

Green Marketing Practices in Bangladesh's Ready-Made Garment Sector: Sustainability Strategies, Challenges, and Market Opportunities

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ABSTRACT

The global fashion industry is increasingly shifting toward sustainable production and environmentally responsible marketing practices. As one of the world's largest apparel exporters, Bangladesh's Ready-Made Garment (RMG) sector faces growing pressure from international buyers, regulators, and consumers to adopt green marketing and sustainable manufacturing strategies. This study examines the adoption of green marketing practices within Bangladesh's RMG sector, focusing on sustainability strategies, implementation challenges, and emerging market opportunities. Using a qualitative industry analysis and case-based approach, the research draws on both primary insights from industry stakeholders and secondary data from academic literature, industry reports, and sustainability publications. The findings indicate that many garment manufacturers are integrating environmentally friendly practices such as the use of organic and recycled materials, energy-efficient production technologies, and sustainable supply chain management. These practices not only help reduce environmental impacts but also enhance brand reputation and competitiveness in global markets. However, the sector continues to face several challenges, including high costs associated with sustainable production, limited access to eco-friendly raw materials, insufficient infrastructure for green technologies, and limited consumer awareness in local markets. Despite these constraints, the growing global demand for sustainable fashion, increasing government support for green initiatives, and technological advancements in eco-friendly production present significant opportunities for the RMG sector. The study highlights that effective green marketing strategies can enable Bangladeshi garment manufacturers to strengthen their position in international markets while contributing to environmental sustainability. The findings provide valuable insights for policymakers, industry practitioners, and researchers seeking to promote sustainable development and green innovation within the global apparel supply chain.

Keywords: Green Marketing, Sustainable Fashion, Ready-Made Garment (RMG) Industry, Sustainability Strategies, Sustainable Supply Chain, Bangladesh

INTRODUCTION

The global apparel industry has undergone significant transformation in recent decades as environmental sustainability has become a central concern for governments, businesses, and consumers. The fashion sector is widely recognized as one of the most resource-intensive industries, contributing substantially to water consumption, chemical pollution, carbon emissions, and textile waste (Bick, Halsey, & Ekenga, 2018). As awareness of these environmental impacts has grown, stakeholders across the global supply chain have increasingly demanded more sustainable and responsible production practices. Consequently, the concept of green marketing, which promotes environmentally friendly products and sustainable business practices, has gained considerable importance in the apparel industry (Peattie & Crane, 2005; Dangelico & Vocalelli, 2017). Green marketing emphasizes the development, promotion, and distribution of products that minimize environmental harm while meeting consumer needs and maintaining economic viability (Polonsky, 1994). In the

context of the fashion industry, green marketing involves the adoption of eco-friendly materials, energy-efficient production methods, sustainable supply chain management, and transparent communication regarding environmental practices (Grant, 2007; Ottman, 2011).

The increasing emphasis on sustainability is particularly significant for countries that play a major role in global apparel production. Bangladesh, which is currently one of the largest exporters of ready-made garments (RMG) in the world, relies heavily on the garment industry as a key driver of economic growth and employment. The RMG sector contributes significantly to the country's export earnings and provides employment to millions of workers, making it a vital component of the national economy. However, the rapid growth of the industry has also raised concerns regarding environmental sustainability, resource consumption, and industrial waste management (Ahmed & Hossain, 2019). As global buyers and consumers become more environmentally conscious, manufacturers in Bangladesh are facing increasing pressure to adopt sustainable production practices and integrate green marketing strategies into their business operations.

In response to these pressures, many companies within Bangladesh's RMG sector have begun implementing environmentally responsible initiatives aimed at reducing their environmental footprint and enhancing their global competitiveness. These initiatives include the use of organic and recycled materials, adoption of energy-efficient technologies, implementation of waste reduction systems, and compliance with international environmental certifications such as the Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS) and the Global Recycled Standard (GRS). Such practices not only contribute to environmental sustainability but also help companies build stronger brand reputations and maintain long-term relationships with international buyers who prioritize ethical and sustainable sourcing (Islam, Perry, & Gill, 2020; Rahman & Islam, 2021). At the same time, the growing demand for sustainable fashion has also been driven by changes in consumer behavior. Modern consumers are increasingly aware of environmental issues and are more likely to consider sustainability when making purchasing decisions. Studies indicate that a significant proportion of consumers are willing to pay a premium for environmentally friendly products and are more likely to support brands that demonstrate transparency and social responsibility (Young et al., 2010; Joshi & Rahman, 2015). This shift in consumer preferences has encouraged fashion companies to incorporate sustainability into their marketing strategies and communicate their environmental commitments more effectively. As a result, green marketing has become an important tool for companies seeking to differentiate themselves in competitive markets while addressing environmental concerns (Chen, 2010; Rahbar & Wahid, 2011).

