

## **An Exploration of Consumers' Perceived Value of Sustainable Brands in India**

**Aarti Kataria**

*Department of Marketing, Management Development Institute, India*

**Jaydeep Mukherjee**

*Department of Marketing, Management Development Institute, India*

**Soumendu Biswas**

*Department of Human Resource, Management Development Institute, India*

**Ruchi Garg**

*School of Management, BML Munjal University, India*

### **Abstract**

This paper explores the factors that influence and the barriers that hinder consumers' sustainable consumption behavior using consumer value approach. Thirty two in-depth interviews were conducted which captured their true experiences, thoughts and feelings in context of their purchase and consumption of sustainable brands. Thematic analysis of the data using NVivo10 qualitative software indicated that consumption benefits such as functional, social, hedonic and altruistic benefits had a strong influence on sustainable consumption behaviour. Limited availability of sustainable brands, high price premiums, low performance of sustainable brands, and high cost of evaluation hindered the consumption of sustainable brands. A conceptual model of sustainable consumption behaviour was developed based on the findings and the literature. The new model would assist researchers and marketers to effectively promote sustainable purchase behaviour in India.

**Keywords:** *Sustainable Brand; Sustainable Consumption Behaviour; Consumer Perceived Value*

## Introduction

Rapid economic prosperity in the last few decades has resulted in over consumption and exploitation of natural resources. The consequences of extensive environmental deterioration are global warming, ozone layer depletion, toxic waste, and life-threatening health hazards. With the growing awareness of global environmental and societal issues, consumers are gradually developing positive attitude and behavior in the matters of consumption of products which are manufactured in a sustainable manner.

A wide range of studies have attempted to profile sustainable consumers and derived insights which can be used by marketers of sustainable products and services to segment the market and target selection (Gupta and Ogden, 2009; Luchs and Mooradian, 2012). Studies have also the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) or Value-Belief-Norm models to explain sustainable consumption behavior. These streams of research have tested the effects of several new constructs like attitude towards sustainability, green lifestyle, perceived consumer effectiveness, consumer awareness, consumer environmentalism, perceived behavioral control, and consumer value orientations on sustainable purchase behaviors (Grinstein and Nisan, 2009; Kalamas, Cleveland, and Laroche, 2014; Trudel and Cotte, 2009; White and Simpson, 2013).

Though the number of consumers sharing a common concern towards sustainability has increased over time (Jain and Kaur, 2004), sustainable brands have often faced limited marketplace acceptance (Ehrich and Irwin, 2005; Luchs, Naylor, Irwin, and Raghunathan, 2010). Since marketers invest heavily in making technical and innovative modifications to bring new sustainability oriented offerings (Steg and Velk, 2009) to market, uncertain and variable demand for such offerings can represent a costly endeavor with low probability of return.

Consumer behavior theorists emphasize that consumers who are conscious towards environmental or social issues, do not choose brands merely on the basis of environmentally or socially responsible aspects. The choice is often based on trade-offs among various brand attributes perceived either positively or negatively (Ramirez, 2013; Rokka and Uusitalo, 2008). Moreover, situational factors such as financial constraints, lack of time, which are not captured by existing attitude-intention models, may also confound the relation between attitudes and behaviour towards sustainable brand offerings (Mainieri, Barnett, Valdero, Unipan, and Oskamp, 1997; Young, Hwang, McDonalds, and Oates, 2010). Only a few studies have investigated the motivational effects of perceptions of product quality, conformation to social norms and enhanced levels of self-respect and lack of information, relative cost as hindrances to the adoption of green brands (Lee, 2014; Schaefer and Crane, 2005; Young *et al.*, 2010). All such studies have been done in isolation that too in context of ecological rather than broader sustainable consumption behaviors.

Furthermore, most of the studies on sustainable consumer behavior are based in western contexts, and little research exists in Asian countries (Boztepe, 2012; Faiers, Cook, and Neame, 2007). The way sustainable consumerism is found gradually moving to Asian countries (Lee, 2014; Gurau and Ranchhod, 2005), India, which is a large emerging economy is found to be a potential market of sustainable brands as

well (Singh, 2013). The studies in Indian context, so far, have focused on profiling green consumers and researching on determinants of consumer purchase behaviour for products such as organic food and genetically modified food (Anand, 2011; Chakrabarti, 2010; Knight and Paradkar, 2008). Previous research evidenced that Indian consumers are considering environmental and social factors while making purchase decisions (Singh, Saeed, and Bertsch, 2012; Manaktola and Jauhari, 2007). Hence, there is a need to examine the wide-ranging set of perceived benefits and costs of sustainable brands that may influence consumer behaviour towards sustainable brands in India (Choi and Ng, 2011; Simpson and Radford, 2013).

