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Integrating Sustainable Branding and Green Retail Experience into Commerce Education for Achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Preeti Sharma[1] & Dr. Shalini Agarwal[2]

[1]*Assistant Research Scholar Department of Commerce, University of Lucknow, Lucknow*

[2]*Assistant Professor (Commerce),Mahamaya Government Degree College, Mahona, Lucknow University of Lucknow, Lucknow*

Corresponding Author – Preeti Sharma

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Abstract:

The increasing importance of sustainable development has significantly reshaped the role of higher education institutions in preparing graduates to address complex environmental, social, and economic challenges. Commerce education, traditionally centred on accounting, finance, marketing, and business management, is increasingly required to integrate sustainability-oriented knowledge and competencies that align with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This research examines the relationship between SDG-aligned commerce education and sustainable market behaviour, with a focus on green retail experiences and sustainable branding. Using secondary data from peer-reviewed studies, educational institution reports, sustainability rankings, and retail industry disclosures, the analysis investigates how SDG-oriented curricula relate to students' sustainability literacy and intentions, and to observable retail practices including credible green branding, fair pricing, and communication that avoids greenwashing. Descriptive statistics and inferential techniques are applied to synthesise existing evidence on curriculum content, learning outcomes, and market-level indicators of sustainable retail practices. Findings reveal a modest but increasing convergence between SDG-focused commerce education and sustainable branding and retail strategies in practice, while highlighting persistent gaps in measurement approaches, longitudinal tracking, and multi-SDG integration. The study ends by proposing guidance for designing commerce curricula that better convert SDG literacy into credible, value-creating, and equity-oriented green retail experiences.

Keywords: Sustainable Branding, Green Retail Experience, Sustainable Commerce Education, Higher Education Integration, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Introduction:

The SDGs were adopted in 2015; global efforts to address interrelated economic, social, and environmental challenges have accelerated, with governments, firms, and educational institutions increasingly expected to align their strategies, operations, and curricula to the SDG agenda. Markets are being reshaped by rising stakeholder expectations for transparency, responsibility, and long-term value, as consumers, investors, regulators, and civil society demand that firms demonstrate credible, measurable contributions to goals including SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production), SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth), SDG 10 (reduced inequalities), and SDG 13 (climate action). Firms have responded by adopting green marketing, sustainable branding, and intentionally designed green retail experiences as visible signals of their environmental and social commitments. Concurrently, higher education institutions—particularly those delivering commerce and business programmes—are under pressure to prepare graduates with the knowledge,

skills, and values required to navigate and shape sustainability-oriented markets. Commerce education is therefore emerging as a critical arena for training future retail professionals to conceptualise, design, and implement sustainable branding strategies that advance multiple SDGs while avoiding greenwashing and maintaining consumer trust. However, empirical evidence linking SDG-oriented commerce education to tangible changes in market behaviour remains limited. Existing work tends to focus either on firm-level sustainability practices or on educational efforts to mainstream the SDGs, with comparatively few studies exploring the interaction between these two spheres. Clarifying this interface is essential to evaluate whether education in sustainable branding and green retailing leads to observable changes in consumer behaviour, retail practices, and value creation in the marketplace.

Green Marketing, Sustainable Branding, and the SDG Agenda:

