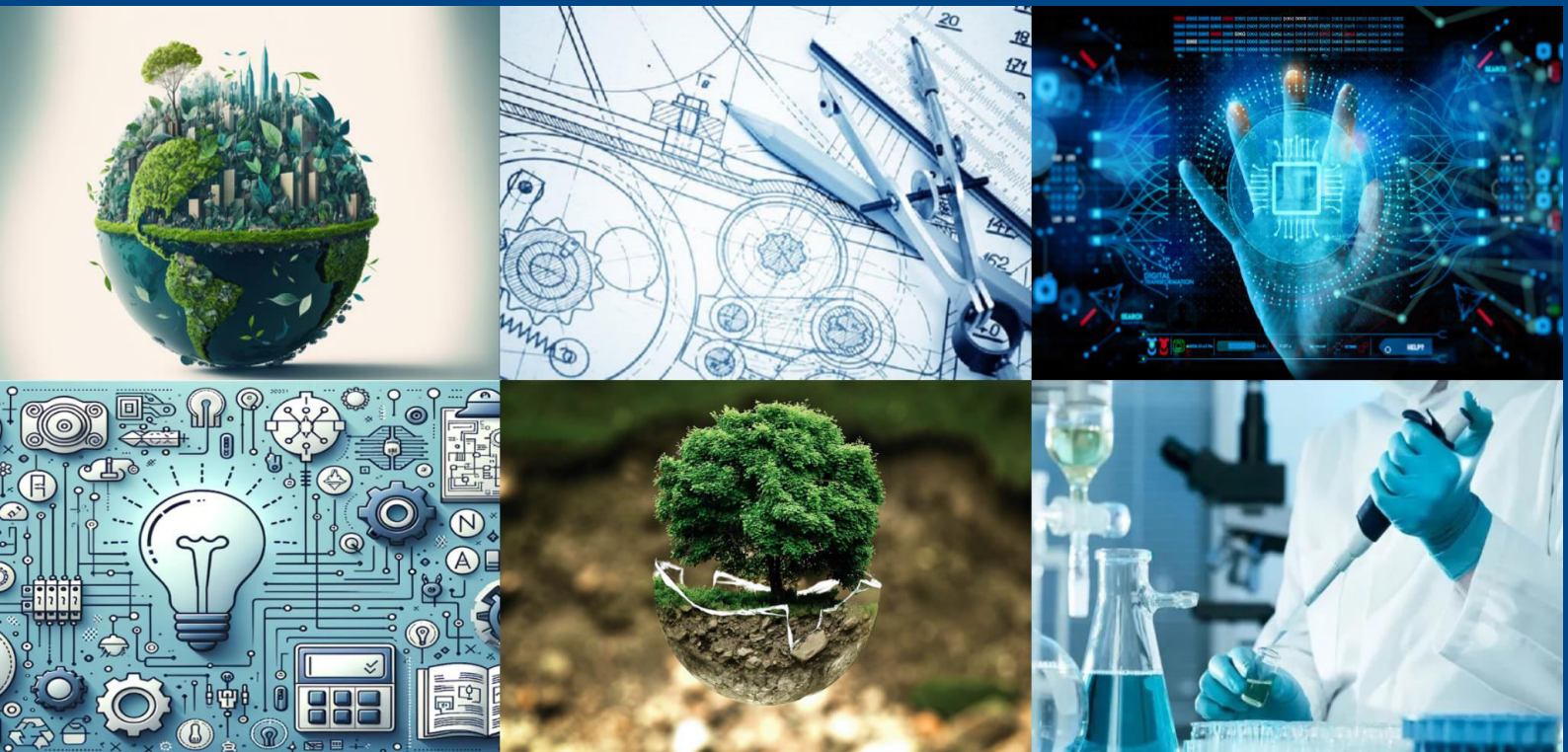




# International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research in Science, Engineering and Technology

*(A Monthly, Peer Reviewed, Refereed, Scholarly Indexed, Open Access Journal)*



**Impact Factor: 9.864**

**Volume 9, Issue 5, May 2026**



## International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research in Science, Engineering and Technology (IJMRSET)

(A Monthly, Peer Reviewed, Refereed, Scholarly Indexed, Open Access Journal)

