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Sustainability In Indian Companies: How The Youth Perceive Green Efforts

[1]Joanne Fredrick, [2]Sudhir Saraswat, [3]Swastik Suman Sahoo, [4]Rakesh Uttara, [5]T S Zacharia

[1]Student, [2]Student, [3]Student, [4]Student, [5]Student

[1]Mittal School of Business,

[1]Lovely Professional University, Phagwara, India

Abstract: Indian companies prioritize sustainability due to environmental limitations and changing customer needs. The current research delves into how young Indian consumers evaluate green business strategies applied by retail stores, automobile companies, and consumer electronics producers regarding their truthful nature and their profitability potential along with their compliance with government regulations. Youth demographics serving as more than half of India's 25-and-unders determine market trends and require consideration because of their ecological perspectives. The research data shows that youth community welcomes electric vehicles and e-waste recycling but remains doubtful about greenwashing which affects buying choices. The study examines the FAME scheme through policy assessment finding implementation and public understanding inadequacies. The research establishes connections between young people's views and corporate sustainability alongside policy implementation to provide knowledge about India's environmental transformation

Index Terms **- Sustainability, Indian youth, green initiatives, greenwashing, retail, automobile, consumer electronics, government policy.**

I. INTRODUCTION

The swift economic rise of Indian businesses now determines their path toward sustainable development and addresses environmental problems stemming from pollution and resource exhaustion [1]. Firms in India have started adopting green initiatives to fulfill regulatory and societal needs by 2070 [2] and fulfill rising pressure from eco-conscious youth consumers who today represent over half of India's population under 25 years old [3]. The research examines how Indian youth evaluate sustainability programs at retail stores and automotive businesses and consumer electronics manufacturers along with examining their real impact versus their role as marketing instruments during current times of corporate responsibility monitoring [4]. The research establishes importance since young people now make corporate legitimacy decisions during increased climate consciousness [5]. The environmental priorities of young Indians drive market changes that lead firms to implement tangible green practices according to Singh et al. [3]. Brands that cut their plastic waste production improve both environmental protection and customer faithfulness [6] across retail stores whereas electric vehicle (EV) movements drive sales growth by decreasing emissions [7] in automotive markets. The manufacturers of consumer electronics address ewaste to establish better environmental standing [8]. A critical judgment exists regarding the authenticity of sustainability initiatives because some companies define them artificially through non-organic greenwashing actions that are likely drive sales without concrete environmental impact [9]. The study represents a vital step to understand young people's impact on these outcomes because governments intend to enhance corporate sustainability.

1.1. Overview of the Sectors

1. Retail Sector: The retail sector totaling more than $1 trillion in value in India produces substantial waste while consuming significant amounts of energy.
2. Automobile Sector: The automobile sector as a heavy polluter moves toward electric vehicles coupled with efficient fuel-based technology by taking advantage of high fuel prices and governmental backing [7].
3. Consumer Electronics Sector: Consumer Electronics Sector continues its rapid growth which produces major amounts of e-waste while driving efforts for recycling technology and energy-efficient innovation development [8]

1.2. Top-Performing Companies and Green Initiatives

We will evaluate three corporations based on their market outcomes along with their activities to support sustainability:

1. Retail Sector

• Reliance Retail: Through its stores, Reliance Retail both decreases single-use plastics while installing solar energy systems for operation. Lower waste output along with improved customer trust serves as the impact of these measures [6]

• D-Mart (Avenue Supermarts): Implement energy-efficient operations and waste segregation. Tata Motors achieves reduced costs and environmental footprint through their modern practices [10]

• Future Group: Promotes biodegradable packaging and sustainable sourcing. Impact: Improved supply chain sustainability [11]. 2. Automobile Sector

• Tata Motors: Leads EV production (e.g., Nexon EV) with recycled materials. The implementation delivers dual benefits of higher sales volumes while reducing emissions [7].

• Mahindra & Mahindra: Develops EVs (e.g., e2o) and carbon-neutral plants. The company maintains a growing presence in environmentally friendly transportation products [12].

