. Older

generations, having lived through eras of uncontrolled pollution and environmental degradation, might be more skeptical of green claims, viewing them with a critical eye. Younger generations, on the other hand, have grown up with messages about sustainability and environmental activism and are more sensitive to greenwashing tactics, readily identifying and calling out misleading practices. The most common greenwashing claims involve emotions and imagery without exact evidence, focusing on one small aspect of sustainability while ignoring significant aspects, uncertain or general claims without exact data, and relying on certifications that are unknown or not trusted. After facing these issues, most consumers react with indifference, disappointment, or anger. They may decide to boycott the brand or share their experience with others. Most consumers are willing to pay more for sustainable products and anticipate living a sustainable lifestyle.

In this paper, we approached different age groups and collected their perspective on the greenwashing concept, the factors influencing consumer buying behavior, corporate responsibility, and the evolving scenery of environmental consciousness. By understanding the heterogeneous dimensions of greenwashing, we desire to pave the way for informed argumentation and actions that promote actual sustainability in this vibrant metropolis.

Objectives

1. To judge the degrees of awareness concerning greenwashing among different age groups in Bengaluru
2. To spot and analyze the beliefs of participants regarding the familiar greenwashing claims.
3. To be aware of the impact of misleading environmental claims on consumers and the overall environmental landscape.
4. To seek a deeper comprehension of how the elements interact within the context of environmental claims made by companies.

Literature Review

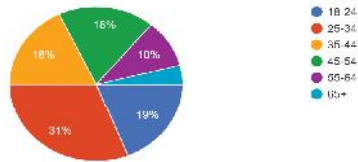
Exploring the Knowledge Structure and Hotspot Evolution of Greenwashing: A Visual Analysis Based on Bibliometrics by Wei Wang (2023)- The interpretation of greenwashing definitions and concepts, influencing factors, consequences, and governance models. The future direction of greenwashing research is from three perspectives: greening screening research, impact research, and governance research.

The “Green Generation Z: An Exploratory Study on How Greenwashing Affects Consumers’ Attitude Formation by Larsson, Lovisa (2022)- The act of greenwashing hurts consumers’ attitudes towards brands and the research further explores the effect of greenwashing on attitude formation.

Research Methodology

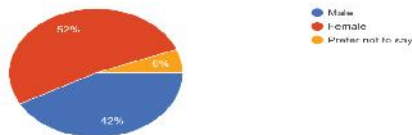
Based on the requirement of the study the data is collected from both primary and secondary sources. The data is collected from different age groups (18-65) located in Bengaluru, and secondary data is collected from various secondary sources like online sites. For the study, the data is collected and interpreted from 100 respondents from different age groups who are located in Bengaluru.

1. Age
100 responses



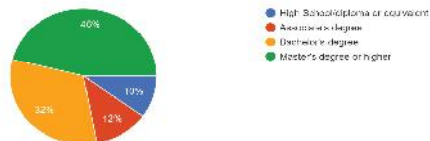
Based on a Survey conducted with 100 respondents, we have age groups of 18-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64, and 65+, the largest age group is 25-34 groups making up 31% of respondents, and the Second largest group is 18-24 groups making up 19% of respondents, the smallest group is 65+ group making up 4% of respondents.

2. Gender
100 responses



Based on a Survey conducted with 100 respondents, out of this 52% of them were male, 42% were female, and 6% preferred not to say.

3. Highest level of education
100 responses

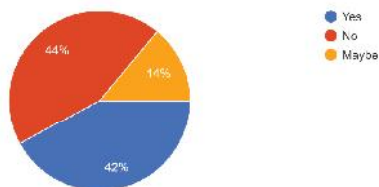


Based on a Survey conducted with 100 respondents, out of this 46% of respondents had a high school diploma or equivalent, 10% of respondents has an associate's degree, 32% of respondents had a bachelor's degree, 12% of respondents had a master's degree or higher.

Occupation was an open-ended questionnaire to this question we received responses like Assistant Professor, Farmer, Software Engineer, Accountant, Logistic (exports and imports) executive, Loan processor, Market Research Analyst, Textile and Laundry Consultant etc

5. Have you heard the term 'green Washing'?

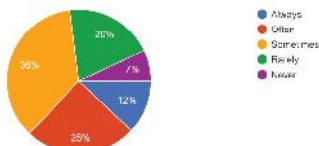
100 responses



Based on a Survey conducted with 100 respondents, 44% of respondents said YES, they had heard of the term “Greenwashing”, 42% of respondents said no, they had not heard of the term “greenwashing, 14% of respondents said may be, they were not sure if they have heard or not. According to this data, most of them are aware of Greenwashing.