Despite the increasing adoption of green marketing practices, several challenges continue to hinder the widespread implementation of sustainability initiatives in the garment industry. Sustainable production often involves higher costs due to the use of environmentally friendly materials, advanced technologies, and certification requirements. Many manufacturers, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises, may face financial and technological barriers when attempting to transition toward sustainable production methods (Seuring & Müller, 2008; Carter & Rogers, 2008). Additionally, the availability of sustainable raw materials and access to green technologies may be limited in developing countries, further complicating the adoption of environmentally responsible practices (Sarkis, 2012). These challenges highlight the need for industry-wide collaboration, supportive government policies, and technological innovation to facilitate the transition toward sustainable production in the garment sector. In Bangladesh's RMG industry, the adoption of green marketing practices has been gradually increasing as companies seek to respond to global sustainability trends. A growing number of manufacturers have invested in green factories, energy-efficient technologies, and environmentally responsible supply chain practices. The Bangladesh garment sector is now recognized internationally for hosting a large number of Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certified factories, demonstrating the industry's commitment to improving environmental performance (BGMEA, 2023). However, while progress has been made, the integration of green marketing strategies across the entire sector remains uneven, with significant differences in sustainability practices among firms. Although previous studies have examined sustainability and environmental practices within the global fashion industry, relatively limited research has focused specifically on green marketing strategies within Bangladesh's RMG sector. In particular, there is a lack of comprehensive analysis exploring how sustainability initiatives are implemented by garment manufacturers, what challenges they face in adopting green marketing practices, and what opportunities exist for expanding sustainable production within the sector. Understanding these factors is essential for developing effective

strategies that can support both environmental sustainability and long-term industry competitiveness.

Against this background, the present study aims to examine green marketing practices in Bangladesh's Ready-Made Garment sector, with a particular focus on sustainability strategies, implementation challenges, and emerging market opportunities. By analyzing industry trends, sustainability initiatives, and organizational practices, this study seeks to provide insights into how green marketing can contribute to both environmental sustainability and business performance in the garment industry. The findings are expected to contribute to the existing literature on sustainable marketing and provide practical implications for policymakers, industry practitioners, and researchers interested in promoting sustainable development within global apparel supply chains.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of Green Marketing

Green marketing has emerged as an important strategy for organizations seeking to address environmental challenges while maintaining competitiveness in global markets. The concept broadly refers to the development, promotion, and distribution of products and services that are environmentally sustainable and socially responsible (Polonsky, 1994). Unlike traditional marketing approaches, green marketing integrates environmental considerations into product design, production processes, packaging, and communication strategies. According to Peattie and Crane (2005), green marketing reflects a shift from purely profit-driven business models toward sustainable practices that consider ecological and social impacts alongside economic performance. The growing significance of green marketing can be attributed to increasing environmental concerns, stricter regulatory frameworks, and heightened consumer awareness of sustainability issues. Companies are increasingly incorporating environmentally friendly practices into their marketing strategies in order to reduce environmental impacts while meeting evolving consumer expectations (Ottman, 2011). Grant (2007) further argues that green marketing should not be viewed solely as a promotional tool but rather as a comprehensive business philosophy that integrates sustainability into every aspect of corporate operations. In recent years, green marketing has also been closely linked to sustainable development and corporate social responsibility (CSR). Organizations adopting green marketing strategies often aim to minimize environmental damage while simultaneously enhancing brand reputation and consumer trust (Dangelico & Vocalelli, 2017). These strategies include the use of environmentally friendly materials, energy-efficient production methods, sustainable supply chains, and transparent communication regarding environmental performance. As environmental sustainability becomes an increasingly important global priority, green marketing has evolved from a niche concept into a mainstream business strategy.