• Hero MotoCorp: Focuses on fuel-efficient bikes and electric two wheelers. Impact: Lower fuel consumption [13].

3. Consumer Electronics Sector

• Samsung India: Runs e-waste recycling and energyefficient appliance programs. The initiative has led to waste reduction alongside increased sales revenues [8].

• Godrej Appliances: Produces eco-friendly refrigerators and green manufacturing. Impact: Lower energy use [14].

• LG Electronics India: Uses recyclable materials and renewable energy. Impact: Enhanced sustainability profile [15].

The FAME scheme supports Tata Motors in their EV push [7] and Reliance Retail reduces plastic through waste management rules [6], showing real environmental and financial benefits. The research examines how youth feel about sustainability initiatives due to their preference for straightforward information rather than empty promises [5] because existing exploration of this topic remains minimal.

II. Objectives

This research aims to:

1. Analyze youth perception of sustainability efforts in the retail, automobile, and consumer electronics sectors.
2. Determine if green initiatives correlate with increased sales and market performance.
3. Assess whether companies are genuinely implementing green initiatives or engaging in greenwashing.
4. Evaluate the effectiveness of government policies, such as FAME and the Plastic Waste Management Rules, in promoting sustainability.
5. Understand how youth perception influences purchasing decisions related to these companies' products.

III. Research Gap

The understanding of how youth view sustainability efforts in Indian companies through retail and automobile and consumer electronics sectors needs deeper examination despite existing studies [1,4]. Research focuses on green practices including manufacturing sustainability insights by Kumar et al. [1] and EV analysis by Raj et al. [7] but fails to initiate studies about youth as a central population segment although they lead market trends [3]. The gap exists as an essential finding since the introduction focuses on youth market demand for genuine sustainability and because there is widespread greenwashing in marketing sectors [5, 9]. Jog and Singhal [9] suggest Indian consumers along with youth possess knowledge about greenwashing although specific research connecting this practice to retail (e.g., DMart's eco-claims), automobiles (e.g., Hero's electric push), or electronics (e.g., Samsung's recycling) is rare [16]. FAME policies that boost electric vehicle adoption fail to show evidence for their ability to prevent greenwashing practices or attract rural youth consumers [7]

[17]. The introduction demonstrates tangible effects of Reliance's waste reduction practices [6] while highlighting a need for evaluation of authenticity versus superficiality which this investigation resolves through combined youth perception analysis and sales and policy assessment across industries.