6. How often do you come across the concept of greenwashing claims in your daily life (e.g., advertising packaging)

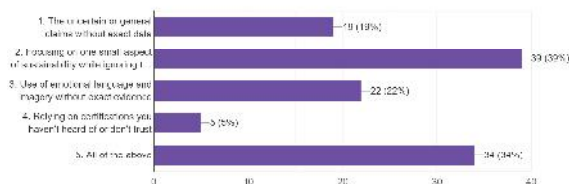
100 responses



Based on a Survey conducted with 100 respondents, 20% of respondents said they always come across greenwashing claims, 36% of respondents said they often come across greenwashing claims, 7% of respondents said they sometimes come across greenwashing claims, 25% of respondents said they never come across greenwashing claims. In conclusion, 36% of them often come across greenwashing in their daily life.

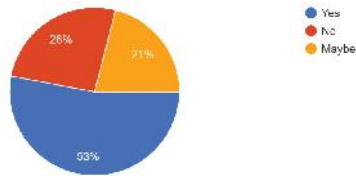
7. Which are the most common greenwashing claims according to your opinion?

100 responses



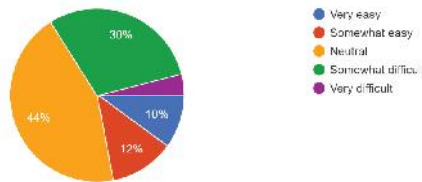
Based on a Survey conducted with 100 respondents, 39% of respondents said the most common greenwashing claim focuses on one small aspect of sustainability without considering the bigger picture, this response shows that Bengaluru people are to some extent they are aware of greenwashing tactics.

8. Do you think the concept of Greenwashing is serious issue?
100 responses



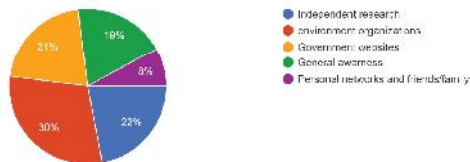
Based on a Survey conducted with 100 respondents, 53% of respondents said yes, they believe greenwashing is a serious issue, 26% of respondents said no, they do not believe greenwashing and 21% of respondents said maybe, they are not sure about greenwashing is a serious issue. In conclusion, Bengaluru people are more concerned with environmental issues.

9. How difficulty do you find it to identify greenwashing claims as misleading?
100 responses



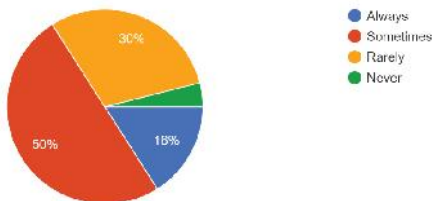
Based on a Survey conducted with 100 respondents, 44% of respondents said they found it somewhat difficult to identify greenwashing claims, 30% of respondents said they found it very difficult to identify greenwashing claims, 12% of respondents said they found it somewhat easy to identify greenwashing claims, 10% of respondents said they found it very easy to identify greenwashing claims. 14% of respondents said they were neutral. In conclusion, respondents finding difficult to identify the claims of greenwashing.

10. What sources of information do you rely on to verify the legitimacy of green claims?
100 responses



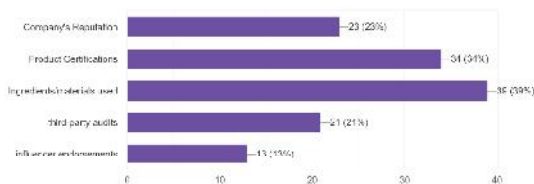
Based on a Survey conducted with 100 respondents, 30% of respondents said they rely on government websites to verify the legitimacy of green claims, 22% of respondents said they rely on personal networks and friends/family, 21% of respondents said they rely on independent research, 19% of respondents said they rely on environment organizations, 8% of respondents said they rely on general awareness. In conclusion, the respondents found that the majority of Bengaluru people rely on government websites or personal networks to verify the legitimacy of green claims.

11. Do you believe the claims of green consideration by companies
 100 responses



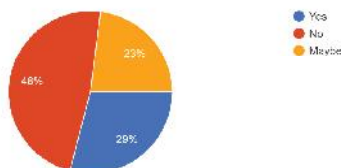
Based on a Survey conducted with 100 respondents, 50% of respondents said they believe the claims of green consideration by companies, 30% of respondents said they rarely believe the claims of green consideration by companies, 16% of respondents were not sure or natural, 4% of respondents they never believe the claims of green consideration by companies.

12. Which factors do you think the level of trust in a company's green claims will influence?
 100 responses



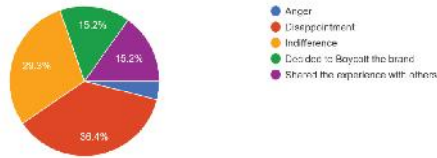
Based on a Survey conducted with 100 respondents, 39% of respondents said the most important factor is the ingredients/materials used in a product, 23% of respondents said the most important factor is the company's reputation, 34% of respondents said the most important factor is product certification, 21% of respondents said factor is third-party audits, 13% of respondents said the most important factor is influencer endorsements.

