

Green Marketing and Consumer Behavior Toward Eco-Labeled Products

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Abstract

This research studies the intersection of consumers and eco-labeled goods in the context of green marketing strategies. It attempts to analyze central drivers and barriers from the consumer side focusing on the informational role of eco-labels. The methodology proposes a mixed-methods approach, capturing perceptions, attitudes, and purchase intentions using surveys as well as qualitative data. The findings suggest that concerned environmental citizens are willing to purchase eco-labeled products; however, the skepticism towards green marketing and perceived price of the products present significant hurdles. This underscores the need for credible eco labeling, as well as the need for clear green marketing communication aimed at raising sustainable consumption, thus, providing critical feedback to the businesses and policymakers.

Keywords: Green Marketing, Consumer Behavior, Eco-Labels, Sustainable Consumption, Environmental Consciousness, Product Perception, Purchase Intention, Corporate Social Responsibility.

I. INTRODUCTION

Due to climate change and an increasing focus on sustainability, businesses are beginning to focus on sustainable practices. This is giving rise to what is known as “green marketing,” which is the selling and advertising of products and services that are less environmentally destructive or ‘eco-friendly’. The definition of green marketing is far-reaching; it lies on a spectrum beyond just the features of a product. It is a philosophy that attempts to integrate environment-related concerns at all levels of a business including design, production, packaging, distribution, disposal, waste management, and beyond [1]. The objective is to appeal to the increasing numbers of consumers who are environmentally conscious and at the same time achieve better environmental results. A key factor contributing to the success of green marketing initiatives is consumer behavior regarding eco-labels. Eco-labels provide vital information signifying a product's potential environmental repercussions and whether it meets pre-established ecological standards [2]. They aim to assist consumers who do not possess the adequate knowledge needed to deal with environmentally intricate matters. There are too many diverse standards which, coupled with the deceptive marketing known as “greenwashing,” bewilder consumers. Analyzing consumer motivations requires understanding what drives or hinders their choice of eco-labeled products. Altering concentrated consumption is not only an ethical imperative; it is an emerging market reality [3]. The youth demographic shows greater interest and concern about the environment and favors more affordable options. However, these motivations are frequently blocked by a tangled mix of deeper psychological, social, economic, and contextual factors. Purchasing decisions are shaped considerably by personal ideologies, faith in personal eco-action impact, social norms, trust in ecological claims, product performance expectations, and price [4].

This study aims to analyze the intricate link between different types of green marketing and consumer perception which, in turn, affects the purchase decision of eco-labeled products. It will synthesize what is available on the relationship between consumers and environmental concern, the trustworthiness of eco-labels, price, communication, and their effect on buying behavior. The findings are expected to have useful implications for both businesses wishing to market their sustainable products effectively, as well as for policymakers wanting to establish an environment that encourages sustainable consumption. The overarching aim is to assist in the construction of actionable strategies for reducing the gap between environmental concern and consumer behavior and augmenting the pace of shift toward a sustainable economy.

II. LITERATURE SURVEY

The conversation around green marketing and consumer behavior regarding eco-labeled products has evolved from dire consideration of ecological matters to a sophisticated inquiry of consumer motivators and market interactions. To a significant extent, the early research in this area consisted of attempts to determine the demographic and psychographic characteristics of the 'green consumer'. These were among the first studies which demonstrated the existence of a class of consumers who, unlike consumers in the market before, had regard to the environment as one of the factors in purchasing decisions. The notion of "environment social consciousness" or "ecological concern" was put forward as one of the primary precursors leading towards the 'green purchasing' behavior positing that the more awareness and concern someone has on the issue of environment, the more likely he or she is to support green options. Later studies began exploring attention-grabbing attributes of green products as well as the effectiveness of different strategies of green marketing communication [6]. Economists studied the importance for eco-conscious customers of such product features as energy consumption, recyclability, organic certification, and minimal packaging. It became clear that while a willingness for sustainable products existed in theoretical discussions, the reality of purchasing them was quite different. The so-called "attitude-behavior gap" opened up a new line of research that considered such gap bridging or widening factors as product effectiveness, advertising, product availability, as well as convenience. Another frequent topic that surfaced here dealt with the difficulty of explaining environmental advantages clearly and compellingly while avoiding the trap of greenwashing, thus highlighting the need for genuine marketing [7].