The rest of the study proceeds as follows. The first section presents the overview of the concept of consumer perceived value and sustainable consumption behavior. The second section outlines the research method and data collection process. The third section discusses the research findings, which is followed by the discussion, research contributions, limitations, and future research directions of the study.

## **Review of Literature**

### **Sustainable Consumption Behavior**

Sustainable consumption refers to the decision made by consumers to buy or not to buy a brand, based on the social and environmental criteria to some extent (Ramirez, 2013). Consumer behavior is an evolving process based on personal values, product attributes, influence of social context like peer group, self-image and situational factors like availability of alternatives at competitive prices. Over the past four decades, researchers have analyzed the underlying motives of sustainable consumption behavior in various forms like pro-environmental behavior, waste management behavior, green consumption behavior, recycling behavior and household energy saving behavior (Lindsay and Strathman, 1997; Wang, Qian, and Yu, 2013).

### **The Concept of Consumer Perceived Value**

Since 1990s, the concept of consumer perceived value has received a lot of attention from both practitioners and academicians. Considerable amount of literature has recognized perceived value as a key determinant of consumer product choice and purchase behavior. It has also been highlighted as one of the most significant factors for a firm's success and a source of competitive advantage (Holbrook, 1994; Woodruff and Gardial, 1996; Zeithaml, 1988).

Consumer perceived value is a consequence of subjective evaluation that is experienced prior to purchase, at the time of purchase, during consumption and post consumption (Sanchez, Callarisa, Rodriguez, and Moliner, 2006). It is a multidimensional concept comprising cognitive and affective factors (Holbrook, 2006; Sheth, Newman, and Gross, 1991). In this respect, Zeithaml (1988) defined perceived value as- *"the consumer's overall assessment of the utility of a product based on perceptions of what is received and what is given"* (p.14).

## Perceived Value in Context of Sustainable Brand

Sustainable Brand is defined as a brand that offers products or services manufactured using recycled or biodegradable ingredients, against animal testing, supports charitable donations and guarantees fair trade conditions (Hartmann, and Ibanez, 2006; Luchet *et al.*, 2010).

Due to the environmental and social features of sustainable brands, value is not just limited to the functional aspects of quality and price, but may also include ethical, emotional, social value components (Ramirez, 2013). Hence, sustainable consumption experiences are expected to involve more than one type of value simultaneously, therefore a multidimensional conceptualization is needed to adequately capture the presence of both cognitive and affective factors in the nature of value (Holbrook, 2006; Sheth *et al.*, 1991). Perceived value has been sparsely used in sustainability research.

Consumer perceived value in the context of sustainable brand is conceptualized as - *“a consumer’s overall evaluation of the utility of a sustainable brand between what is received and what is given based on his/her environmental and ethical desires, expectations and needs”* (Zeithaml, 1988).

The consumer value literature suggests several types of benefits that consumers derived from sustainable brands. There is need to select the specific benefits to be included in our model of sustainable brands. Similarly, when the types of costs are considered, the existing literature supports to several individual costs and hence, lacks an integrative model.

Keeping the above in view, the objective of this study was two-fold:

**RO1:** To investigate different types of perceived benefits which a consumer associates with sustainable brands.

**RO2:** To investigate different types of perceived costs which a consumer associates with sustainable brands.

## Theoretical framework – Social Exchange Theory (Set)

Social Exchange theory describes the mechanism for relationship building between a brand and its consumers. This theory provides an understanding of how and when social exchanges promote or inhibit strength in relations or groups (Blau, 1964). The theory also maintains that the attainment of implicit and explicit benefits by participating actors determines the nature of relationship among them. And when a consumer perceived that the costs of the relationship as outweighing the perceived benefits, he/she will leave the relationship (Emerson, 1962).