# Consumer Trust in Sustainable Brands: The Role of Transparency and Eco-Labels

Rishik J<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Kalavathy K S<sup>2</sup>

Department of MBA, CMS Business School, JAIN (Deemed-to- be University), Bengaluru, India<sup>1</sup>

Associate Professor, Faculty of Management Studies, CMS Business School, JAIN (Deemed-to-be University), Bengaluru, India<sup>2</sup>

**ABSTRACT:** This study examines how consumer trust is shaped in the context of sustainable brands, with a particular focus on the twin dimensions of transparency and eco-labeling. As environmental awareness deepens among urban consumers, brands increasingly claim green credentials, making it harder for buyers to separate genuine sustainability from performative marketing. The study draws on responses from 115 participants, employing a structured questionnaire and descriptive research design. Statistical tools including percentage analysis and Chi-square tests were used to examine relationships between demographic variables, transparency perceptions, eco-label recognition, and trust levels. The results show that while consumer awareness of green products is broadly high, genuine comprehension of eco-labels remains partial. Transparency is widely valued and positively perceived, yet does not emerge as a statistically significant driver of trust on its own. Similarly, eco-labels serve as useful navigational cues but their influence on actual purchase decisions falls short of significance. The study concludes that although both transparency and eco-labeling are necessary features of sustainable branding, the path from awareness to trust to purchase is shaped by a broader constellation of factors that current brand communication has yet to fully bridge.

**KEYWORDS:** Sustainable Brands, Consumer Trust, Transparency, Eco-labels, Purchase Behaviour

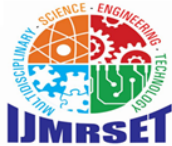
## I. INTRODUCTION

The marketplace has shifted in a way that earlier generations of marketers would find unfamiliar. Consumers today do not simply evaluate a product on the basis of price or function — they want to know where it came from, how it was made, and whether its production left a lighter or heavier footprint on the planet. This shift is most visible among younger urban cohorts, where environmental consciousness has moved from the fringes of consumer identity into the mainstream. In response, brands have rushed to reposition themselves as stewards of sustainability, flooding shelves and screens with green imagery, organic certifications, and claims of carbon neutrality.

Yet this very proliferation has seeded a trust problem. When every brand waves the green flag, consumers find it harder to know which claims are genuine and which are embellishments designed to capture an environmentally anxious market. This dynamic — often labelled greenwashing — has made suspicion a default mode for many buyers. The challenge for genuinely sustainable brands, therefore, is not just to act responsibly but to communicate that responsibility in ways that consumers can believe.

Two instruments occupy the front line of this communication challenge: transparency and eco-labels. Transparency refers to a brand's willingness to disclose information about its sourcing, production processes, environmental impact, and governance. Eco-labels, by contrast, function as shorthand — third-party or self-declared marks that signal compliance with an environmental standard, sparing the consumer the effort of independent verification. Both tools are theoretically well-suited to closing the credibility gap, yet their effectiveness in practice depends heavily on consumer familiarity, comprehension, and the degree to which they trust the labelling institutions themselves.

This paper investigates the extent to which transparency and eco-labels actually move the needle on consumer trust for sustainable brands in an Indian context. Working with a sample of 115 respondents and deploying both descriptive and inferential statistical methods, it seeks to map consumer awareness, test the hypothesised relationships between the key variables, and draw practical implications for brand managers, policymakers, and educators.



## International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research in Science, Engineering and Technology (IJMRSET)

(A Monthly, Peer Reviewed, Refereed, Scholarly Indexed, Open Access Journal)

### Background of the Study

The concept of sustainability has migrated over recent decades from the domain of policy to the rhythms of everyday consumer life. Where once discussions of resource depletion or pollution were confined to government white papers and NGO reports, they now surface routinely in conversations about what to buy, which brands to support, and how to live. This cultural shift has been accelerated by digital media, which has both raised awareness of environmental crises and given consumers tools to scrutinise corporate claims with an ease that was unimaginable a generation ago.

In India specifically, urban consumer interest in sustainable products is on an upward trajectory. Middle-class households — particularly those with higher educational attainment and exposure to global media — are increasingly open to paying a premium for products that carry credible environmental credentials. However, the market is far from uniform. Alongside enthusiastic early adopters sit large segments of consumers who remain uncertain about what sustainability claims actually mean, unconvinced that the premium is justified, or simply overwhelmed by the volume of competing signals.