13. Did you buy any of the product which are green claims, later realized it was greenwashing?
 100 responses



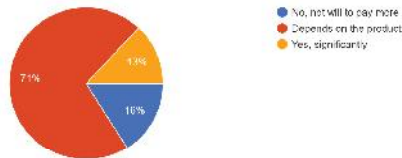
Based on a Survey conducted with 100 respondents, 48% of respondents said they did not buy any product they later realized was greenwashing, 29% of respondents said they may be bought a product they later realized was greenwashing and 23% of respondents said they did buy a product they later realized was greenwashing.

14. If you have faced the above issues what was your reactions?
99 responses



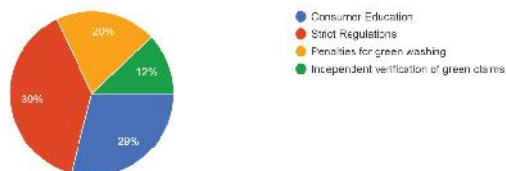
Based on a Survey conducted with 100 respondents, 36.4% of respondents said they shared their experience with others, 29.3% of respondents said they noticed indifference, 15.2% of respondents said they decided to Boycott the brand, 15.2% of respondents said they noticed anger, 14% of respondents said they noticed disappointment.

15. Will you go for buying the product which are environmentally friendly and ethically produced for more cost ?
100 responses



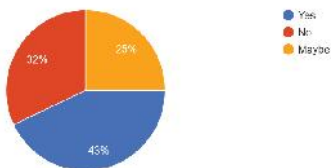
Based on a Survey conducted with 100 respondents, 71% of the respondents say that they are willing to buy product that are environmentally friendly and ethically produced for more cost that depends on the product.

16. What actions will you take against the companies for addressing the greenwash?
100 responses



Based on a Survey conducted with 100 respondents, 29% of respondents reacted that they educated the consumer against the companies for addressing the greenwash, 39% of them would bear stricter regulations, 20% of them hold up for penalties for greenwashing and 12% of them keep independent verification of green claims.

17. Do you think your generation is concerned about environmental issues?
 100 responses



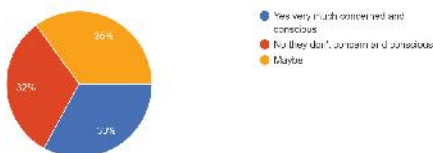
Based on a Survey conducted with 100 respondents, 43% of different age groups say that they are more concerned about environmental issues.

18. Comparing to your generation and present generation which generation is more conscious about environmental issues?
 100 responses



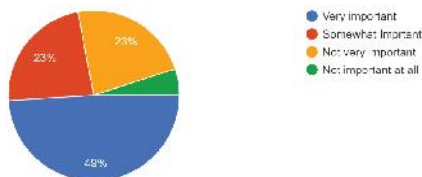
Based on a Survey conducted with 100 respondents, 54% of them say the present generation is more conscious about environmental issues.

19. Do you think the up coming generation are more concerned about environmental issues, or if they have more conscious about it
 100 responses



Based on a Survey conducted with 100 respondents, 35% of respondents say they are not sure about coming generation are more concerned about environmental issues.

20. How personally important to you to live a sustainable lifestyle?
 100 responses



Based on a Survey conducted with 100 respondents, 49% of respondents say its very important to live a sustainable lifestyle personally.

Findings

- Survey discloses awareness is high among all the age groups, younger generations (18-34) might be slightly more likely concerned and aware of environmental claims.
- 44% of respondents had heard the term “Greenwashing” and 36% frequently encounter greenwashing claims.
- Focus on consumer education and transparency as 44% of respondents found it somewhat difficult to identify greenwashing.
- Most relied upon sources of government websites and personal networks for verifying greenwashing claims.
- Mixed emotions about greenwashing, anger, disappointment, and indifference were common responses against greenwashing.
- 71% of respondents expressed willingness to pay more for sustainable and environmentally friendly products, this shows a strong belief between awareness and purchase decisions.
- 54% of respondents believe in the present generation’s consciousness about environmental claims, indicating a focus on sustainability.

Suggestions

- Launch a city-wide greenwashing awareness campaign, Educate future generations, and empower citizens of all ages to make informed choices and advocate for sustainable practices through greenwashing awareness initiatives.
- Empower stakeholders with social media, and utilize sentiment analysis tools to track and respond to the public about greenwashing simultaneously.
- Conduct regular seminars, case studies, webinars, conferences, infographics, and videos to illustrate real-life examples of greenwashing and its effects.
- Optimizing sustainability communication through brand reputation, clear labelling, and leveraging social works.

Conclusions

In conclusion, This study discloses a high level of greenwashing awareness in Bengaluru, and most surprisingly the younger generation is more worried and concerned about environmental claims. Focus on consumer education and transparency as 44% of respondents found it somewhat difficult to identify greenwashing. Most relied upon sources of government websites and personal networks for verifying greenwashing claims. Launch a city-wide greenwashing awareness campaign, Educate future generations, and empower citizens of all ages to make informed choices and advocate for sustainable practices through greenwashing awareness initiatives furthermore, a strong willingness of respondents to pay more for sustainable products. Most of the respondents believe in the present generation’s consciousness about environmental claims, indicating a focus on sustainability.

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