In line with this reasoning, this cost-benefit framework has been considered suitable for developing an understanding of consumers’ perception of benefits and costs associated with sustainable brands. Consumers’ evaluate sustainable brands in terms of social exchange, that is, evaluate in terms of expected benefits obtained in return of the costs incurred to them while buying a sustainable brand. Few studies have suggested that consumers perceive functional, social and emotional value during their

purchase of green brands (Lee, 2014; Schaefer and Crane, 2005; Young *et al.*, 2010), and price was the major constraint included in the studies. Though what Indian sustainable consumers will sacrifice is not well answered. Therefore, this study applied SET as a theoretical basis for understanding how consumers value their sustainable brands, along with the potential of incurring sacrifices and their impact on their purchase decisions.

## **Research Methodology**

The objectives of this study were to explore the thought process of consumers so as to obtain a deeper understanding of the trade-offs they make among sustainable brand attributes. The consumer value literature suggests several types of values, more or less inclusive and empirically supported, so selecting the specific values in order to build a model in the specific context of sustainable brands is a crucial task. Moreover, when the types of costs are considered, the existing literature supports to several individual costs and hence, lacks an integrative model. Therefore, qualitative research deemed appropriate to obtain a deeper understanding of the thought process of consumers and clarify the types of benefits and costs associated with a sustainable brand. This has helped the researchers to further investigate the relevant factors which might not be apparent during literature review (Dawes and Brown, 2000; Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003).

### **Data Collection Technique: Semi-Structured Depth Interviews**

Considering the exploratory nature of the study, face to face in-depth interviews deemed the most appropriate data collection technique (Lincoln and Denzin, 1994) which provided initial understanding of the lived experience of consumer and the meanings he/she ascribe to sustainable attributes of a brand (Lincoln and Denzin, 1994). The face to face in-depth interviews facilitate respondents to reflect and express their emotions without inhibition about how others would perceive them as is the case with focus groups.

Semi-structured interview protocol was employed which enabled the researcher to follow a consistent process throughout the interview yet being flexible (Miller and Crabtree, 1992). The respondents were encouraged to elaborate on their purchase experiences in order to understand their reasons for buying and using sustainable brands.

### **Sampling Technique**

The population for this research was defined as sustainable consumers from the National Capital Territory and Gurgaon region of India. *Sustainable Consumers* are defined as consumers who consider the social and environmental attributes to be significant when they purchase any brand (Peattie, 2001), or consumers who deliberately seek out brands perceived to have relatively less impact on the society and environment (Ottman, 1993).

Participants were chosen purposively (on the basis of a number of key characteristics such as gender, age, educational standards and, economic backgrounds) to maximize structural variation with an explicit purpose of obtaining a rich source of information

(Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Huberman and Miles, 2002). A total of thirty two interviews were conducted over a four month period. Out of 32 respondents, 52.7 % were female and 47.3 % were male. The respondents ranged from 22 to 58 years of age. The respondents were interviewed for 45-60 minutes. The data collection phase was concluded at the point of theoretical saturation. According to Glaser and Strauss (1967) theoretical saturation is a scenario where no additional information is emerging through the data collection and when only repetitive patterns started to emerge.

### **Data Analysis: Thematic Analysis**

Thematic analysis was used for identifying, analyzing and reporting themes/patterns within the data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). It was used to understand and represent the experiences of people as they encounter, engage with and live those experiences (Elliott, Fischer, and Rennie, 1999; Lincoln and Denzin, 2005). To do this, a six-stage process (Braun and Clarke, 2006) was followed, which involved familiarization with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes. The themes were reconstructed after scrutinizing the interview transcripts, carefully examining not only the relevant connections but also the contradictions, as well as discarding themes that were of little relevance to the research objectives. The resulting themes were then categorized, organized, and reported in this article. QSR NVivo10 was used to store, explore, and organize the interview data.

### **Results: Emerging Themes in Sustainable Consumption Behavior**

First, we identify the most common sustainable brands that consumers purchase. Using this context, we identify different values and costs that consumers' associate with sustainable brands. Each of these findings is discussed in turn.

The most common sustainable brands that the interviewees mentioned were-Krya (cleaning products), Body shop (personal care products), Down to earth (package food products), Tattva (restaurant), And-Shop for change (clothing)

#### **Theme 1: Consumer Perceived Benefits of Sustainable Brand**

Consumer's categorization of sustainable attributes and their perception of benefits could be mapped to several of the benefits identified in the literature. These sources of benefits are highly predictive of consumer behavior, explaining behaviors as encompassing brand preferences, and interest in specific brand features (Holbrook, 2006) (see Figure 1). Each is discussed in the following section.