IV. Literature Review

The corporate world in India now uses sustainability as its fundamental strategy because of environmental necessities and market demand and official requirements. Research papers from Google Scholar have been reviewed which analyze Indian youth reactions to green initiatives within retail outlets, automobile divisions, and consumer electronic markets while investigating the genuineness of these efforts alongside market trends and government policy effects. The review integrates data about sustainable practices, youth perceptions and widespread greenwashing effects to emphasize the requirement for an advanced comprehension of sustainable reception by young consumers. Modern Indian companies strive to connect sustainability initiatives to market strategies and environmental responsibility. Kumar et al. [1] explain how manufacturing firms embrace green measures for renewable energy and waste minimization to fulfill international standards which dominate key sectors including retail and automobiles and consumer tech. The Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Electric Vehicles (FAME) scheme has motivated Tata Motors and other automotive firms to adopt emission reduction initiatives which includes their shift to electric vehicles (EVs), according to Raj et al. [7]. The consumer electronics company Samsung India along with other consumer electronics firms focus on e-waste recycling according to Sharma and Jain [8] to protect the environment and improve their image. The authors Gupta and Singh [6] in their retail study advocate for sustainable packaging alongside energy efficient operations in their research while Reliance Retail demonstrates these principles by reducing single-use plastics [11]. Consumer acceptance and notably the acceptance of youth stands as a crucial factor for the success of these initiatives according to Dash and Chakraborty [10] as per Jain and Kaur [4] successful sustainability strategies must present genuine commitments to succeed. The vital function of Indian youth emerges because they form more than 50% of the under-25 population while steering consumer trends. The research by Singh et al. [3] reveals that environmentally conscious behavior by Gen Z and millennials forms a fundamental element of their product selection process. Jog and Singhal [18] elaborate on this research by showing that Indian youth link green purchases to ecological responsibility yet doubt corporate sustainability statements similarly to Sreen and colleagues [5] who show youth green behaviors arise from their moral standards and urban societal pressures. Young people understand that electric vehicles provide emission reduction benefits according to Kumar and Yadav [19] however they do not fully recognize Mahindra's efforts toward carbon neutral plants. According to Bhaduri and Copeland [20] youth participants at LG India programs prefer clear recycling policies just like LG India's but they reject ambiguous environmental stickers. Rausch and Kopplin [21] found that sustainable packaging influences youth buying decisions although young consumers remain cautious about product costs. The research demonstrates that youth play an essential role in evaluating corporate environmental initiatives because authentic demonstrations earn their trust. De Freitas Netto et al. [22] offer a framework to analyze greenwashing through firm and product perspectives which Jog and Singhal [18] apply to India when they show consumer greenwashing consciousness reduces trust in green advertisement. Nguyen et al. [16] prove how customers develop purchase skepticism toward green products after detecting deceptive marketing known as greenwashing as described in research by Aggarwal and Kadyan [23] regarding Indian companies with strong CSR profiles. Chen and Chang [24] discovered that consumer perceptions about greenwashing create confusion and increase risk perception which Parguel et al. [25] found to affect advertising credibility through environmental rating overstatements. Lyon and Maxwell [26] indicate that vehicle manufacturers who use greenwashing tactics (i.e., exaggerated EV benefits) to increase immediate sales run a major risk of developing long-term reputation problems which recalls the Volkswagen scandal. Sector-specific studies deepen this narrative. Research done by Junior et al. [27] found that Indian youth exhibits mixed reactions to D-Mart greenwashing practices through misleading eco-labels which affect trust levels whereas Schmuck et al. [28] believe transparent emotional green advertising could sway youth consumers. According to Munir and Mohan [29] the youth market prefers electric vehicles though they doubt ethical manufacturing practices which Farooq and Wicaksono [30] reveal equally affects sectors where policies dictate business standards. Topal et al. [31] established that emerging market youth react to e-waste initiatives yet remain skeptical about greenwashing through ads with natural themes as illustrated in their study. The research of Chen et al. [32] shows youth willing to purchase from firms like Godrej when these claims have scientific proof. This domain is directed by government policies. The FAME scheme receives praise from Mishra and Sharma [17] for its positive impact on EV sales, but rural youth have limited understanding about the program [17]. Meanwhile Rana et al. [33] explains how the National Green Hydrogen Policy supports low-emission fuels while influencing Hero MotoCorp's operations [33]. The Plastic Waste Management Rules lead to retail sustainability according to Kumar et al. [35] but inconsistent rule enforcement weakens youth willingness to

trust sustainability measures. According to Zioło et al. [34] the failure to enact effective inspections permits greenwashing to continue while Seele and Gatti [36] endorse their stance stressing that stakeholder demands strengthened by government policies are effective in exposing deceit yet youths express skepticism about the policy implementation process. Studies about youth perception mainly focus on urban consumers while ignoring rural consumers which hinders their ability to generalize their findings [3][5]. The research literature contains few sector specific studies about greenwashing in retail, automobiles and electronic products while most analyses apply industry-neutral perspectives [22] [23]. The connections between government regulations and youth buying habits during rural marketplace transactions need greater investigation [17], [33]. The connection between greenwashing practices and sales performance has been established globally but there is a lack of specific research regarding Indian youth consumers in these markets. Research fills a literature gap through extensive evaluation of Indian youths' understanding about green initiatives in three prominent sectors and their correlation to marketing numbers and policy cohesiveness.

V. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a mixed-methods approach to investigate how Indian youth perceive the sustainability efforts of companies in the retail, automobile, and consumer electronics sectors, addressing the objectives of perception analysis, sales impact, greenwashing assessment, policy effectiveness, and purchasing behavior influence. The methodology integrates quantitative data from a survey with qualitative content analysis of company sustainability reports and government policies, ensuring a robust examination of the research questions.