Sustainability in the Global Fashion Industry

The global fashion industry has faced growing criticism for its environmental and social impacts. The sector is responsible for significant levels of pollution, resource consumption, and waste generation. For example, the production of textiles requires large amounts of water and energy, while chemical dyes and finishing processes contribute to water contamination in many manufacturing regions (Bick, Halsey, & Ekenga, 2018). In addition, the fast fashion business model encourages rapid consumption and disposal of clothing, leading to increased textile waste and environmental degradation. As a response to these concerns, the concept of sustainable fashion has gained increasing attention among researchers, policymakers, and industry stakeholders. Sustainable fashion refers to the design, production, distribution, and consumption of clothing in ways that minimize environmental harm while promoting ethical labor practices and responsible resource use (Fletcher, 2008). According to Niinimäki (2020), sustainable fashion emphasizes the use of environmentally friendly materials, circular production models, and longer product life cycles to reduce the environmental footprint of the apparel industry. Many global fashion brands have begun incorporating sustainability into their business strategies in order to meet changing consumer expectations and regulatory requirements. Companies such as Patagonia, H&M, and Nike have introduced sustainable collections, adopted recycling initiatives, and improved transparency within their supply chains. Circular economy models, which focus on recycling materials and reducing waste, have also become increasingly important in promoting sustainable fashion practices (Geissdoerfer et al., 2017; Kirchherr,

Reike, & Hekkert, 2017). Despite these advancements, challenges remain in implementing sustainability across the fashion industry. The complexity of global supply chains, high production costs associated with eco-friendly materials, and limited consumer awareness in certain markets continue to hinder the widespread adoption of sustainable fashion practices (Joy et al., 2012; Mukendi et al., 2020).

Sustainable Supply Chain Management in the Apparel Industry

Sustainable supply chain management plays a critical role in promoting environmental sustainability within the apparel industry. Supply chains in the fashion sector often involve multiple stages of production, including raw material sourcing, textile manufacturing, garment assembly, and distribution. Each stage of the supply chain has potential environmental impacts, such as energy consumption, chemical pollution, and waste generation. Seuring and Müller (2008) emphasize that sustainable supply chain management requires organizations to integrate environmental and social considerations into supply chain decision-making processes. Similarly, Carter and Rogers (2008) propose that sustainable supply chain management involves balancing economic, environmental, and social objectives to achieve long-term sustainability. This approach encourages companies to adopt environmentally responsible practices such as resource efficiency, waste reduction, and sustainable sourcing. In the apparel industry, sustainable supply chain practices often include the use of organic or recycled materials, implementation of energy-efficient technologies, and adherence to international sustainability certifications. Zhu, Sarkis, and Lai (2013) argue that the adoption of green supply chain practices can improve both environmental performance and operational efficiency. By reducing resource consumption and minimizing waste, companies can achieve cost savings while simultaneously improving their environmental reputation. However, implementing sustainable supply chains can be challenging for manufacturers operating in developing countries. Limited access to eco-friendly raw materials, insufficient technological infrastructure, and financial constraints may hinder the adoption of environmentally responsible production methods (Sarkis, 2012). These challenges highlight the need for supportive government policies and industry collaboration to facilitate sustainable supply chain development.

Green Marketing and Consumer Behavior

Consumer behavior plays a significant role in the success of green marketing strategies. As environmental awareness increases, consumers are becoming more conscious of the environmental and social impacts of their purchasing decisions. This shift in consumer attitudes has encouraged companies to adopt green marketing practices that highlight environmental sustainability and ethical production. Young et al. (2010) note that consumers increasingly consider environmental factors when purchasing products, particularly in industries such as fashion where environmental impacts are widely publicized. Similarly, Joshi and Rahman (2015) identify several factors influencing green purchase behavior, including environmental awareness, perceived product quality, price sensitivity, and trust in sustainability claims. Green brand image also plays an important role in shaping consumer perceptions and purchasing decisions. Chen (2010) argues that companies with strong environmental reputations can enhance brand equity and build long-term relationships with environmentally conscious consumers. Rahbar and Wahid (2011) further suggest that effective green marketing communication can increase consumer trust and encourage the adoption of sustainable consumption patterns. Nevertheless, consumer skepticism toward environmental claims remains a significant challenge for companies implementing green marketing strategies. Some consumers question the authenticity of environmental claims made by companies, particularly when these claims are perceived as marketing tactics rather than genuine sustainability efforts. This phenomenon, often referred to as "greenwashing," can undermine consumer trust and reduce the effectiveness of green marketing initiatives.

Green Marketing in Bangladesh's RMG Sector

Bangladesh's Ready-Made Garment sector plays a crucial role in the global apparel supply chain and represents one of the largest contributors to the country's economic growth. Over the past several decades, the industry has expanded rapidly, making Bangladesh one of the leading exporters of garments worldwide. However, the environmental impacts associated with garment manufacturing have raised concerns regarding sustainability within the sector. Recent studies indicate that the Bangladeshi garment industry has begun adopting