##### **Subtheme 1: Functional Benefits**

Functional value is the perceived utility derived from the brand's capacity to provide utilitarian and physical performance (Sheth *et al.*, 1991). A large majority of respondents suggested that functional benefits of sustainability oriented brand offerings are the leading driver behind integrating sustainability criteria into their decision-making process.

## **Quality of Sustainable Brand Offerings**

As consumers, the participants interviewed had varying views on product performance as it relates to sustainable attributes of products. Some respondents felt strongly that their sustainable goods performed better than their conventional counterparts while others expressed a degree of skepticism; for example,

*“It seems like; when I switched over to using Krya products... they worked. I mean it’s gentler on our clothes...less harsh on my skin, there was no reason to go back.”*

*“Tattva is a different concept like food is not being treated with pesticides and just sustainable agricultural practices, knowing how the people, I guess have been, not just taking care of the land, but also the kinds of seeds they are using or the kinds of things they’re growing. So I feel like food served at Tattva is safer to eat. They keep harmful pesticides away not only from the soil, air and water as well as from your body.”*

## **Sustainable Brand Offerings are Value for Money**

Some participants acknowledged their willingness to pay a premium for sustainable brand offerings. Several participants discussed the diminished role of pricing when they were making purchase decisions about sustainable brands. Their ethical values, environmental concern, care for kids and family and feeling of goodness about the purchase were described as being more important than pricing differences; for example,

*“Most of the time, if it’s something I’m used to using, or like with the Body Shop for instance, I pay the extra and not even think about it, because it’s a health concern, my skin is too sensitive and it’s a daily use product I cannot put any think like that.”*

## **Subtheme 2: Social Benefits: Sustainable Consumption as A Communicative Device**

Brands have the ability to enhance social self-concept of consumers by satisfying their needs for social approval and communicating reference group identity (Escalas and Bettman, 2005). Participants expressed that the consumption of sustainability-oriented brands can provide social benefits, for example, can lead to enhancement in eyes of others, or be used to define oneself to the community. By being seen as someone who cares for the community and the natural environment, a consumer can ensure he/she meets social norms and community standards that reinforce such behaviors; for example,

*“Using brands like ‘Down to earth’ may give a feel that you are aware and educated, your friends and family members look up to you.”*

*“I tell people ‘Oh I’ve found a great new shop’ that has natural and fair trade stuff.... I think it’s not only for yourself, but it’s also to let your friends know how serious the problem is and encourage them to be responsible. And also,*

*when you shop in such stores, you do feel kind of part of it, and spread a word about such brands among friends or family members.”*

### **Subtheme 3: Hedonic Benefits**

Hedonic benefits are associated with the degree of happiness or sadness felt by the decision maker during the purchase or consumption experience (Holbrook, 2006). Especially in the context of sustainability-oriented offerings, pleasure is derived from aesthetics, feel and taste of more sustainably produced brand offerings. Some of the participants frequently highlighted enjoyment, simplicity, pleasant smell of sustainability-oriented brand offerings as hedonic benefits; for example,

*“I really enjoy eating home-like fresh healthy meal served at Tattva.”*

*“We are totally and absolutely in love with it (Krya), aside from the fact that it is harmless to nature and doesn’t leave chemical scum during the washing process, we really love the smell of clothes after wash; a very fresh from the loom cloth-like smell, earthy and wonderful.”*

### **Subtheme 4: Altruistic Benefits**

Several altruistic benefits are derived from the brand due to its ability of helping others; this consumption experience is viewed as a self-justifying end in itself (Holbrook, 2006). Consumers experience a direct, psychological benefit arising from doing good to help others in society as well as from environmental protection (Menges, Schroeder, and Traub, 2005).

With regard to their perception of sustainability-oriented offerings, participants reported the experience of well-being and contentment as a consequence of moral satisfaction engendered by contributing to the environmental and social common good; for example,

*“But when I think deeply it’s a circle like they (And) procure organic raw material from farmers...pay well to farmers... so whatever the motive is somewhere down the line they are providing better living conditions to them. And indirectly (through purchase of sustainable goods) you are being a part of such circle so that’s make you feel good about yourself too.”*

*“All I think about is testing product on a rabbit doesn’t make any sense to me. I am a vegan, and personally I don’t like killing animals just for the sake of self-benefit or testing a product that will probably make you look beautiful. We all are part of a community and all deserve equal treatment from one another.”*