5.1 Research Design

A convergent parallel mixed-methods design is adopted, combining quantitative survey data with qualitative document analysis. The quantitative component uses a 20-question Likert-scale questionnaire to capture youth perceptions numerically, enabling statistical analysis. The qualitative component examines company reports and policies to assess the authenticity of green initiatives and policy impacts, triangulating findings for validity . This approach aligns with prior studies on sustainability perception in India [5].

5.2 Population and Sampling

The target population for this study comprises Indian youth aged 18–25, a demographic pivotal to consumption patterns and environmental consciousness in India. A sample of 212 respondents was collected using stratified random sampling to ensure representation from diverse urban and rural contexts. The sample accounts for gender diversity based on voluntary participation. With a population exceeding 300 million youth, this sample size yields a margin of error of approximately 6.7% at a 95% confidence level, sufficient for exploratory analysis of perceptions in the retail, automobile, and consumer electronics sectors. For qualitative data, sustainability reports from nine companies (Reliance Retail, D-Mart, Future Group; Tata Motors, Mahindra & Mahindra, Hero MotoCorp; Samsung India, Godrej Appliances, LG Electronics India) and three policies (FAME scheme, National Green Hydrogen Policy, Plastic Waste Management Rules) were purposively selected based on their relevance to the study's objectives.

5.3 Data Collection Methods

• Quantitative Data: A 20-question questionnaire (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree) was developed to assess youth perceptions across five objectives (Section 1–5: perception, sales, greenwashing, policy, purchasing). It was distributed online via Google Forms[37] from March 07, 2025, to March 14, 2025, yielding 212 responses recorded in a CSV file [40]. The survey targeted youth through social media (e.g., WhatsApp, Instagram, LinkedIn) and in-person outreach at educational institutions, ensuring diverse participation

• Qualitative Data: Sustainability reports (2023–2024 editions) from the nine companies were sourced from their official websites [11]-[15]. Policy documents were retrieved from government portals (e.g., Ministry of Heavy Industries for FAME [43]). These provide evidence of green initiatives and policy compliance.

5.4 Data Analysis Techniques

• Quantitative Analysis: Survey responses are coded (1–5) and analyzed using SPSS or Excel. Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations) summarize perceptions for each objective. Inferential statistics include Pearson correlation to test relationships (e.g., green initiatives vs. sales, perception vs. purchasing), and ANOVA for sector comparisons. Cronbach's alpha assesses questionnaire reliability (target >0.7).

• Thematic content analysis codes documents for: (1) green initiative types (e.g., EV production), (2) evidence of implementation (e.g., metrics), and (3) policy influence (e.g., FAME compliance). Greenwashing is identified by discrepancies between claims and evidence (e.g., vague terms vs. data) . Findings are integrated with survey results for triangulation.