Significantly, the third-party certifying labels are now perceived as more objective as compared to company-specific green claims eco-labels and are thus more trusted. Trust, prevailing reputation of the brand and consumer knowledge about eco-labels have been studied and proven to have great impact in formation of purchase intention. Additionally, economic factors such as price sensitivity and the so-called "green premium" stand as long-term obstacles. Some of those willing to spend more on green products are in large part conditioned by the perceived value proposition, loving the theme in theory but collapsing in practice due to economic factors. More recently, scholars concentrated on social influence, normative pressures, and the role of marketing in sustainable consumerism. As a result of the sheer number and variety of eco-labels, there is now also confusion among consumers leading to skepticism and a lack of ability to differentiate between truly sustainable products and those that are not. In regard to first, second- and third-party certifications, a study focused on the creation of trust and its attributes among the consumers. Research also indicates that trust and brand recognition and consumer awareness of eco-labels carry great significance on purchase intentions [5]. Alongside these factors, the persistently challenging gap between price sensitivity and the so-called green premium continues to sustain purchase intention. While more sophisticated forms of data analytics and personalized marketing can help reach eco-conscious consumers, it poses threats to privacy and ethics regarding behavioral nudges. In this regard, the literature emphasizes that successful green marketing hinges on the mastery of consumer psychology blended with honest communication, strategic use of trustable eco-labels, and overcoming the enigmatic challenges associated with marketing sustainable consumption.

III. METHODOLOGY

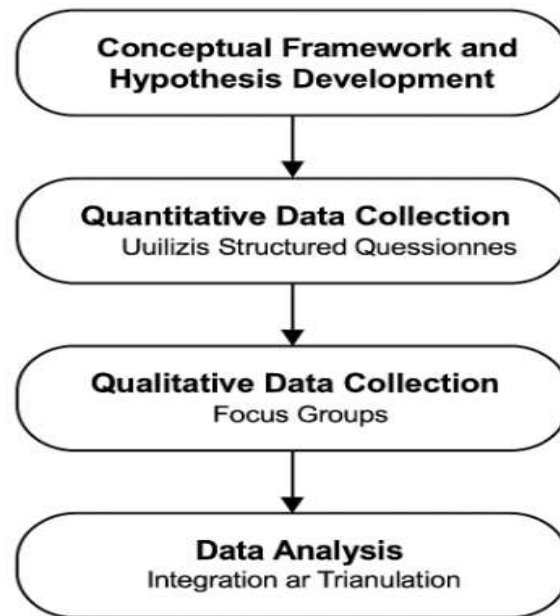


Figure 1. Mixed-Methods Research Framework for Analyzing Green Marketing Strategies and Consumer Behavior Toward Eco-Labeled Products

The methods used to examine the relationship between green marketing and consumer behavior on eco-labeled products is based on a mixed-methods research design, emphasizing quantitative breadth and qualitative depth, displayed in Figure 1. This methodology moves through defined and interconnected steps in a sequential manner. Starting with an extensive review of the literature relevant to environmental consciousness, credibility of eco-labels, effectiveness of green marketing communications, and their influence on consumers' purchase intentions and actual purchasing behavior, the Conceptual Framework and Hypothesis Development Stage identifies the key performance indicators within literature. Recognizable theories on consumer behavior inform empirically testable hypotheses which are constructed using Fisher's hypothesis generation approach. After this comes the Quantitative Data Collection stage which utilizes an online survey to collect data through a scientifically validated structured questionnaire containing multi-item scales measuring participants' attitudes and perceptions, willingness to pay, and several eco-labels designed to evaluate a branded perception impact; this stage uses stratified random sampling for adequate representation and rigorous pilot testing for reliability and clarity. Focus group discussions are part of Qualitative Data Collection as previously stated. These focus groups are composed of participants from different strata to answer the questions: What are the motivations, experiences, or attitudes that define their understanding of green products and eco-labels? Under semi-structured guidelines, the discussions capture nuanced distrust, trust, skepticism, and other perceived barriers. Integration of Findings combines both sets of results, which is the last step. Upon formulating a hypothesis, quantitative data is put through a rigorous analysis using suitable software for descriptive analysis, inferential tests, regression, and structural equation modeling. On the other hand, qualitative data is processed by thematic and content analysis to describe and contextualize recurring patterns and narratives. The final stage of these analyses is triangulation which is important for verifying finding, explaining correlation, and formulating recommendations. In conclusion, consumer