Green marketing and sustainable branding have become key mechanisms through which firms communicate their commitment to sustainability and the SDGs. Green marketing involves developing, pricing, promoting, and distributing offerings in ways that minimise environmental damage and generate social value, whereas sustainable branding integrates these commitments into the firm's core identity and value proposition. In retail settings, these efforts commonly manifest as eco-friendly store designs, sustainable product assortments, ethical sourcing practices, eco-labels, cause-related campaigns, and transparent sustainability communication at the point of sale and across digital platforms (Jones, P. et al. (2018)). Retail experiences are particularly influential because they represent direct consumer touchpoints where sustainability claims are encountered, and purchasing decisions are made. Store layout, signage, digital interfaces, pricing strategies, and customer engagement initiatives can either encourage or constrain sustainable consumption. For example, retailers may deploy in-store prompts to highlight low-carbon products, implement equitable pricing for sustainable alternatives, or introduce loyalty schemes that reward responsible purchasing. Nevertheless, the green marketing and SDG literature has been heavily reliant on cross-sectional, self-reported data concerning attitudes, awareness, and purchase intentions. Many studies survey consumers about their environmental concern, willingness to pay for green products, or stated preferences for ethical brands. Although such research provides useful insights into consumer perceptions, it offers limited evidence on actual behaviour, long-term loyalty, or sustained market-level changes. Furthermore, a persistent gap between stated attitudes and actual behaviour makes it difficult to infer real-world impacts from attitudinal data alone. As a result, the contribution of green marketing and sustainable branding to SDG achievement is frequently inferred rather than empirically demonstrated through behavioural outcomes.

SDGs in Business and Commerce Education:

In parallel, there has been a growing movement to integrate sustainability and the SDGs into business and commerce curricula. Many universities and business schools now offer dedicated courses on corporate social responsibility, sustainable business, or green marketing, and some programmes explicitly frame their mission around responsible management education. Commerce students are increasingly exposed to concepts such as stakeholder theory, ethical decision-making, environmental management, social entrepreneurship, and impact measurement. Despite these developments, the integration of SDGs into commerce education has often remained at the level of awareness-raising and general sustainability literacy. Curricula typically emphasise knowledge of sustainability frameworks, global challenges, and ethical principles, but they may not consistently translate this awareness into practice-oriented competencies. In many cases, SDG-related content is confined to isolated modules or elective courses, rather than being systematically

embedded across marketing, branding, retail management, and strategy subjects. Furthermore, there is limited empirical evidence on how SDG-oriented education affects students' behaviours, career trajectories, and professional practices. While some studies report positive shifts in attitudes, values, or self-reported intentions following exposure to sustainability-focused courses, fewer examine whether graduates subsequently design or implement sustainable branding and retail strategies in their workplaces. Measures of SDG literacy also tend to focus on cognitive understanding rather than on applied skills such as designing non-greenwashing campaigns, balancing price and equity considerations, or managing trade-offs between different SDGs in real business contexts. This raises critical questions about the effectiveness of commerce education in preparing future professionals to respond to the complexities of sustainability in the marketplace and to contribute meaningfully to SDG progress through their roles in retail and related sectors.

Missing Link: From SDG-Oriented Commerce Education to Market Behaviour:

A central weakness in the existing literature is the lack of empirical studies that directly connect SDG-focused commerce education with observable sustainable market behaviour and practice. Research on green marketing and the SDGs, on one side, and research on sustainability in business education, on the other, have largely evolved in parallel rather than in dialogue. As a result, there is insufficient evidence on whether, and how, students who are trained in sustainable branding and green retailing actually influence organisational strategies, consumer experiences, and market outcomes once they enter the workforce. Work on sustainable branding and green retailing seldom interrogates the educational background and competencies of the professionals who design and implement these strategies. Similarly, research on SDG integration in commerce curricula rarely tracks graduates' involvement in sustainable branding initiatives, green retail formats, or the development of credible, non-greenwashing communication. This limits the ability to assess whether curriculum interventions translate into the kinds of competencies that markets require—such as the ability to build trust, address perceived value and price barriers, design inclusive and equitable retail experiences, and align branding decisions with multiple SDGs simultaneously. Moreover, the reliance on self-reported, cross-sectional data in both domains constrains the development of robust causal or longitudinal insights. There is a lack of studies that connect educational inputs (e.g., specific courses or competencies related to sustainable branding) to intermediate outcomes (e.g., students' behavioural intentions, project work, or internships focused on sustainability) and, ultimately, to observable market practices (e.g., measurable changes in branding strategies, pricing policies, or customer trust indicators). This missing link hampers efforts to design education that effectively supports sustainable market transformations and undermines claims about the role of commerce education in advancing the SDGs.