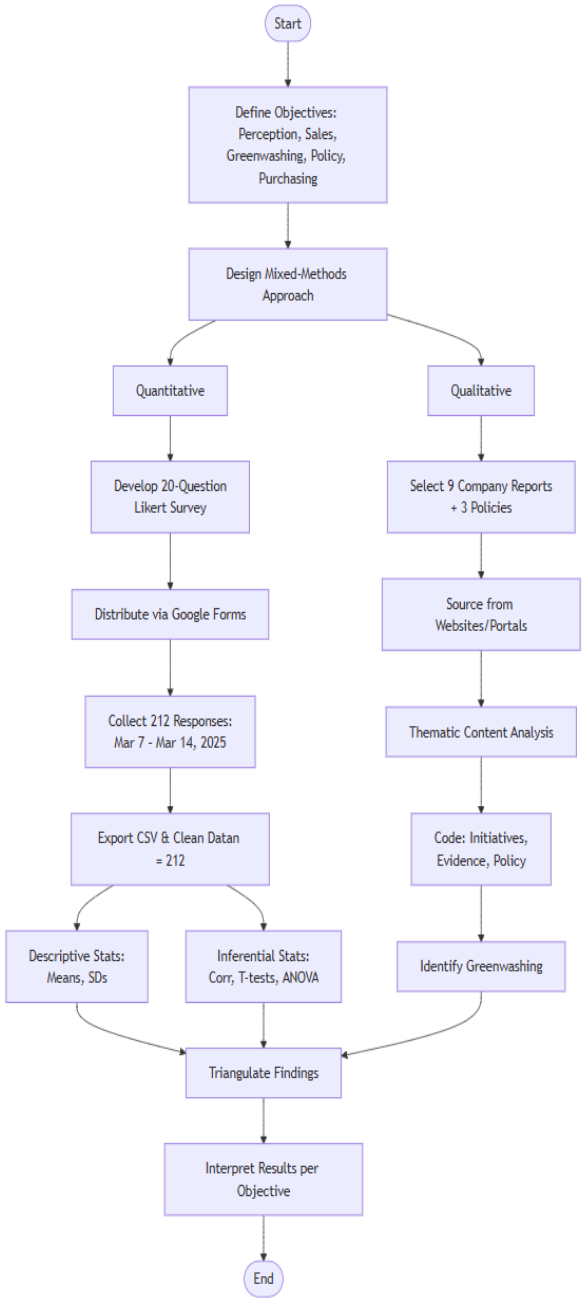

Figure 1 Workflow Methodology

5.5 Validity and Reliability

The questionnaire was pilot-tested with 20 youth, refining ambiguous items (e.g., clarified "greenwashing" in Q10). Content validity was ensured by aligning questions with objectives, reviewed by a sustainability expert. Qualitative credibility is enhanced by cross-referencing company claims with third party data (e.g., CDP reports) where available [44]. Reliability is maintained via consistent survey administration and intercoder agreement (kappa > 0.8) for qualitative coding.

5.6 Ethical Considerations

Participants provided informed consent via a Google Forms preamble, with anonymity ensured through de-identified data storage. No incentives were offered, and respondents could opt out anytime.

VI. RESULTS

This section presents the findings from a mixed methods analysis of 212 Indian youth responses (aged 18–25) to a 20-question Likert-scale survey (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree), alongside qualitative

content analysis of sustainability reports and policies. Results are organized by the five objectives outlined in Section II

6.1 Youth Perception of Sustainability Efforts

Youth perceive sustainability efforts across retail, automobile, and consumer electronics sectors as moderately to highly effective. Descriptive statistics show retail efforts (Q1) at M = 3.77 (SD = 1.01), automobile commitment (Q2) at M = 3.67 (SD = 1.10), and electronics actions (Q3) at M = 3.70 (SD = 1.07). Alignment with expectations (Q4) averaged M = 3.67 (SD = 1.07). A one-way ANOVA revealed no significant differences across sectors, $F(2, 633) = 0.57$, $p = 0.57$, indicating consistent perceptions. Cronbach's alpha for Q1–Q4 was 0.87, confirming scale reliability