environmentally sustainable practices in response to international market pressures and increasing regulatory requirements (Ahmed & Hossain, 2019). Many manufacturers are investing in energy-efficient technologies, wastewater treatment systems, and sustainable raw materials to reduce their environmental footprint. According to Islam, Perry, and Gill (2020), Bangladesh has emerged as a global leader in the development of environmentally certified garment factories. The country currently hosts a large number of LEED-certified factories, reflecting the industry's commitment to improving environmental performance. Additionally, manufacturers are increasingly adopting sustainability certifications such as the Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS) and the Global Recycled Standard (GRS) in order to meet international buyer requirements. Despite these positive developments, significant challenges remain in promoting green marketing within the RMG sector. Limited access to sustainable raw materials, high implementation costs, and lack of technological infrastructure continue to hinder the widespread adoption of environmentally responsible practices (Rahman & Islam, 2021). Furthermore, smaller manufacturers may struggle to meet the financial and technical requirements associated with sustainability certifications. Nevertheless, the growing global demand for sustainable fashion presents significant opportunities for Bangladesh's garment industry. As international brands increasingly prioritize environmentally responsible sourcing, Bangladeshi manufacturers that adopt green marketing strategies can strengthen their competitive position within the global apparel market.

Research Gap

Although previous studies have explored sustainability and environmental practices within the global fashion industry, relatively limited research has focused specifically on green marketing strategies within Bangladesh's Ready-Made Garment sector. Existing research has primarily examined environmental compliance, labor standards, and supply chain sustainability, with less attention given to marketing strategies that promote environmentally responsible products. Furthermore, there is limited empirical analysis examining how green marketing practices are implemented by garment manufacturers, what challenges they face in adopting sustainable marketing strategies, and what opportunities exist for expanding environmentally responsible production within the sector. Addressing these gaps is essential for understanding how green marketing can support both environmental sustainability and long-term competitiveness in the garment industry.

Therefore, this study aims to contribute to the existing literature by providing a comprehensive analysis of green marketing practices in Bangladesh's Ready-Made Garment sector, focusing on sustainability strategies, challenges, and emerging market opportunities.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study examines green marketing practices in Bangladesh's Ready-Made Garment (RMG) sector by drawing on three key theoretical perspectives: Stakeholder Theory, the Resource-Based View (RBV), and Diffusion of Innovation (DOI) Theory. These theories provide a conceptual basis for understanding how firms adopt environmentally sustainable practices and how such practices contribute to competitiveness and sustainability within the garment industry.

Stakeholder theory suggests that organizations must consider the expectations and interests of various stakeholders, including customers, suppliers, governments, employees, and local communities (Freeman, 1984). In the context of green marketing, stakeholders increasingly expect firms to adopt environmentally responsible practices and contribute to sustainable development. Within the global apparel industry, international buyers, environmental organizations, and consumers play a significant role in encouraging manufacturers to adopt sustainable practices. As global fashion brands emphasize ethical sourcing and environmental responsibility, garment manufacturers in Bangladesh face increasing pressure to reduce environmental impacts and integrate sustainability into their marketing strategies. By adopting green marketing practices, firms can strengthen relationships with stakeholders, enhance brand reputation, and maintain competitiveness in international markets.

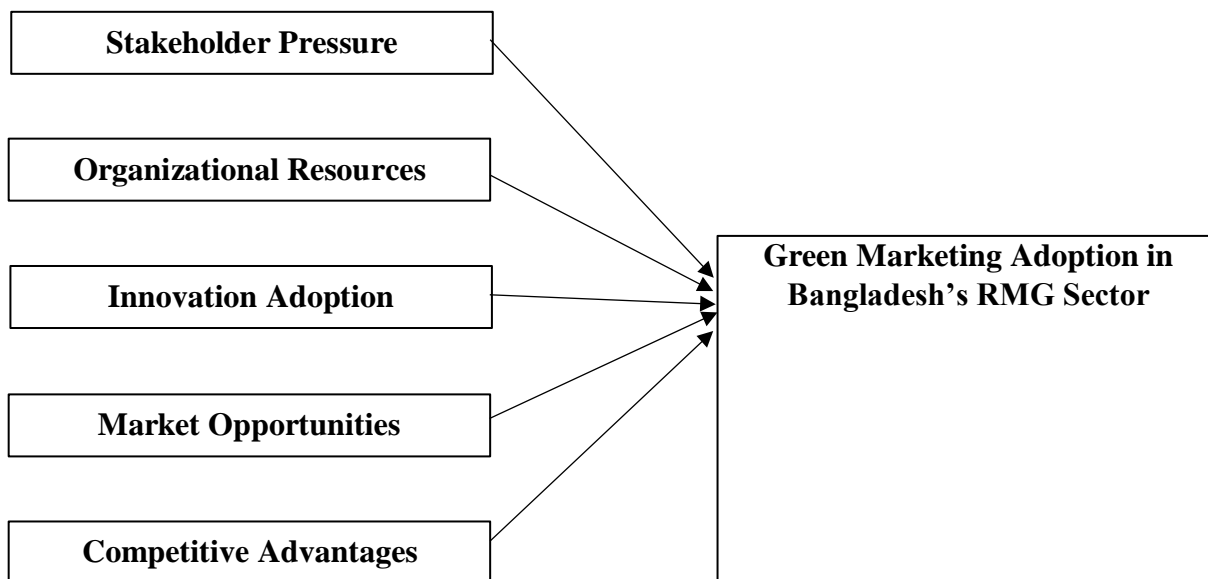
The Resource-Based View (RBV) explains how organizations achieve competitive advantage through valuable and unique resources and capabilities (Barney, 1991). In the context of sustainability, environmentally friendly