## **Theme 2: Consumer Perceived Costs of Sustainable Brand**

The situational context for each participant’s purchase is important and was made up of several independent factors, which included lack of availability, lack of time, price, evaluation cost, and lifestyle (see Figure 2). Situational factors can hinder sustainable

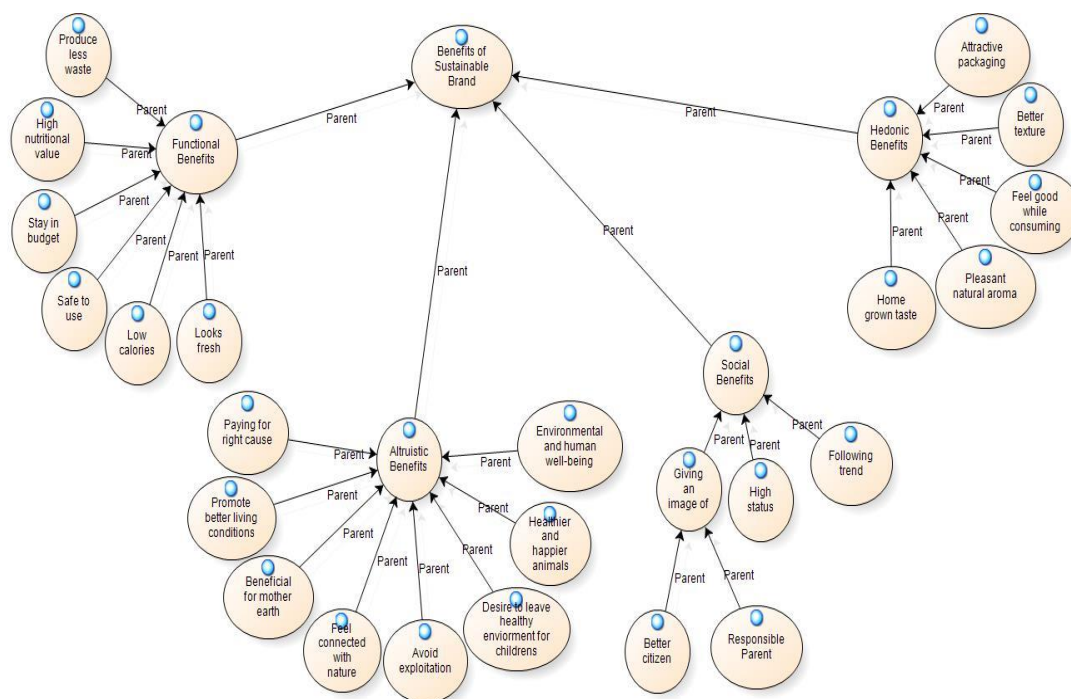


consumer behavior and undermine the influence of positive values (Tanner and Kast, 2003). Each is discussed in turn.

### Subtheme 1: High Price Premiums

For some participants price was the major factor deterring the purchase of sustainable brands while others discussed the comparison of pricing between sustainable brands and the regular brand alternatives; for example,

*“To be honest, cost is an issue for me. Body shop is too expensive; like they had a lip balm costs Re.600. So that’s too costly for me. Instead of buying a costly organic lip balm, I would rather buy the regular one.”*



**Figure 1:** Thematic Map Showing Benefits Associated with the Purchase of Sustainable Brands (NVivo10 Output)

### Subtheme 2: High Evaluation Cost

For the participants the second substantial factor that influences consumer purchasing decision was the lack of available information on the environmental and social performance of brands. One participant pointed out-

*“I think there needs to be more information on the part of a brand as to what products are produced under fair trade conditions, there needs to be displays that help educate the consumers, so they know that these brands exist and what the fair-trade mission is. So that, more people would think about buying these brands.”*

### **Subtheme 3: Lack of Time and Effort**

The effort in researching, decision-making and searching for the brand was the next barrier for the interviewees for not purchasing sustainable brands. For instance, a few participants stated that:

*“The only flip side is the restaurant (Tattva) location which is slightly out of main village area and it is a struggle to walk from the parking lot to the restaurant. On the way, one passes a narrow rutted lane which can get shady at night. A person who actually braves this journey will definitely go back for more”.*

### **Subtheme 4: Functional Risk**

The negative responses to sustainable product performance suggest a need for improvements in the products themselves. Or there was perhaps a need for an increased effort on the part of the manufacturers and retailers to highlight the significance of the sustainability-oriented alternatives and why it is worth sacrificing some level of performance; for example,