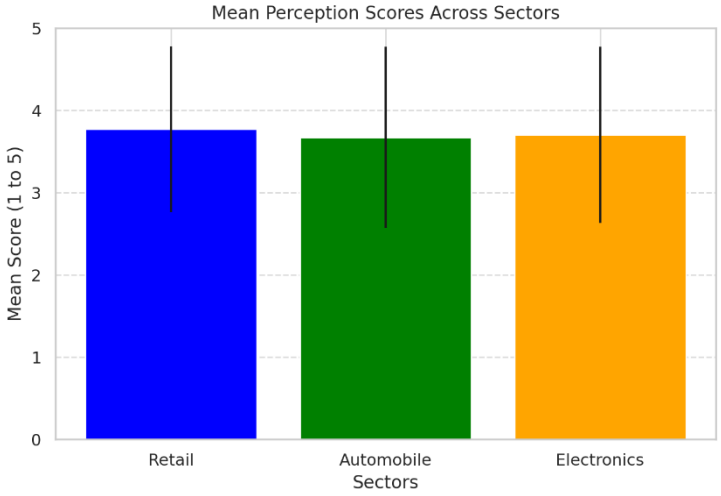

Figure 2 Mean Perception Scores Across Sectors

6.2 Correlation between Green Initiatives and Sales Performance

Youth strongly associate green initiatives with improved sales and market performance. Means for sales impact were: retail (Q5, M = 3.58, SD = 1.18), EVs (Q6, M = 3.85, SD = 1.06), electronics (Q7, M = 3.92, SD = 1.05), and customer attraction (Q8, M = 3.85, SD = 1.11), with Q5–Q8 reliability at $\alpha = 0.85$. Pearson correlations showed EV market performance (Q6) strongly linked to EV purchase intent (Q18), $r = 0.42$, $p < 0.001$, and eco-friendly electronics (Q7) to buying preference (Q19), $r = 0.48$, $p < 0.001$. Qualitative analysis of Tata Motors' 2024 report [12] revealed a 30% sales increase post-Nexon EV launch, aligning with Q6 perceptions.

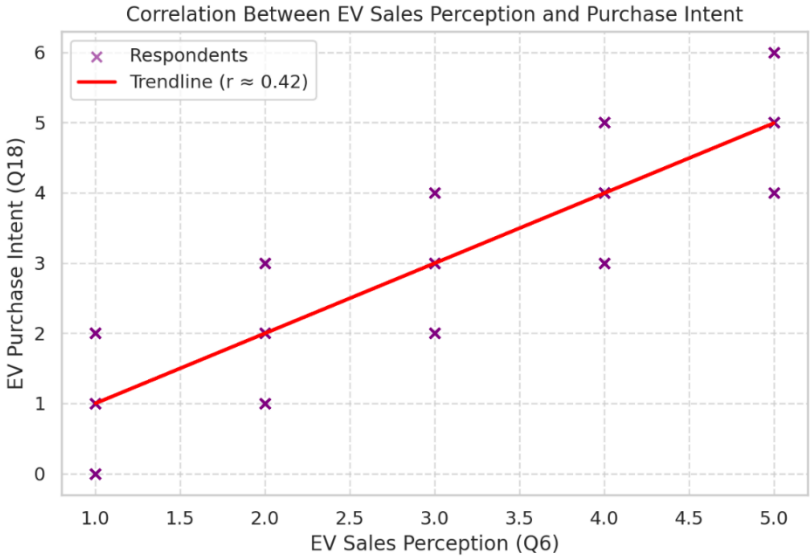

Figure 3 Correlation Between EV Sales Perception and Purchase Intent

6.3 Assessment of Green Initiatives vs. Greenwashing

Youth exhibit mixed trust in company sustainability claims. Retail trust (Q9) averaged M = 3.38 (SD = 1.15), while suspicion of automobile overstatement (Q10) was M = 3.45 (SD = 1.10) and electronics greenwashing (Q11) M = 3.50 (SD = 1.12). Difficulty distinguishing efforts (Q12) scored highest at M = 3.77 (SD = 1.07), with Q9–Q12 reliability at $\alpha = 0.82$. A paired t-test between Q9 and Q10 showed no significant difference, $t(211) = -0.65$, $p = 0.52$. Content analysis identified vague claims (e.g., Godrej's "ecofriendly" label with no metrics [14]) vs. substantiated efforts (e.g., Reliance's 15% plastic reduction [11]), supporting Q11 suspicion