Greenwashing has complicated this picture considerably. High-profile instances of brands making exaggerated or misleading environmental claims have introduced a persistent note of scepticism into the consumer relationship with sustainable branding. When trust is broken by bad actors, it tends to taint the broader category — meaning that even honest brands must work harder to establish credibility. Transparency and eco-labels represent two structural responses to this challenge, each operating through a different mechanism and appealing to different aspects of consumer cognition.

### II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Agyeman (2024) investigated the heightened significance of sustainability in consumer decision-making, with particular attention to how trust influences the acceptance of environmentally friendly products. Drawing on regression analysis of quantitative survey data, the study found that perceived authenticity and open brand communication are central to building consumer trust and purchase intention. The core observation — that clarity and honesty matter more than the mere fact of sustainability — runs as a thread through much of the subsequent literature.

Bhaduri and Ha-Brookshire (2024) examined consumer perceptions of transparency among sustainable fashion brands and their downstream effects on trust and brand loyalty. Their structural equation modelling revealed that transparency is positively associated with trust, but with an important caveat: excessive or overly complex information can trigger confusion rather than confidence. This finding speaks to the challenge of calibrating transparency — brands must be open without overwhelming buyers with data that they lack the tools to evaluate.

Chen and Chang (2023) extended this line of enquiry by examining how green marketing practices translate — or fail to translate — into consumer trust. Their analysis confirmed that perceived credibility and transparency have significant positive effects on trust, while misleading claims impose measurable negative effects on consumer perception. The study underscored the cost of credibility failures: once trust is eroded by greenwashing, it is difficult to recover.

On the eco-label side, Dangelico and Vocalelli (2022) found that such labels have a genuinely positive effect on consumer trust when they are familiar and readily understood, but that the impact dissipates when consumers encounter labels they do not recognise. This points to a significant infrastructure problem: the proliferation of eco-labelling schemes has outpaced public education about what they mean. Rahbar and Wahid (2020) arrived at a similar conclusion, observing that awareness of eco-labels is a precondition for their influence on behaviour.

Delmas and Burbano (2021) focused on the damage side of the equation, demonstrating that greenwashing produces not just reduced trust in the offending brand but broader negative attitudes toward the category. Their work reinforces the argument that the credibility of sustainable branding is a collective good — one that all players in the space have an interest in protecting.

Gupta and Ogden (2022) approached consumer trust from a psychological angle, identifying it as the mediating variable between environmental concern and actual purchase behaviour. The existence of this mediation effect suggests that concern alone is insufficient to drive green consumption — trust must be present before attitudes convert into



## International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research in Science, Engineering and Technology (IJMRSET)

(A Monthly, Peer Reviewed, Refereed, Scholarly Indexed, Open Access Journal)

action. Yadav and Pathak (2021) reached a complementary conclusion, noting that trust is the decisive factor in bridging the oft-observed gap between stated green intentions and real purchasing decisions.

Taken together, the literature establishes a fairly consistent picture: transparency and eco-labels are theoretically well-positioned to build trust, but their practical effectiveness is conditional on comprehension, familiarity, and the absence of credibility-damaging greenwashing in the surrounding environment. The present study situates itself within this body of work while seeking to extend it into the specific context of Indian urban consumers.

### Research Gap

Despite the volume of work on sustainability and consumer behaviour, most studies treat transparency and eco-labels as independent variables rather than examining how they interact in shaping consumer trust. Furthermore, much of the existing research was conducted in developed markets where baseline awareness levels are considerably higher than in India. The present study seeks to address this gap by examining both factors in combination within an Indian urban consumer context, while also attending to the demographic heterogeneity that characterises the market. The increasing role of digital platforms in mediating brand-consumer interaction — and in generating both awareness and confusion — is a further dimension that earlier studies did not fully anticipate.

### III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### Research Objectives

This study set out to accomplish four interconnected objectives. The first was to assess the impact of transparency on consumer trust for sustainable brands. The second was to evaluate the effect of eco-labels on consumer perception and trust. The third was to understand how consumer trust shapes purchase decisions in the context of sustainable products. The fourth was to analyse how transparency and eco-labels together influence consumer behaviour in relation to sustainable brands.