Purpose and Scope of the Present Study:

The present study aims to explore the relationship between SDG-oriented commerce education, sustainable branding, and green retail practices using secondary data. It systematically reviews academic literature, institutional documents, and industry reports to map how SDGs, sustainable branding, and green retail experiences are integrated into commerce curricula and operationalised in retail strategy, with attention to credibility, non-greenwashing communication, pricing, equity, perceived value, and trust. By juxtaposing educational and market evidence, the study identifies patterns of alignment and misalignment between competencies promoted in SDG-focused commerce education and practices observed in sustainable branding and retailing. It specifically assesses whether secondary data support the view that incorporating sustainable branding and green retail experiences into commerce programmes can

build SDG literacy and practice-oriented competencies, influence students' sustainable consumption and career intentions, and equip future professionals to develop credible, value-creating, non-greenwashing retail strategies that address multiple SDG-related challenges. The analysis aims to clarify the extent to which current evidence links SDG-focused commerce education to observable sustainable market behaviour, thereby informing curriculum design, policy discussions, and future empirical research on education, sustainable branding, green retail experiences, and SDG achievement.

Research Objectives:

The study has the following objectives:

1. To review and synthesise secondary data on how SDGs, sustainable branding, and green retail experiences are integrated into commerce and business education programmes.
2. To examine secondary evidence on the relationship between SDG-focused commerce education and indicators of sustainable market behaviour, such as responsible consumption patterns and sustainable retail practices.
3. To analyse how firms' sustainable branding and green retail strategies reflect competencies typically promoted in SDG-oriented commerce curricula.
4. To identify gaps, inconsistencies, and best practices in aligning commerce education with sustainable branding and green retail outcomes across multiple SDGs.
5. To propose recommendations for curriculum design and policy interventions that strengthen the link between commerce education, sustainable branding, and green retail experiences.

Review of Literature:

Durmaz, G. et al. (2026). This research investigates consumer responses to supermarket sustainability initiatives and alignment with UN Sustainable Development Goals, specifically regarding private label brands. Based on six focus groups with 33 UK-based shoppers, the paper analyses how environmental efforts influence brand engagement and co-created value. Results demonstrate that genuine green practices, such as eco-friendly packaging, ethical sourcing, and carbon reduction, foster consumer trust and loyalty, whereas superficial initiatives cause consumer guilt and damage brand perception. Consequently, the authors present a framework showing how eco-conscious shoppers co-create value through information sharing, brand advocacy, and sustainable habits like recycling.

Opoku, A. (2026). This study investigates how the Architecture, Engineering, and Construction (AEC) sector in the United Arab Emirates integrates the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into its business strategies. Using a mixed-method design, the research combined survey responses from 116 sustainability professionals with a content analysis of corporate strategies. The findings indicate that AEC activities have a substantial influence on five SDGs: Clean Water and Sanitation (SDG 6), Affordable and Clean Energy (SDG 7), Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG 8), Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG 11), and Climate Action (SDG 13). The study identifies stakeholder engagement, transparent reporting of sustainability outcomes, and investment in research and development for sustainable practices as three essential strategies for achieving effective SDG alignment. The case studies further demonstrate that UAE-based AEC companies are embedding environmental sustainability, gender equality, and responsible consumption within their core operations. Overall, the research proposes a conceptual framework to support AEC firms in aligning their activities with international sustainability standards while enabling policymakers, investors, and customers to evaluate the credibility of corporate sustainability commitments.

Khalufi, N.A.M. et al. (2025). This research (Grounded in Expectation-Confirmation Theory (ECT)) investigates how retail sustainability initiatives, including eco-packaging, green certifications, carbon footprint transparency, and product recommendations, affect customer

relationship quality (CRQ). Using Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) to analyse responses from 745 retail shoppers, the authors evaluated the impact of these practices on customer engagement, brand loyalty, and overall perception. The results reveal that eco-friendly initiatives substantially improve customer relationship quality and brand loyalty by increasing the perceived value of green actions. Additionally, the paper highlights how transparent and sustainable retail strategies actively advance United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, specifically SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).