*“Thinking about Liberty’s eco-friendly range, I feel like, I just have this bias that they’re not going to work as well. Knowing that it’s been made from waste and recycled materials, I am little apprehensive about its durability.”*

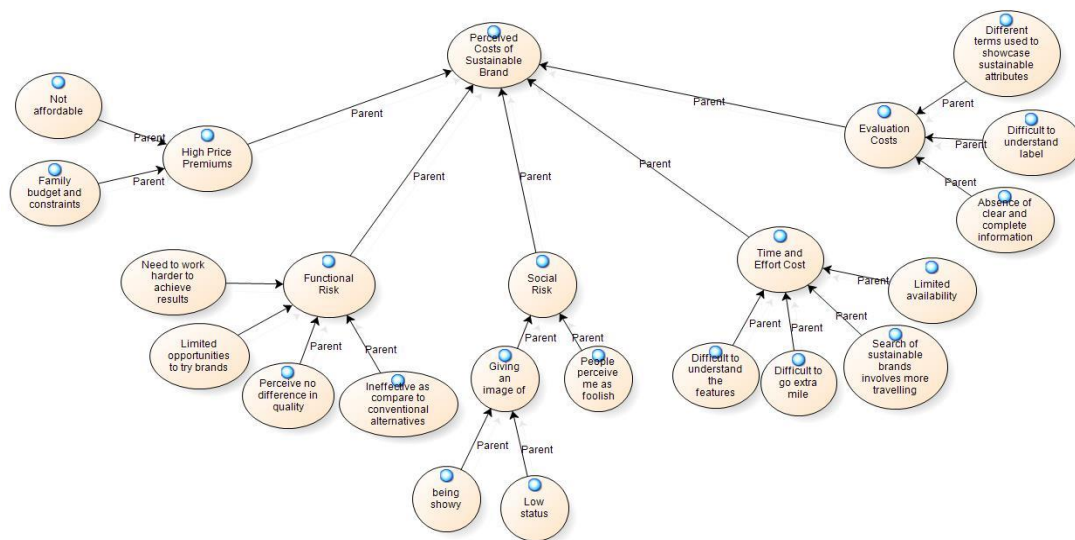
### **Subtheme 5: Social Risk**

Past research has demonstrated that in the process of consumption, other people interpret the meaning of brands and draw conclusions about their owner (Golob, Bunch, and Brownstone, 1997). As reported by a few interview participants, brands with sustainable attributes had a negative impact on respondents, giving the appearance of being a foolish and showy person, low social status; for example,