#### Research Design and Data Collection

A descriptive research design was adopted, suited to the study's aim of capturing and systematically describing consumer opinions, attitudes, and behaviours without manipulating variables. Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered to 115 respondents. The questionnaire covered demographic characteristics, awareness of sustainable products, recognition and understanding of eco-labels, perceptions of brand transparency, trust levels, and willingness to pay a premium for sustainable products. Secondary data were drawn from peer-reviewed journals, academic publications, and credible online repositories.

Convenience sampling was employed to select respondents — a pragmatic choice given constraints of time and accessibility. Respondents were drawn from the population of urban Indian consumers who had some degree of exposure to or awareness of sustainable or eco-friendly branded products. The sample included a roughly equal split between male and female respondents and encompassed a range of age groups, educational backgrounds, and income levels. Responses that were incomplete or otherwise invalid were excluded from analysis, leaving a clean dataset of 115 usable cases.

#### Statistical Tools

Three analytical approaches were used. Percentage analysis provided a descriptive account of the sample composition and the distribution of responses across key survey items. Cross-tabulation allowed for comparison of demographic variables with trust and perception variables, facilitating pattern recognition across sub-groups. The Chi-square test was the primary inferential tool, used to test for statistically significant associations between demographic factors and consumer perceptions of transparency, eco-labels, and trust. The threshold for significance was set at  $p < 0.05$  throughout.

#### Research Hypotheses

Four hypotheses guided the inferential analysis. The first proposed that there is a significant association between age and consumer trust in sustainable brands. The second proposed that educational level is significantly associated with awareness of eco-labels. The third proposed that brand transparency is significantly associated with consumer trust. The fourth proposed that eco-label identification is significantly associated with consumer purchase decisions.



## International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research in Science, Engineering and Technology (IJMRSET)

(A Monthly, Peer Reviewed, Refereed, Scholarly Indexed, Open Access Journal)

### IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

#### Demographic Profile of Respondents

The 115 respondents in this study were drawn from a broadly urban, educated, and working-age population. Understanding the demographic composition of the sample is important context for interpreting the substantive findings that follow.

Table 1: Age Distribution of Respondents | Source: Primary Data

Age Group	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
Below 20	15	13%
20–30	60	52%
31–40	25	22%
Above 40	15	13%
Total	115	100%

More than half the sample (52%) falls in the 20–30 age bracket, which is consistent with the demographic most likely to have been exposed to sustainability discourse through digital channels and higher education. A further 22% are in the 31–40 cohort. Together, these two groups account for nearly three quarters of the sample, giving the findings a distinctly millennial and early Gen-Z inflection.

Table 2: Gender Distribution | Source: Primary Data

Gender	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
Male	60	52%
Female	55	48%
Total	115	100%

The sample is close to equally split by gender — 52% male and 48% female — which means the findings are unlikely to be significantly skewed by gender-specific attitudes toward sustainability.

Table 3: Educational Qualification of Respondents | Source: Primary Data

Education Level	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
School	20	17%
Undergraduate	50	43%
Postgraduate	35	30%
Others	10	10%
Total	115	100%



## International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research in Science, Engineering and Technology (IJMRSET)

(A Monthly, Peer Reviewed, Refereed, Scholarly Indexed, Open Access Journal)

Educational attainment is high within this sample: 43% hold undergraduate degrees and a further 30% are postgraduates. This matters because prior research consistently links higher education to greater environmental awareness and more nuanced evaluations of brand claims.

Table 4: Monthly Income Distribution | Source: Primary Data

Monthly Income (₹)	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
Below ₹20,000	20	17%
₹20,000–₹50,000	45	39%
₹50,001–₹1,00,000	30	26%
Above ₹1,00,000	20	17%
Total	115	100%

The largest income segment — 39% — falls in the ₹20,000 to ₹50,000 monthly range. This corresponds to the urban middle-class household, a demographic that is both sufficiently financially comfortable to consider premium sustainable products and sufficiently price-sensitive that trust and perceived value will play a decisive role in purchase decisions.