Lin, C. C. et al. (2025). Based on a survey of 140 guests at four eco-certified five-star hotels in Bali, this study evaluates the impact of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) practices on guest satisfaction, customer loyalty, and brand image within green hospitality. The analysis reveals that active commitment to SDGs directly elevates all three areas. Additionally, brand image serves as a crucial mediator that further strengthens the positive relationship between sustainability practices and both guest satisfaction and loyalty. Ultimately, transitioning to sustainable operations allows hotels to gain a competitive edge by appealing to modern eco-conscious travellers. To maximise these benefits, hotel operators should embed SDG goals into their operations and openly communicate these efforts to enhance consumer trust and support lasting profitability.

Abbas, S. et al. (2024). The article explores how eco-labels and green advertising influence consumers' intentions to purchase environmentally friendly products in a price-sensitive developing-country setting. Using survey data and PLS-SEM, the study finds that eco-label involvement and green advertising positively affect green purchase intention, whereas higher perceived prices discourage consumers. Environmental awareness, green trust, information quality, and perceived product effectiveness also play important roles. The findings suggest that combining trustworthy eco-labels with clear and informative green advertising can encourage sustainable consumption and contribute to SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production). However, reducing price barriers and preventing greenwashing are essential for strengthening consumer confidence and adoption.

Vuong et al. (2024) investigate how green marketing strategies influence consumers' intentions to buy eco-friendly FMCG products in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. Based on 291 consumer responses, the study finds that green branding, product innovation, distribution, pricing, and advertising positively affect green purchase intentions. However, competitive intensity does not significantly strengthen the effects of green branding and advertising. The findings highlight green marketing as an important tool for promoting sustainable consumption and supporting SDGs 12 and 13.

Nguyen, L. T. V. et al. (2024) investigate the integration of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into higher education coursework through Problem-Based Learning (PBL), examining RMIT University Vietnam's School of Communication & Design. A two-step methodology combining content analysis and semi-automated mapping revealed that although all 17 SDGs appear across the school's offerings, coverage remains uneven, with strong emphasis on Quality Education (SDG 4) and Decent Work (SDG 8) compared to minimal attention on poverty, water management, and ocean life. Furthermore, course content leans toward abstract theory and international examples rather than actionable, localised practice. Anchored in transformative learning theory, the authors offer an adaptable curriculum mapping model designed to assist universities in tailoring SDG content to specific fields and better preparing graduates for sustainability-driven professions.

Delacroix, E. (2024). Explores a hands-on learning experiment in a Master's "Sustainable Marketing" class aimed at deepening student involvement with the UN Sustainable Development Goals, specifically SDG12: Responsible Consumption and Production. Grounded in Sipos et al.'s Transformative

Sustainability Learning (TSL) framework, which combines cognitive (head), practical (hands), and emotional (heart) engagement, students worked together to weave a rug from upcycled clothing and set a fair retail price. By contrasting the actual labour and material costs of their handmade rug with typical market prices, students directly confronted the complex tension between economic gain, social equity, and environmental care. In the end, the project reshaped their perspectives, highlighting how core marketing strategies can be reframed to elevate perceived product value and boost consumer willingness to pay for ethically made, sustainable goods.

Braimah, S. M. et al. (2023). Grounded in a developing economy context, this research examines the impact of consumers' prior green product experiences and eco-label trust on their perceived value, satisfaction, and brand loyalty. The authors used partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) to analyse survey responses from 578 consumers in Ghana. Results show that direct experience with green products together with trust in eco-labels substantially boost perceived value and satisfaction. In turn, green perceived value leads to higher customer satisfaction, which ultimately strengthens brand loyalty toward eco-friendly products, offering valuable guidance for sustainability marketing strategies.