technologies, efficient production systems, and sustainable supply chain management can serve as strategic resources that differentiate firms from competitors. For garment manufacturers in Bangladesh, investments in green factories, energy-efficient technologies, and environmentally sustainable materials can improve operational efficiency and strengthen market positioning. These capabilities not only reduce environmental impacts but also help firms meet international sustainability standards and gain access to environmentally conscious markets.

The Diffusion of Innovation (DOI) theory explains how new ideas, technologies, and practices spread within an industry over time (Rogers, 2003). In the garment sector, green marketing practices can be viewed as innovations that are gradually adopted by firms seeking to improve sustainability and respond to global market demands. Larger and more resourceful firms often act as early adopters by implementing environmentally sustainable production methods and green marketing strategies. Over time, these practices may spread throughout the industry as other firms recognize their economic and reputational benefits. In Bangladesh’s RMG sector, the growing number of environmentally certified factories reflects the gradual diffusion of sustainability practices within the industry.

Based on these theoretical perspectives, this study proposes a conceptual framework in which stakeholder pressure, organizational resources, innovation adoption, market opportunities, and competitive advantages influence the implementation of green marketing practices within Bangladesh’s Ready-Made Garment (RMG) sector. These practices include sustainable sourcing of materials, energy-efficient production processes, waste reduction initiatives, and transparent communication of environmental performance. The adoption of such practices is expected to enhance environmental sustainability while simultaneously strengthening firms’ market positioning and generating competitive advantages for garment manufacturers operating in global markets.

Figure 1: Research Framework



Source: Author’s own elaboration

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative exploratory research design to examine green marketing practices within Bangladesh’s Ready-Made Garment (RMG) sector. The qualitative approach is appropriate because the study aims to explore sustainability strategies, industry challenges, and emerging opportunities related to green marketing rather than test specific quantitative hypotheses. Exploratory research is widely used in sustainability and marketing studies when the objective is to gain deeper insights into industry practices and emerging trends. The research focuses on understanding how garment manufacturers integrate environmentally sustainable

practices into their marketing and operational strategies. By examining sustainability initiatives within the RMG sector, the study aims to identify key drivers of green marketing adoption, the challenges faced by firms, and the potential opportunities that sustainable practices create in global apparel markets.

Data Collection

The study relies primarily on secondary data sources, complemented by insights derived from industry observations. Secondary data were collected from a wide range of credible sources, including academic journal articles, industry reports, sustainability reports, and publications from international organizations. Relevant information was gathered from sources such as the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), international sustainability organizations, and previous academic studies on sustainable fashion and green marketing. In addition, industry-related information was reviewed from reports on sustainable garment manufacturing practices, green factory initiatives, and environmental certifications within Bangladesh's RMG sector. These sources provided valuable insights into the current state of sustainability adoption and green marketing strategies among garment manufacturers. The use of secondary data allows for a comprehensive understanding of existing industry practices and sustainability trends while ensuring that the analysis is grounded in reliable and publicly available information.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using a qualitative content analysis approach. Content analysis enables researchers to systematically examine textual information from various sources and identify recurring themes, patterns, and relationships related to the research topic. In this study, the analysis focused on identifying key themes associated with green marketing practices, sustainability strategies, industry challenges, and market opportunities within the garment sector. The analysis process involved several steps. First, relevant literature and industry reports were reviewed to identify commonly discussed sustainability practices within the garment industry. Second, information related to environmental initiatives such as energy-efficient production technologies, sustainable sourcing of materials, and waste reduction practices was categorized and analyzed. Third, the findings were interpreted in relation to the theoretical perspectives presented in the conceptual framework, including stakeholder pressure, organizational resources, and innovation adoption. Through this analytical approach, the study provides a structured interpretation of how green marketing practices are implemented within Bangladesh's RMG sector and how these practices influence environmental sustainability and business competitiveness.