### Consumer Awareness and Eco-label Recognition

Table 5: Awareness of Sustainable Products | Source: Primary Data

Awareness of Sustainable Products	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
Yes	95	83%
No	20	17%
Total	115	100%

A substantial majority — 83% — report that they are aware of sustainable or eco-friendly products. This is an encouraging baseline, suggesting that the communication challenge for sustainable brands is less about generating awareness and more about converting it into comprehension and trust.

Table 6: Eco-label Recognition | Source: Primary Data

Recognition of Eco-labels	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
Always	20	17%
Sometimes	60	52%
Rarely	25	22%
Never	10	9%
Total	115	100%



## International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research in Science, Engineering and Technology (IJMRSET)

(A Monthly, Peer Reviewed, Refereed, Scholarly Indexed, Open Access Journal)

Table 7: Eco-label Understanding | Source: Primary Data

Understanding of Eco-labels	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
Fully	30	26%
Partially	60	52%
Not at all	25	22%
Total	115	100%

These two tables together reveal a pattern that has significant implications for eco-label strategy. While more than two-thirds of respondents recognise eco-labels at least sometimes, only 26% claim to understand them fully. The majority — 52% — acknowledge only partial understanding. This gap between visual recognition and functional comprehension is precisely the condition under which eco-labels are most susceptible to being dismissed as noise, or worse, associated with greenwashing. The data suggest that eco-labels are visible in the market but not yet deeply legible to most consumers.

### Perceptions of Transparency

Table 8: Brands that clearly share product information appear more trustworthy | Source: Primary Data

Response	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
Strongly Agree	35	30%
Agree	50	43%
Neutral	15	13%
Disagree	10	9%
Strongly Disagree	5	5%
Total	115	100%

Table 9: Transparency in production and sourcing increases confidence in a brand | Source: Primary Data

Response	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
Strongly Agree	30	26%
Agree	55	48%
Neutral	15	13%
Disagree	10	9%
Strongly Disagree	5	4%
Total	115	100%



## International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research in Science, Engineering and Technology (IJMRSET)

(A Monthly, Peer Reviewed, Refereed, Scholarly Indexed, Open Access Journal)

Table 10: Preference for brands that openly communicate environmental practices | Source: Primary Data

Response	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
Strongly Agree	32	28%
Agree	50	43%
Neutral	18	16%
Disagree	10	9%
Strongly Disagree	5	4%
Total	115	100%

Across all three transparency-related items, the pattern is consistent and clear. Roughly 70–75% of respondents either agree or strongly agree that transparency makes brands appear more trustworthy, that sourcing transparency increases confidence, and that they prefer brands that communicate openly about their environmental practices. Fewer than 15% register disagreement in any category. Transparency is, in other words, a valued and broadly expected brand attribute among this sample. The question that the hypothesis testing must answer is whether this positive disposition translates into a statistically demonstrable relationship with trust.

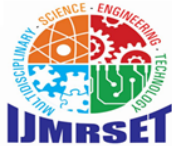
### Eco-label Influence on Trust and Purchase Decisions

Table 11: Eco-labels help identify sustainable products easily | Source: Primary Data

Response	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
Strongly Agree	30	26%
Agree	55	48%
Neutral	15	13%
Disagree	10	9%
Strongly Disagree	5	4%
Total	115	100%

Table 12: Trust in products with certified eco-labels | Source: Primary Data

Response	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
Strongly Agree	28	24%
Agree	52	45%
Neutral	20	17%
Disagree	10	9%
Strongly Disagree	5	5%
Total	115	100%



## International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research in Science, Engineering and Technology (IJMRSET)

(A Monthly, Peer Reviewed, Refereed, Scholarly Indexed, Open Access Journal)

Both items paint a similar picture to the transparency findings: positive sentiment is in the majority, with 74% agreeing or strongly agreeing that eco-labels help identify sustainable products easily, and 69% trusting products with certified eco-labels. The neutrals — 13% and 17% respectively — represent a notable segment that is neither convinced nor alienated. This group likely corresponds to those with only partial understanding of what eco-labels mean, as revealed earlier.