Collier et al. (2022) show that undergraduate business programmes can incorporate the UN SDGs quickly through changes to individual courses, rather than waiting for a complete curriculum overhaul. Based on survey responses from 565 students before and after SDG-related learning activities, the study found that substantial assignments improved students' awareness of the SDGs, willingness to learn more, and confidence in supporting sustainable development after graduation. The most influential factor was faculty members' ability to convincingly link the SDGs to business relevance. Results were consistent across courses and business majors, indicating that sustainability can be embedded throughout the curriculum. However, the results are limited because the same students were not tracked across both surveys and there was no non-SDG comparison group.

Lin, Y. T. et al. (2022). By merging the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) with the Value-Based Adoption Model, this study explores the primary factors motivating consumers to use durable, multiuse containers at retail stores repeatedly. Through structural equation modelling of 518 survey replies, the researchers established that perceived value, working alongside classic TPB determinants such as attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control, directly boosts reuse intention. Perceived value is mainly driven upward by monetary savings and identity expressiveness (both personal and social self-representation), while being hampered by perceived inconvenience. Furthermore, perceived value operates as a key mediating mechanism: it entirely absorbs the adverse impact of inconvenience while partially mediating the positive influences of financial savings and identity expressiveness on consumer intent to reuse. Based on these insights, retailers can encourage lasting sustainable behaviours by introducing monetary rewards, minimising user friction via social media channels, and aligning eco-friendly practices with consumer identity.

Amoako, G. K. et al. (2022) examine how key green marketing tactics, such as promotional campaigns, eco-friendly packaging, and pricing, drive consumer purchasing habits and advance the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) within Ghana. Based on structural equation modelling applied to 622 survey responses, the researchers confirmed that eco-conscious marketing efforts directly boost sustainable buying decisions. Additionally, the study highlights price as a critical mediating variable: although the premium cost associated with sustainable products often deters consumers, developing strong brand loyalty effectively offsets this price sensitivity and promotes eco-friendly shopping choices.

Palakshappa, N. and Dodds, S. (2021). Investigates how brand co-creation can advance UN Sustainable Development Goal 12 by fostering sustainable consumption and production

practices. Focusing on two fashion brands through an embedded case study approach, the authors used an expanded Customer Brand Co-creation Model to evaluate interactions between consumers and brands. The study reveals that strategic marketing and branding effectively drive sustainability when companies treat consumers as key participants in value creation. Consequently, the authors conclude that to successfully encourage eco-friendly consumer behaviour, sustainability must be fully embedded within a firm's core operational strategy and brand experience rather than treated as a secondary goal.

Fuchs, P. et al. (2020) outline how higher education institutions (HEIs) can customize the Balanced Scorecard (BSC) into a strategic management framework aimed at driving green marketing initiatives and advancing sustainable development goals. Grounded in an evaluation of best practices from four global universities, the researchers categorised key performance indicators into five distinct green marketing domains: external public, internal public, general public opinion, product, and strategy. By utilizing a cause-and-effect strategy map, this structured model assists HEIs in setting and achieving green marketing objectives alongside broader environmental management agendas. Consequently, institutions gain a robust system to continuously monitor, track, and transparently convey their sustainability progress to both internal and external stakeholders.

Research Gap:

Existing Research on green marketing and SDGs largely relies on cross-sectional, self-reported data about attitudes, awareness, and purchase intentions, offering limited insight into actual behavioural shifts or sustained outcomes. Work on embedding SDGs in business and commerce curricula tends to prioritise awareness-raising, and studies on sustainable branding and green retailing seldom investigate how such knowledge is systematically integrated into commerce education or translated into the competencies and practices of future retail professionals. As a result, there is a notable lack of empirical studies that directly connect SDG-oriented commerce education with observable sustainable market behaviour and practice. Specifically, existing literature provides little evidence on how incorporating sustainable branding and green retail experiences into commerce programmes can build SDG literacy, influence students' sustainable consumption and career-related intentions, and equip them to develop credible, value-creating, and non-greenwashing retail strategies that address challenges related to price, equity, perceived value, trust, and the pursuit of multiple SDGs.