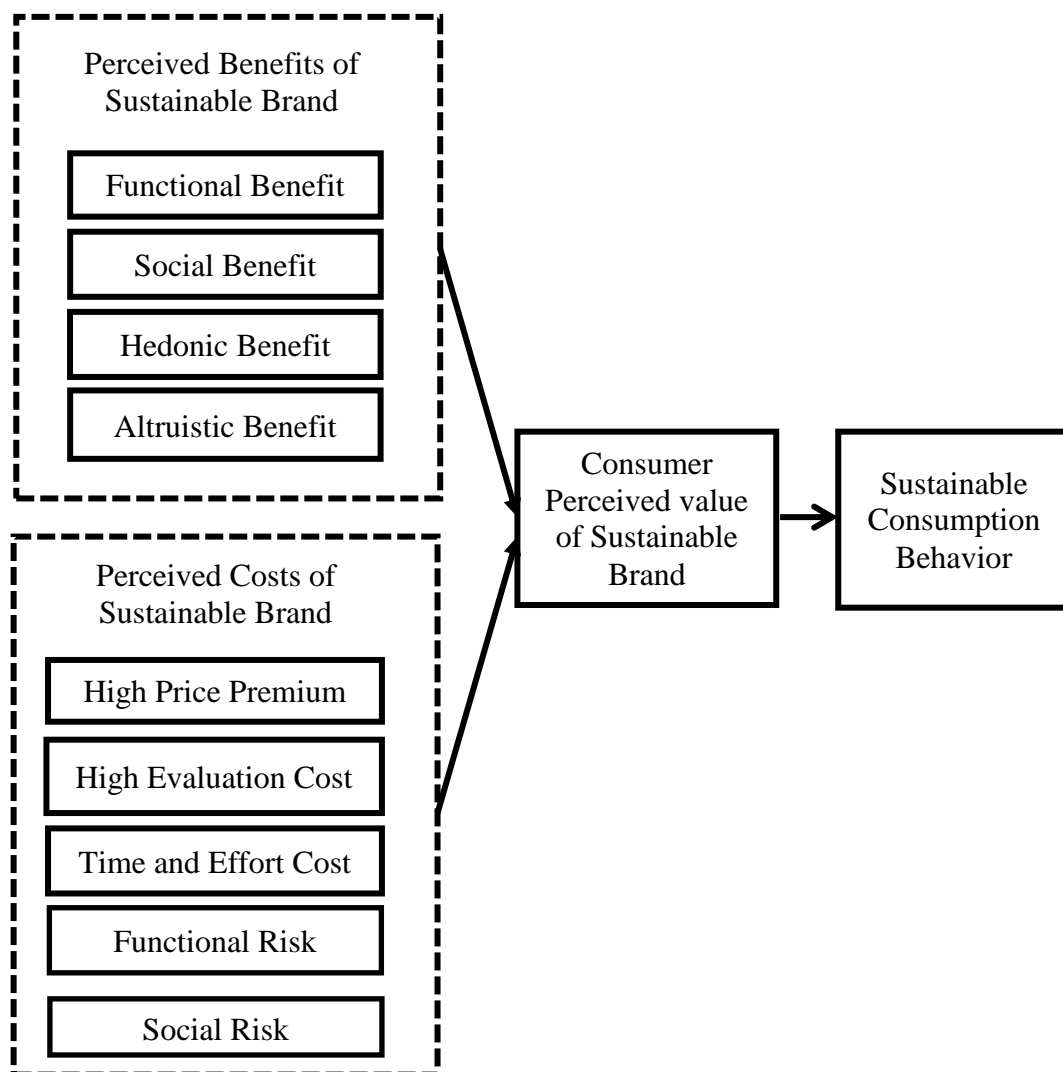
*“I think, not everyone cares about buying or using sustainable products. Everybody is in a really fast-paced job and doesn’t slow down to think about organic or fair trade kind of things. I think when you are with your mates you don’t really want to be individual anyway and say I am socially responsible or green geek, you want to be all the same I think.”*

## **Conceptual Model**

Based on the findings of the qualitative study, four themes of perceived benefits i.e. functional, hedonic, social and altruistic benefits and five themes of perceived costs i.e. high price premiums, evaluation cost, time and effort cost, functional and social risk were identified as the factors affecting consumers’ purchase decision for sustainable brand (see Figure 3).



**Figure 2:** Thematic Map Showing Costs Associated with the Purchase of Sustainable Brands (NVivo10 Output)



**Figure 3:** Conceptual Model of Sustainable Consumption Behavior

## Discussion

The findings of this research are notable for several reasons. The analysis of interviews helped in categorizing several motivations to pursue sustainability criteria. One of them was health-related motivations, which are predominantly category specific within this sample. Some consumers felt very strongly about products that touched them or went into their bodies, while other consumers were motivated by monetary savings and long term health advantages such as sustainable clothes and energy consumption. These findings are similar to the results of previous studies that have shown brand performance, cost effectiveness, and quality as major determinants of sustainable consumption behavior (Hartmann and Ibanez, 2006; Krystallis and Chrysosoidis, 2005; Laroche, Bergeron, Barbaro-Forleo, 2001).

Consumer identity and status play a significant role in some consumers' mind when they are choosing between sustainability-oriented brands and conventional alternatives. This finding supports Oliver and Lee's (2010) study that suggested consumer perceptions of social value associated with owning a hybrid car impacts his/her purchase intentions.

In addition to the above, several participants expressed their desire to leave a healthy planet for their children. Family well-being is at the center of Indian consumers, and it is not surprising to find that as sustainability related purchase behaviors are determined by importance of family in the consumer's life. The finding also supports previous studies that have shown family and environmental welfare is major determinant of sustainable consumption behavior (Carrete, Castano, Felix, Centeno, and Gonzalez, 2012).