### Trust, Purchase Intention, and Willingness to Pay

Table 13: More likely to purchase from brands I trust | Source: Primary Data

Response	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
Strongly Agree	40	35%
Agree	50	43%
Neutral	10	9%
Disagree	10	9%
Strongly Disagree	5	4%
Total	115	100%

Table 14: Transparency and eco-labels influence buying decisions | Source: Primary Data

Response	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
Strongly Agree	35	30%
Agree	50	43%
Neutral	15	13%
Disagree	10	9%
Strongly Disagree	5	5%
Total	115	100%

Table 15: Willingness to pay more for trustworthy sustainable brands | Source: Primary Data

Response	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
Strongly Agree	25	22%
Agree	45	39%
Neutral	20	17%
Disagree	15	13%
Strongly Disagree	10	9%
Total	115	100%



## International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research in Science, Engineering and Technology (IJMRSET)

(A Monthly, Peer Reviewed, Refereed, Scholarly Indexed, Open Access Journal)

The trust-to-purchase linkage is strong in this sample: 78% agree or strongly agree that they are more likely to buy from brands they trust. This reinforces the theoretical position of trust as a central mediator of purchase behaviour. Willingness to pay a premium shows a slightly softer profile — 61% are willing, but 22% remain neutral and 22% disagree — which suggests that price sensitivity remains a real constraint even among sustainability-oriented consumers.

### Hypothesis Testing: Chi-Square Analysis

#### H1: Age and Consumer Trust

Table 16: Age × Trust Cross-tabulation | Source: Primary Data

Age Group	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)	Total
Below 20	48.0%	32.0%	20.0%	25
20–30	38.2%	29.4%	32.4%	34
31–40	42.3%	26.9%	30.8%	26
Above 40	26.7%	26.7%	46.7%	30
Total	38.3%	28.7%	33.0%	115

Table 16a: Chi-Square Tests — Age and Trust

Test	Value	df	p-value (Asymp. Sig.)
Pearson Chi-Square	4.976	6	0.547
Likelihood Ratio	5.071	6	0.535
Linear-by-Linear	3.704	1	0.054
N of Valid Cases	115	–	–

The cross-tabulation reveals some directional variation across age groups — older respondents (above 40) show the highest proportion strongly agreeing with trust statements (46.7%), while those below 20 are most likely to remain neutral (48.0%). However, the Chi-square value of 4.976 with  $p = 0.547$  falls well above the significance threshold. The null hypothesis is therefore retained: there is no statistically significant association between age and consumer trust in sustainable brands. This is a notable finding, suggesting that trust dispositions toward sustainable brands are distributed fairly uniformly across the age spectrum — and that age-based segmentation may be less useful for sustainable brand communication than assumed.



## International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research in Science, Engineering and Technology (IJMRSET)

(A Monthly, Peer Reviewed, Refereed, Scholarly Indexed, Open Access Journal)

### H2: Education and Eco-label Understanding

Table 17: Education × Eco-label Understanding Cross-tabulation | Source: Primary Data

Education	Fully (%)	Partially (%)	Not at All (%)	Total
School	24.0%	32.0%	44.0%	25
Undergraduate	53.6%	21.4%	25.0%	28
Postgraduate	47.8%	39.1%	13.0%	23
Others	25.6%	38.5%	35.9%	39
Total	36.5%	33.0%	30.4%	115

Table 17a: Chi-Square Tests — Education and Eco-label Understanding

Test	Value	df	p-value (Asymp. Sig.)
Pearson Chi-Square	11.578	6	0.072
Likelihood Ratio	12.095	6	0.060
Linear-by-Linear	0.001	1	0.971
N of Valid Cases	115	–	–

The cross-tabulation shows a discernible gradient: school-educated respondents most frequently report no understanding of eco-labels (44.0%), while undergraduate respondents show the highest rate of full comprehension (53.6%). The pattern is intuitively sensible and is close to statistical significance —  $p = 0.072$  is just above the conventional 0.05 threshold. The null hypothesis is technically accepted, but the finding deserves more than a dismissive non-result. It suggests that while education is directionally associated with eco-label understanding, the relationship is not cleanly linear — a substantial minority of highly educated respondents also lack full comprehension, indicating that education alone is insufficient to produce eco-label literacy. Dedicated consumer education may be necessary as a complement to labelling programmes.