Research Methodology:

Research Design: The study adopts a descriptive and comparative research design to examine documented relationships identified in the secondary data. It uses a mixed-method synthesis that integrates quantitative indicators, such as the frequency of SDG-oriented courses, sustainability rankings or indices, and green sales performance, with qualitative evidence, including curriculum descriptions, institutional narratives, and corporate sustainability communication strategies.

Sampling: The sampling process will include studies and reports published from 2015 onwards, following the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The selected literature and documents will focus on commerce, business, and management education in which sustainability or SDG-related concepts are explicitly incorporated. In addition, the sample will cover retail and other consumer-facing sectors where sustainable branding and green retail experiences are documented, assessed, or measured. Priority will be given to sources that provide quantifiable indicators or systematically reported outcomes, including sustainability-related curriculum elements, learning outcomes, organisational sustainability key performance indicators (KPIs), and customer-facing measures of sustainable practices.

Data Sources:

- Academic literature: Peer-reviewed journal articles and conference proceedings addressing green marketing, sustainable branding, green retailing, and the integration of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into commerce and business education.
- Institutional documents: University curriculum frameworks, course outlines, accreditation and quality-assurance reports, and sustainability or SDG-related publications issued by higher education institutions.
- Industry and corporate reports: Sustainability and integrated reports, corporate social responsibility disclosures, ESG ratings, and sustainability indices related to the retail sector.
- International databases: Relevant datasets published by organisations such as the United Nations, OECD, and World Bank, particularly those containing indicators related to SDG outcomes in education, sustainable consumption, and responsible business practices.

Data Analysis:

The data analysis will be conducted in multiple stages. First, a content analysis of curricula and institutional documents will be undertaken by systematically coding commerce and business programmes for the inclusion of SDG-related courses, sustainable branding, green marketing, and retail sustainability topics. The learning outcomes will then be categorised according to their cognitive and behavioural orientation, ranging from basic awareness and critical thinking to the development of practical skills and behavioural transformation. Second, corporate and industry reports, including sustainability and integrated reports, will be examined to identify references to the SDGs, green branding, sustainable retail design, equitable pricing, and commitments to preventing greenwashing. Where data are available, relevant indicators will be extracted, including the share of sustainable product offerings, use of environmental labels, customer engagement initiatives, and measures of consumer trust and loyalty. The study will subsequently apply descriptive and comparative statistical techniques to assess the prevalence and intensity of sustainability and SDG-related themes across educational curricula and corporate practices. Cross-tabulations and correlation analysis may also be conducted, where appropriate, to examine potential relationships between the maturity of SDG-focused commerce education at institutional or regional levels and indicators of sustainable branding and retail performance. Finally, a thematic synthesis will be performed across the educational and corporate sources. This analysis will explore how competencies promoted through SDG-oriented commerce education, such as ethical decision-making, stakeholder consideration, and organisational transparency, are reflected in actual branding and retail strategies. It will also identify areas of alignment, gaps, and inconsistencies between educational objectives and observed market practices.

Findings:

Based on the analysis of the secondary data, the study is expected to generate findings across several dimensions. First, it may reveal a growing integration of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), sustainable marketing, and ethical decision-making within commerce education. However, the extent and depth of this integration are likely to vary considerably across programmes, particularly in relation to the assessment of behavioural outcomes. Although many curricula may focus on students' awareness and conceptual understanding of sustainability, fewer programmes are expected to evaluate behavioural intentions or develop practice-oriented competencies related to sustainable branding and green retailing. The findings may also indicate some degree of alignment between educational initiatives and market practices. Institutions with well-established sustainability orientations may be located in regions or sectors where companies demonstrate more advanced sustainable branding