The analysis further revealed that each individual purchase was framed by situational factors that negatively affected perceived value of sustainable brands. They included, brand related discoveries such as -1) performance skepticism about sustainability-oriented brand offerings would deter consumers' from the consumption of sustainable brands (Wiedmann, Hennings, Pankalla, Kassubek, and Seegebarth, 2011). 2) Limited availability of sustainable brands in the marketplace, thus consumers' found it a time consuming activity. More specifically, 'being sustainable' requires physical effort and time in peoples' lives that is not available in increasingly busy lifestyle. 3) Several participants clearly respond to key words in brand names and associate sustainability-oriented brands with terms like fair-trade, eco-friendly, organic. However, some participants expressed limited knowledge about the existence of such terms, expressed confusion about their meanings and credibility. The lack of knowledge and education about sustainability oriented labels hinders the consumption of brands. This finding is congruent with the results from previous studies that have suggested lack of information resists consumers to eco-friendly purchase behavior (Ginsberg and Bloom, 2004; Laroche *et al.*, 2001).

## Theoretical and Managerial Contributions

First, through a discovery oriented analysis of 32 in-depth interviews, a conceptual model on sustainable brand purchase decision is advanced which includes enablers and barriers of sustainable consumption. Although the research is exploratory, and

thus requires confirmatory analysis, it offers researchers and marketing managers with a description of how these factors might influence consumer purchase decision for sustainable brand.

Second, the present research contributes to the on-going discussion on sustainable consumption behaviour by identifying multiple aspects underlying perceived benefits and costs that consumers' associate with a sustainable brand. Notably, this study reveals the multi-dimensional view of consumers' perceived cost of a sustainable brand which has been ignored in previous literature. The findings of this study suggest that not only monetary costs, but other non-monetary costs such as lower performance, inconvenience and social risks hinder the consumption of sustainable brands.

Third, the identified components of perceived benefits were functional, social, hedonic, and altruistic benefits, which were consistent with previous research. Especially, "altruistic benefits" was newly developed and was identified as one of the dimensions underlying sustainability related value.

Fourth, study results reveal that quality, performance, price, and sustainability labels are important criteria that consumers consider when making a purchase decision. Therefore, marketing practitioners should communicate the benefits of a sustainable brand offering (e.g., organic ingredients, reduction of emissions released into the environment). This would help making their value offerings more attractive for various consumer segments.

Fifth, supporting the factors that facilitate sustainable brand choices; for example, in this study, it was found that Indian consumers are generally concerned about health and well-being of their family members; therefore, communication messages should highlight the benefits of consuming sustainable offerings on the individual's health and for their children's future to attract such kind of consumers to buy and become loyal to sustainable brands.

Sixth, removing the barriers due to which consumers fail to incorporate sustainability criteria into their brand choices would enable marketing managers to satisfy and retain customers. In order to overcome consumer struggle to differentiate between sustainable and conventional brand, marketers should clearly communicate attribute level information regarding sustainable brands such as energy efficient, free from chemicals, fair trade and also need to emphasize information relating to environmental benefits, production methods, and positive societal level contributions. Knowledge of such information is required to ensure consumers understand why and how their choice preferences are important.

Seventh, the present study found that some consumers perceived the consumption of sustainable brands gives a negative image. Therefore, the communication campaign that emphasizes reference groups will help strengthen sustainable purchase commitment.

Eighth, Indian sustainable consumers encounter monetary cost related purchasing problems; it is significant for marketers to use incentives and discounts to attract consumers.

## Limitations and Future Research Directions

First, previous researches argued that value is perceived differently at different point in time, such as pre-purchase, at the moment of purchase, at the time of use and post use (Holbrook, 1994; Sanchez *et al.*, 2006). The current research has only investigated consumer value in the pre-purchase stage. Future research could analyze how these value perceptions changes with the consumption experience. It may provide more insights into the behavioral outcomes such as word of mouth, recommendation and, consumer loyalty.

Second, the study respondents were from a few large cities of India, future research should explore sustainable consumer behaviour in rural areas of the country as a substantial proportion of Indian consumers live in these areas. Situational factors such as availability of sustainable brands and knowledge of environmental problems could affect their willingness to participate in sustainable consumption. Also, future studies may analyse the value perceptions of the consumers with different nationalities and cultural backgrounds.

Third, the researchers utilized qualitative approach to identify consumers' perceived benefits and costs associated with a sustainable brand. Future studies may consider using confirmatory approach to analyse the impact of these factors on consumers' decision making.

Fourth, researchers may conduct segmentation studies based on demographics and psychographics to explore the differential effects of such factors on sustainable consumption behaviour.

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