### H3: Transparency and Consumer Trust

Table 18: Transparency (Confidence) × Purchase Trust Cross-tabulation | Source: Primary Data

Confidence Level	Neutral-Purchase (%)	Agree-Purchase (%)	Strongly Agree-Purchase (%)	Total
Neutral	28.0%	36.0%	36.0%	50
Agree	26.7%	30.0%	43.3%	30
Strongly Agree	28.6%	37.1%	34.3%	35
Total	27.8%	34.8%	37.4%	115



## International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research in Science, Engineering and Technology (IJMRSET)

(A Monthly, Peer Reviewed, Refereed, Scholarly Indexed, Open Access Journal)

Table 18a: Chi-Square Tests — Transparency and Consumer Trust

Test	Value	df	p-value (Asymp. Sig.)
Pearson Chi-Square	0.696	4	0.952
Likelihood Ratio	0.694	4	0.952
Linear-by-Linear	0.006	1	0.939
N of Valid Cases	115	–	–

This is perhaps the most counterintuitive finding of the study. Despite the overwhelmingly positive consumer attitudes toward transparency captured in the descriptive analysis, the Chi-square test returns a p-value of 0.952 — indicating essentially no statistical relationship between transparency perception and consumer trust in purchasing. The distribution of trust levels across the three confidence groups is remarkably similar, suggesting that consumers who hold positive views of transparency are no more likely to express strong purchase-oriented trust than those who are merely neutral. One explanation is that transparency as a variable is so uniformly and positively valued that it no longer discriminates — everyone agrees it is good, but it does not alone tip the scales. Another is that trust involves additional factors — brand history, price, peer recommendation, product quality — that moderate and dilute the direct transparency-to-trust pathway. The null hypothesis is accepted.

#### H4: Eco-labels and Purchase Decisions

Table 19: Eco-label Identification × Purchase Decision Cross-tabulation | Source: Primary Data

Eco-label ID Level	Neutral-Decision (%)	Agree-Decision (%)	Strongly Agree-Decision (%)	Total
Neutral	24.4%	22.0%	53.7%	41
Agree	35.0%	27.5%	37.5%	40
Strongly Agree	35.3%	38.2%	26.5%	34
Total	31.3%	28.7%	40.0%	115

Table 19a: Chi-Square Tests — Eco-labels and Purchase Decision

Test	Value	df	p-value (Asymp. Sig.)
Pearson Chi-Square	6.252	4	0.181
Likelihood Ratio	6.274	4	0.180
Linear-by-Linear	3.902	1	0.050
N of Valid Cases	115	–	–

The null hypothesis is accepted here too, though the linear-by-linear association ( $p = 0.050$ ) sits precisely at the boundary of significance. This borderline result captures an interesting tension in the data. Consumers who are neutral toward eco-label identification show the highest proportion of 'strongly agree' responses on purchase decisions (53.7%), which might seem paradoxical. It may reflect the fact that purchase intent is driven by factors beyond eco-label engagement — consumers can intend to buy sustainably without eco-labels being the deciding mechanism. Conversely, those who strongly agree with eco-label identification spread their purchase intent more evenly, suggesting that eco-



## International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research in Science, Engineering and Technology (IJMRSET)

(A Monthly, Peer Reviewed, Refereed, Scholarly Indexed, Open Access Journal)

label engagement is neither necessary nor sufficient for purchase commitment. The overall picture is one of moderate influence that falls short of a clean, statistically significant pathway.

### V. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Summary of Key Findings

Several findings emerge from the analysis. Consumer awareness of sustainable products is high — 83% of respondents are aware of such products — but awareness does not translate directly into comprehension of eco-labels, which remains partial for the majority. Transparency is broadly and positively valued, yet its effect on trust does not reach statistical significance. Eco-labels are recognised and appreciated as navigational tools, but their statistical relationship with purchase decisions is moderate. Trust is confirmed as a significant antecedent of purchase intent. Willingness to pay a premium for sustainable brands is present but price sensitivity persists. Demographic variables — age and education — do not produce statistically significant differences in trust or eco-label understanding within this sample, though directional patterns are visible.