Conceptual Framework Application

The conceptual framework developed in this study serves as a guiding structure for the analysis. The framework suggests that several factors influence the adoption of green marketing practices within the RMG sector, including stakeholder pressure, organizational capabilities, and the diffusion of innovation within the industry. These factors shape how firms implement sustainability initiatives and integrate environmentally responsible practices into their marketing strategies. By applying this framework, the study evaluates how sustainability practices contribute to environmental improvements while simultaneously creating competitive advantages for garment manufacturers in international markets.

Stakeholder Insights

In addition to the analysis of secondary data sources, this study incorporated qualitative insights from industry stakeholders to better understand practical sustainability challenges in the ready-made garment (RMG) sector. Informal discussions and publicly available industry interviews with sustainability managers, factory executives, and industry analysts were reviewed to identify common green marketing practices and sustainability challenges faced by garment manufacturers in Bangladesh. These insights helped contextualize the findings of the study and provided a more practical understanding of sustainability strategies adopted by garment exporters. The inclusion of stakeholder perspectives strengthens the relevance of the study by linking theoretical analysis with real industry practices.

Research Limitations

Although this study provides valuable insights into green marketing practices within Bangladesh's RMG sector, certain limitations should be acknowledged. The research primarily relies on secondary data, which may limit the depth of firm-level insights into sustainability practices. In addition, the qualitative nature of the study does not allow for statistical measurement of the relationships among variables. Despite these limitations, the research provides a comprehensive overview of sustainability trends and green marketing practices within the garment industry and offers a foundation for future empirical research using quantitative or mixed-method approaches.

RESULTS

Adoption of Green Marketing Practices in the RMG Sector

The analysis reveals that Bangladesh's Ready-Made Garment (RMG) sector has increasingly adopted green marketing practices in response to global sustainability demands and stakeholder expectations. Many garment manufacturers have integrated environmentally responsible initiatives into their production processes and marketing strategies to improve their environmental performance and enhance their competitiveness in international markets. One of the most visible developments is the increasing number of environmentally certified garment factories in Bangladesh. Many factories have obtained international sustainability certifications such as Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED), Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS), and Global Recycled Standard (GRS). These certifications demonstrate manufacturers' commitment to environmentally responsible production and are often highlighted in marketing communications to attract environmentally conscious buyers and brands. In addition, several manufacturers have begun adopting eco-friendly materials, including organic cotton, recycled polyester, and biodegradable fabrics. These materials reduce environmental impacts while aligning with the sustainability requirements of global fashion brands.

Sustainable Production and Resource Efficiency

The findings indicate that sustainable production practices are becoming increasingly common within the RMG sector. Many garment factories have invested in energy-efficient machinery, water-saving technologies, and waste management systems to reduce their environmental footprint. Energy-efficient technologies, such as solar energy systems and advanced manufacturing equipment, have helped reduce energy consumption in garment production facilities. Similarly, water recycling systems and wastewater treatment plants have been implemented in several factories to minimize water pollution and conserve water resources. Waste reduction initiatives have also been introduced to manage textile waste generated during the production process. Some manufacturers have adopted recycling programs and circular production practices, where fabric waste is reused or repurposed into new products. These initiatives contribute to both environmental sustainability and cost efficiency.

Influence of Stakeholder Pressure

Stakeholder pressure emerged as a major driver of green marketing adoption within Bangladesh's garment industry. International fashion brands, environmental organizations, and regulatory authorities have increasingly demanded higher environmental standards from garment manufacturers. Global apparel brands often require their suppliers to comply with sustainability standards related to environmental management, chemical usage, and energy consumption. As a result, many Bangladeshi garment manufacturers have implemented green production practices in order to maintain business relationships with international buyers. Consumer awareness has also played a role in encouraging sustainable practices. Increasing demand for sustainable fashion in international markets has motivated garment manufacturers to incorporate green marketing strategies and communicate their sustainability efforts more effectively.

Challenges in Implementing Green Marketing

Despite the progress made in adopting sustainable practices, several challenges continue to hinder the widespread implementation of green marketing within the RMG sector. One major challenge is the high cost associated with sustainable production technologies and environmental certifications. Implementing energy-

efficient machinery, wastewater treatment systems, and sustainability certification programs requires significant financial investment, which may be difficult for smaller manufacturers to afford. Another challenge involves limited access to eco-friendly raw materials. Sustainable materials such as organic cotton and recycled fabrics are often more expensive and less readily available than conventional materials. This can increase production costs and reduce profitability for manufacturers. In addition, technological limitations and lack of technical expertise may hinder the adoption of advanced sustainability practices in certain factories. Many smaller manufacturers may lack the resources required to implement sophisticated environmental management systems (Sarna & Chowdhury, 2026).