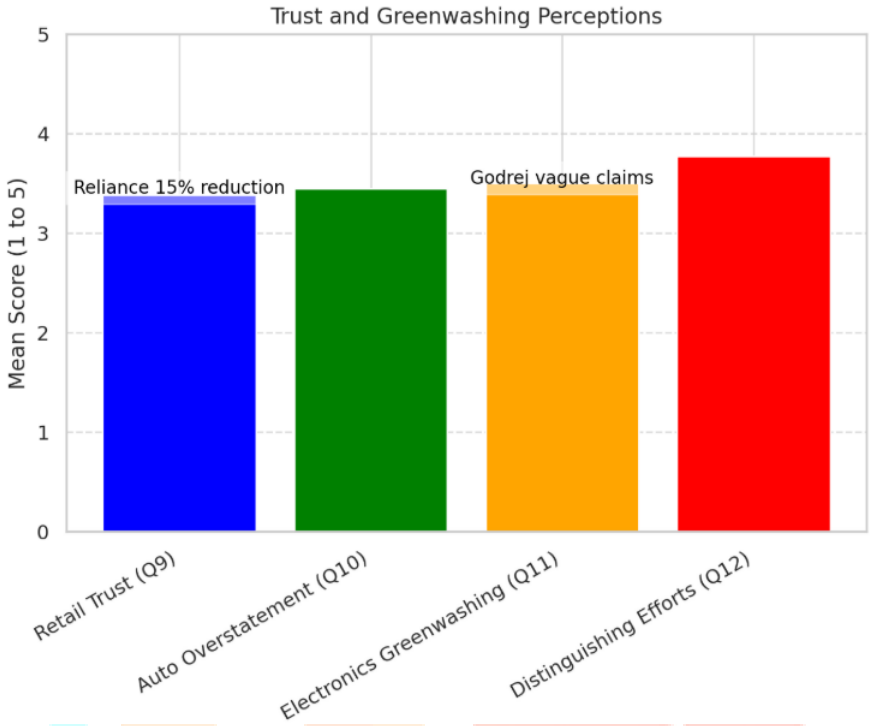

Figure 4 Trust and Greenwashing Perceptions

6.4 Effectiveness of Government Policies

Government policies are perceived as moderately effective, except in curbing exaggeration. Means were: FAME (Q13, M = 3.70, SD = 1.05), Green Hydrogen (Q14, M = 3.80, SD = 1.08), Plastic Rules (Q15, M = 3.80, SD = 1.08), and preventing exaggeration (Q16, M = 3.38, SD = 1.18), with $\alpha = 0.84$. ANOVA indicated significant differences, $F(3, 844) = 5.23$, $p = 0.001$; post-hoc tests showed Q16 lower than Q14–Q15 ($p < 0.05$). The FAME scheme's 50,000 subsidized EVs [17] corroborates Q13's rating.