and green retail strategies. Nevertheless, this relationship is likely to remain largely indirect, as there may be limited empirical evidence demonstrating that graduates of SDG-oriented programmes directly contribute to or drive changes in market practices. With regard to sustainable branding and green retail experiences, the analysis may identify an increasing use of eco-labels, sustainability narratives, and environmentally oriented in-store experiences. At the same time, firms may continue to face challenges associated with pricing, perceived consumer value, and trust. The data may also reveal instances of superficial sustainability communication or potential greenwashing, highlighting inconsistencies between the educational emphasis on integrity and stakeholder responsibility and the way sustainability claims are communicated in the marketplace. The study is further expected to identify important gaps in measurement and the integration of multiple SDGs. Longitudinal and robust indicators linking SDG-focused education with career decisions, sustainable consumption behaviour, and professional practices appear likely to be limited. In addition, curricula and retail strategies may not adequately combine environmental priorities with concerns related to social equity, decent work, and responsible consumption. Consequently, sustainability efforts may remain fragmented rather than developing into comprehensive, interconnected approaches. Overall, these findings are expected to demonstrate a partial but incomplete relationship between SDG-oriented commerce education and outcomes related to sustainable branding and green retailing.

Conclusion:

Drawing on secondary data, this study examines the relatively underexplored relationship between SDG-focused commerce education and observable sustainable market behaviour, with particular emphasis on sustainable branding and green retail experiences. The analysis indicates that although SDG-related themes are becoming increasingly incorporated into commerce curricula and sustainability is gaining importance in retail branding, the influence of educational initiatives on actual market behaviour remains inadequately documented and inconsistently assessed. Commerce education continues to emphasise sustainability awareness and theoretical understanding, while marketplace practices reflect both progress in sustainability communication and continuing concerns related to greenwashing, unequal pricing, and the limited consideration of interconnected SDGs. Overall, the study identifies a structural disconnect between the SDG literacy and ethical competencies promoted through commerce education and the sustainability practices currently visible in branding and retail environments. Bridging this gap will require more consistent and comprehensive measurement frameworks, long-term monitoring of graduates' professional and behavioural outcomes, and stronger collaboration among academic institutions, industry stakeholders, and policymakers.

Recommendations:

For Commerce and Business Educators:

- **Apply Practical Learning:** Move beyond theory by integrating hands-on projects, simulations, and anti-greenwashing strategies into the assessed curriculum.
- **Assess Ethical Impact:** Design evaluation metrics that measure ethical decision-making and students' ability to balance economic, environmental, and social goals.
- **Co-Create Curricula:** Work directly with industry partners to build learning modules centered on real-world challenges like fair pricing, transparency, and consumer trust.

For Universities & Policy Makers:

- **Incentivize SDG Integration:** Update accreditation and ranking standards to reward institutions that connect sustainability education to real graduate impact.
- **Track Graduate Outcomes:** Build long-term tracking systems to measure how graduates drive sustainable practices throughout their careers.

- **Standardize Reporting:** Establish open data guidelines to compare how effectively different institutions translate sustainability education into market and societal progress.

For Industry and Retail Firms:

- **Partner with Educators:** Offer internships, mentorships, and live projects that train students in transparent and equitable green retail strategies.
- **Enhance Transparency & Metrics:** Improve how sustainability performance is measured and shared, specifically regarding affordability, multi-SDG goals, and customer trust.
- **Prioritize Green Competencies:** Align hiring and employee development with sustainability skills, actively seeking candidates trained in responsible branding and stakeholder management.

For Future Research:

- **Trace Long-Term Effects:** Carry out multi-year, data-driven studies to examine how sustainability-focused education influences individual habits, corporate practices, and broader markets.
- **Identify Regional & Sector Best Practices:** Investigate variations across different industries and regions to determine what works best and adapt those strategies globally.

Rather than focusing solely on basic awareness, these recommendations promote a practical, data-driven approach to teaching sustainable branding and eco-conscious retail. By embedding these practices directly into business education, institutions can drive meaningful progress toward achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

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