Market Opportunities Created by Green Marketing

Despite these challenges, the results suggest that green marketing presents significant opportunities for Bangladesh's garment industry. The growing global demand for sustainable fashion has created new market opportunities for manufacturers that adopt environmentally responsible practices. Garment manufacturers that invest in sustainability initiatives can strengthen their relationships with international brands that prioritize ethical sourcing and environmental responsibility. In addition, sustainable practices can enhance brand reputation and improve market positioning in competitive global markets. Furthermore, government initiatives and industry collaborations aimed at promoting sustainable manufacturing may provide additional support for the adoption of green technologies in the RMG sector. As sustainability becomes an increasingly important factor in global trade, manufacturers that successfully integrate green marketing practices are likely to gain long-term competitive advantages.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study provide important insights into the adoption and implementation of green marketing practices within Bangladesh's Ready-Made Garment (RMG) sector. The results indicate that the industry has gradually begun integrating sustainability-oriented practices in response to growing environmental concerns and increasing stakeholder expectations. These findings are consistent with previous research that highlights the rising importance of sustainability within the global fashion industry (Niinimäki, 2020; Fletcher, 2008).

One of the key findings of the study is the increasing adoption of environmentally certified factories and sustainable production practices within the RMG sector. The expansion of LEED-certified factories and environmentally responsible production facilities demonstrates the industry's efforts to improve environmental performance while maintaining competitiveness in global markets. This development aligns with the Resource-Based View (RBV), which suggests that firms can achieve competitive advantage through the development of valuable and unique organizational capabilities (Barney, 1991). Investments in energy-efficient technologies, sustainable materials, and environmentally responsible supply chains can therefore serve as strategic resources that differentiate garment manufacturers in increasingly sustainability-conscious markets. The study also highlights the significant role of stakeholder pressure in promoting green marketing adoption within the RMG sector. International buyers, regulatory institutions, and environmentally conscious consumers are increasingly demanding higher environmental standards within the apparel supply chain. These pressures encourage manufacturers to implement sustainable production methods and communicate their environmental initiatives through green marketing strategies. This finding supports Stakeholder Theory, which emphasizes that organizations must respond to the expectations and interests of multiple stakeholders in order to maintain legitimacy and long-term success (Freeman, 1984). In the case of Bangladesh's garment industry, stakeholder expectations from global brands and sustainability-focused organizations have become a major catalyst for the adoption of environmentally responsible practices. Another important insight from the study relates to the diffusion of sustainability practices across the garment industry. Larger manufacturers with greater financial and technological resources tend to adopt environmentally responsible practices earlier than smaller firms. Over time, these practices gradually spread across the industry as other firms recognize the reputational and economic benefits associated with sustainability initiatives. This pattern of adoption reflects the principles of Diffusion of Innovation Theory (Rogers, 2003), which explains how new ideas and technologies spread within industries over time. The increasing number of environmentally certified factories in Bangladesh suggests that sustainability practices are gradually diffusing across the garment sector.

Despite these positive developments, the study also identifies several challenges that hinder the widespread adoption of green marketing practices within the industry. High costs associated with sustainable production technologies, limited access to eco-friendly raw materials, and technological constraints remain significant barriers for many manufacturers. These challenges are particularly pronounced among small and medium-sized enterprises that may lack the financial resources required to implement sustainability initiatives. Similar challenges have been identified in previous research on sustainable supply chain management and environmental innovation within developing countries (Seuring & Müller, 2008; Sarkis, 2012). At the same time, the study highlights the growing market opportunities created by sustainable fashion trends. Increasing consumer awareness of environmental issues and stronger sustainability requirements from international brands are encouraging manufacturers to adopt environmentally responsible practices. Firms that successfully integrate green marketing strategies into their operations may benefit from improved brand reputation, stronger buyer relationships, and enhanced competitiveness in international markets.

Bangladesh is one of the world's largest exporters of ready-made garments, competing with other major manufacturing countries such as Vietnam and India. While Bangladesh has made notable progress in green manufacturing through initiatives such as LEED-certified factories and improved energy efficiency, Vietnam has benefited from stronger government-driven sustainability policies and integration with global green supply chains. Similarly, India has implemented various sustainability initiatives in the textile sector, including eco-labeling and sustainable fiber programs. Compared with these countries, Bangladesh's competitive advantage lies in its growing number of green factories and increasing awareness of sustainable production practices. However, further policy support and technological innovation are necessary for Bangladesh to maintain its competitive position in the global sustainable apparel market.