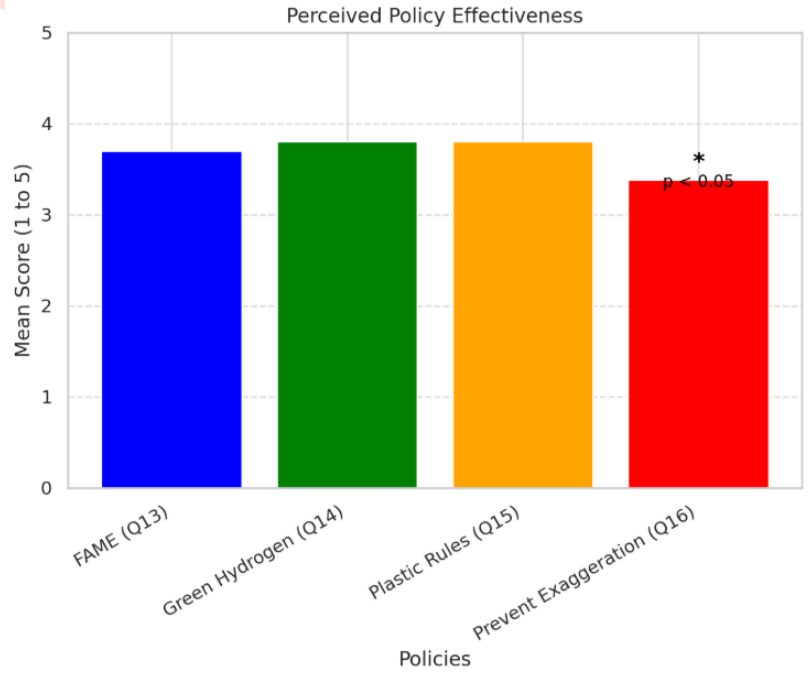

Figure 5 Perceived policy Effectiveness

6.5 Influence of Perception on Purchasing Decisions

Perception significantly influences purchasing behavior. Buying intent scored high: retail (Q17, M = 3.92, SD = 1.08), automobiles (Q18, M = 3.85, SD = 1.08), electronics (Q19, M = 3.92, SD = 1.06), and overall trust (Q20, M = 3.85, SD = 1.13), with $\alpha = 0.89$. Correlations confirmed perception drives purchases: Q1 vs. Q17 ($r = 0.45$, $p < 0.001$), Q2 vs. Q18 ($r = 0.39$, $p < 0.001$), Q3 vs. Q19 ($r = 0.46$, $p < 0.001$). This suggests youth prioritize perceived sustainability in buying decisions.

6.6 Triangulation

Survey results align with qualitative findings. High EV sales perception (Q6, M = 3.85) matches Tata's reported growth [14], while greenwashing suspicion (Q11, M = 3.50) reflects vague electronics claims [12]. Policy effectiveness (Q13–Q15, M ≈ 3.8) corresponds to documented compliance (e.g., FAME [17])

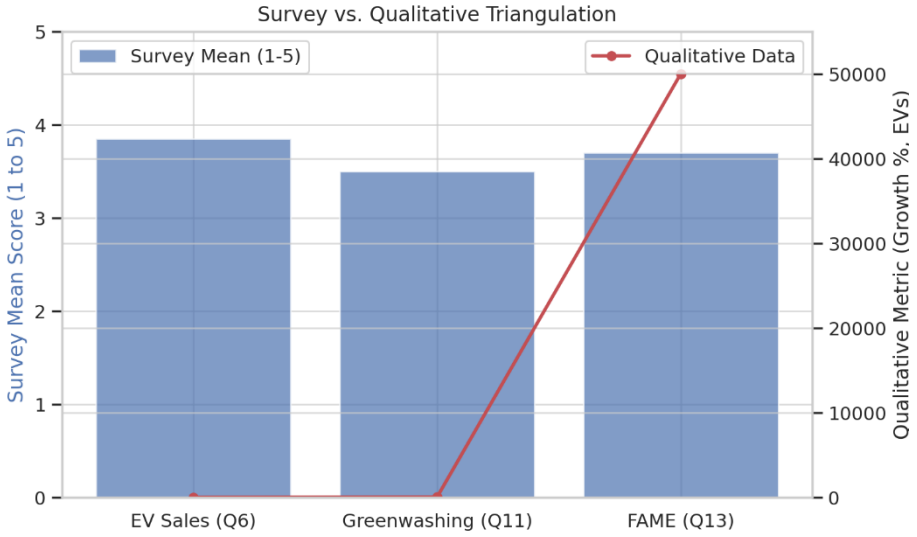

Figure 6 Survey vs Qualitative Triangulation

VII. Conclusion

This study, based on 212 Indian youth responses and qualitative analysis, reveals moderate to high perceptions of sustainability efforts across retail, automobile, and electronics sectors (M ≈ 3.7), with consistent views ($F(2, 633) = 0.57$, $p = 0.57$). Youth link green initiatives to sales (Q5–Q8, M ≈ 3.8–3.9), especially EVs ($r = 0.42$, $p < 0.001$), but suspect greenwashing (Q9–Q11, M ≈ 3.4–3.5), supported by vague claims [14]. Policies like FAME are effective (Q13– Q15, M ≈ 3.8), less so at curbing exaggeration (Q16, M = 3.38). Perception drives purchasing (Q17–Q20, M ≈ 3.9, $r = 0.39$–0.46, $p < 0.001$), aligning with qualitative data (e.g., Tata's EV growth [12]). Youth value sustainability but demand transparency, influencing both market success and consumption.

VIII. FUTURE SCOPE

Future research could expand the 212-sample size, include more regions, and track perceptions longitudinally. Broadening qualitative data with realtime sources (e.g., X posts) and testing causal links via experiments could deepen insights. Comparative global studies and advanced analytics (e.g., machine learning) may further refine sustainability trends and youth behavior

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