Chi-square testing across all four hypotheses resulted in the acceptance of all four null hypotheses, indicating that none of the proposed associations reached statistical significance at the  $p < 0.05$  level. This consistent pattern of non-significance in inferential testing alongside broadly positive descriptive findings suggests a structural situation: consumers are generally aligned in their positive attitudes toward sustainability signals, which compresses the variance that hypothesis tests need in order to detect significant group differences. It may also indicate that trust-building for sustainable brands is a phenomenon that resists reduction to two or three discrete variables.

#### Recommendations

For brand managers and marketers, the findings counsel against assuming that transparency statements or eco-labels will independently resolve consumer trust challenges. Both work best as part of a coherent brand narrative that also encompasses product quality, pricing fairness, and consistent experience over time. Transparency disclosures should be calibrated for the audience — detailed enough to be credible, accessible enough to be understood. Eco-labelling strategies should be accompanied by consumer education that explains what specific labels mean and who confers them.

For policymakers, the partial-comprehension gap around eco-labels points to a clear agenda item. Standardising the eco-labelling landscape — reducing the number of competing certification schemes and investing in public communication about what labels mean — would likely improve the utility of labels as trust mechanisms. Government and industry bodies could collaborate on a national eco-labelling framework with a recognisable public-facing identity. For educators and civil society, the findings reinforce the value of including sustainability literacy in educational curricula, not only at the university level but from secondary school onward. If even partially-educated consumers struggle to fully interpret eco-labels, the solution is not just better label design — it is a more informed citizenry.

### VI. LIMITATIONS AND SCOPE FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The study is constrained by its sample size of 115 respondents, its reliance on convenience sampling, and its geographic focus on an urban Indian population that is more educated and more exposed to sustainability discourse than many other consumer segments. The findings should not be generalised without caution. Future research could expand the sample size and geographical coverage to include semi-urban and rural consumers, incorporate variables such as brand image, product quality, and social influence, and examine the moderating role of digital media consumption on how transparency and eco-labels are perceived and evaluated.

### VII. CONCLUSION

This study set out to examine whether and how transparency and eco-labels contribute to consumer trust in sustainable brands among urban Indian consumers. The results are nuanced rather than decisive. Both transparency and eco-labels are positively received — consumers value them, recognise their importance, and express willingness to act on them. But the statistical analysis finds no significant direct pathways from either variable to trust or purchase decisions. This does not mean that transparency and eco-labels are irrelevant; rather, it suggests that they are necessary but not



## International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research in Science, Engineering and Technology (IJMRSET)

(A Monthly, Peer Reviewed, Refereed, Scholarly Indexed, Open Access Journal)

sufficient conditions for trust. Building credible sustainable brand relationships appears to require these elements as a foundation, combined with consistent product experience, clear and honest communication, and a broader informational environment in which consumers are equipped to evaluate the claims they encounter.

### REFERENCES

1. Agyeman, K. (2024). Sustainability and consumer decision-making. [Journal reference as per source document].
2. Bhaduri, S. P., & Ha-Brookshire, S. (2024). Consumer perceptions of transparency among sustainable fashion brands. [Journal reference as per source document].
3. Chen, Y., & Chang, C. (2023). Green marketing practices and consumer trust. [Journal reference as per source document].
4. Dangelico, R. M., & Vocalelli, D. (2022). The influence of eco-labels on consumer attitudes. [Journal reference as per source document].
5. Delmas, M. A., & Burbano, V. C. (2021). The drivers of greenwashing. *California Management Review*, 54(1), 64–87.
6. Gupta, S., & Ogden, D. T. (2022). Psychological factors in sustainable consumption. [Journal reference as per source document].
7. Rahbar, E., & Wahid, N. A. (2020). Eco-label awareness and consumer trust. *Business Strategy Series*, 12(2), 73–83.
8. Yadav, R., & Pathak, G. S. (2021). Determinants of green purchase intention. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 135, 732–739.
9. Zhang, L., et al. (2023). Transparency in sustainable branding and consumer loyalty. [Journal reference as per source document].



INTERNATIONAL  
STANDARD  
SERIAL  
NUMBER  
INDIA



# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH IN SCIENCE, ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY

| Mobile No: +91-6381907438 | Whatsapp: +91-6381907438 | [ijmrset@gmail.com](mailto:ijmrset@gmail.com) |

[www.ijmrset.com](http://www.ijmrset.com)