While large garment manufacturers often have sufficient financial resources to implement advanced green technologies and obtain international environmental certifications, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) face greater financial and technological constraints. Nevertheless, SMEs can still adopt practical and cost-effective sustainability strategies. These include energy-efficient lighting systems, waste reduction practices, water recycling initiatives, and transparent communication of sustainability efforts to international buyers. By adopting gradual improvements and collaborating with sustainability programs supported by international buyers and NGOs, SMEs can also integrate into global sustainable supply chains. Encouraging SME participation in green marketing initiatives will be crucial for ensuring that sustainability improvements occur across the entire RMG sector in Bangladesh.

Overall, the findings of this study suggest that green marketing practices have the potential to contribute significantly to both environmental sustainability and economic growth within Bangladesh's garment industry. By responding to stakeholder expectations, developing sustainability-oriented capabilities, and adopting environmentally responsible innovations, garment manufacturers can strengthen their position in the global apparel market while supporting long-term sustainable development.

Limitations And Future Research

While this study provides valuable insights into green marketing practices within Bangladesh's Ready-Made Garment (RMG) sector, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the research primarily relies on secondary data sources, including academic literature, industry reports, and sustainability publications. Although these sources provide reliable and comprehensive information, the absence of extensive primary data limits the ability to capture firm-level perspectives and detailed operational insights regarding sustainability practices. Future studies could incorporate primary data collection methods such as surveys, interviews, or case studies involving garment manufacturers, industry experts, and policymakers to gain deeper insights into the implementation of green marketing strategies. Second, the study adopts a qualitative exploratory approach, which focuses on identifying trends and thematic patterns rather than statistically testing relationships among variables. While this approach is useful for understanding industry practices, quantitative research methods could provide empirical validation of the relationships proposed in the conceptual framework. Future research may therefore employ quantitative techniques such as regression analysis or structural equation modeling to examine the impact of green marketing practices on firm performance, environmental sustainability, and competitive

advantage. Third, this study focuses specifically on Bangladesh's RMG sector, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other industries or geographical contexts. Comparative studies across different countries or textile-producing regions could provide broader insights into how sustainability practices and green marketing strategies vary across global apparel supply chains. Another limitation of the study is that the analysis primarily reflects sustainability practices adopted by larger garment manufacturers, while small and medium-sized enterprises may face different challenges due to limited financial and technological resources. Future research could also explore consumer perceptions of sustainable fashion and investigate how green marketing influences purchasing behavior in both domestic and international markets.

CONCLUSION

This study explored green marketing practices within Bangladesh's Ready-Made Garment (RMG) sector, focusing on sustainability strategies, industry challenges, and emerging market opportunities. The findings indicate that the garment industry in Bangladesh is gradually integrating environmentally responsible practices in response to increasing global demand for sustainable fashion and growing pressure from international stakeholders. Sustainability initiatives such as the adoption of environmentally certified factories, energy-efficient production technologies, sustainable materials, and waste reduction systems are becoming increasingly common within the sector. The results suggest that green marketing practices can play a significant role in enhancing both environmental sustainability and business competitiveness. Firms that invest in environmentally friendly production processes and transparent sustainability communication are better positioned to meet international buyer requirements and strengthen their reputation in global markets. These practices align with the principles of stakeholder theory, resource-based view, and diffusion of innovation theory, which collectively explain how stakeholder expectations, organizational capabilities, and innovation adoption influence sustainability-oriented business strategies. However, the study also highlights several challenges that hinder the broader implementation of green marketing practices within the RMG sector. High investment costs associated with sustainable technologies, limited access to eco-friendly raw materials, and technological constraints remain major barriers for many manufacturers, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises. Addressing these challenges will require stronger collaboration among industry stakeholders, supportive government policies, and increased access to sustainable technologies and resources. Despite these challenges, the growing global demand for sustainable fashion presents significant opportunities for Bangladesh's garment industry. As environmental awareness continues to rise among consumers and international brands, manufacturers that successfully integrate green marketing strategies into their operations are likely to gain long-term competitive advantages. The continued development of green factories and sustainable production practices can further strengthen Bangladesh's position as a responsible and competitive player in the global apparel supply chain.

Overall, this study contributes to the understanding of sustainability practices and green marketing adoption within Bangladesh's RMG sector. The findings provide valuable insights for policymakers, industry practitioners, and researchers seeking to promote environmentally sustainable practices and enhance the long-term competitiveness of the garment industry.

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