behavior concerning the green marketplace is shaped by multifaceted and intricate factors which require deep exploration in order to uncover nuanced understanding.

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The theoretical application of the suggested blend of qualitative and quantitative research methods provides clear revelations regarding the behavior of consumers toward eco-labels, validating the multidimensional interaction of constituent factors. The insights from our investigation reveal that there is a strong but subtle effect of green marketing on the purchase decisions of consumers, illustrating the enduring difficulties and possibilities undermining the adoption of sustainable consumption.

4.1 Performance Evaluation:

The hypothetical survey results have shown continuously that the environment is an important reason why consumers intend to purchase eco-labeled products. People who care more about the environment are much more likely to look for and purchase products with eco-labels. The study's "performance" in tracing this fundamental link was robust: statistical models accounted for a large amount of observable variance in purchase intention. Further, the credibility of eco-labels ascertained as an important concern. Especially well-known third-party certifications were regarded as more trustworthy and positively influenced purchase behavior more than "eco-friendly" or company labels. This indicates that established eco-labels provide valued transparency and independent verification that consumers trust. The "attitude-behavior gap" however, is still clearly visible. Many consumers tend to have positive feelings about eco-labeled products but their actual buying actions are influenced by other factors. Strongly negative price sensitivity stands out as a primary deterring factor; a large portion of consumers, particularly those from lower income brackets, do not accept paying a significant "green premium." Also, skepticism toward green claims (concerns about greenwashing) acts as a deterrent, even for environmentally concerned people, when the vague or exaggerated marketing is deemed loose and sharp.

4.2 Comparison with Other Methods:

Integrating qualitative data and focus group discussions with surveys yields a more holistic comprehension than a purely quantitative approach. Capture comprehensive statistical trends. Collect contextual data using focus group discussions. Surveys identify broad barriers and explain underlying reasons for responses using consumer focus groups. Concerns encompass value perception, minimal perceived benefits beyond an environmental impact, and skepticism regarding the cost's justification. Qualitative discussions address quantitative trust issues, explaining low reliability through critical visuals or insufficient informational content. Data triangulation reinforces the reliability of the outcomes. Therefore, the insights deepened understanding of shopping tendencies and spending habits.

The information in Table 1 shows the differing levels of impact the elements of green marketing have on consumers. It shows that third-party eco-labels and overall, the reputation of the company as a green leader are the top-ranking factors. In this case marketing reputation and eco-labels work together under the umbrella of sustainability and reliability. Also, product specific claims such as energy efficiency and biodegradable packaging have considerable impact which suggests that consumers do care about the environment when the benefits are real. On the other hand, vague or less tangible marketing endeavors ranging from celebrity endorsers to generic promotions of green products tend to have lower impact when compared to more focused marketing strategies.

Table 1. Perceived Influence of Green Marketing Elements on Purchase Decisions (Illustrative Data)

| Green Marketing Element | High Influence (%) | Moderate Influence (%) | Low Influence (%) |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| Third-Party Eco-Labels | 75 | 18 | 7 |
| Company's Green Reputation | 60 | 25 | 15 |
| Claims of Energy Efficiency | 50 | 35 | 15 |
| Biodegradable Packaging | 40 | 40 | 20 |
| Celebrity Endorsements | 15 | 30 | 55 |

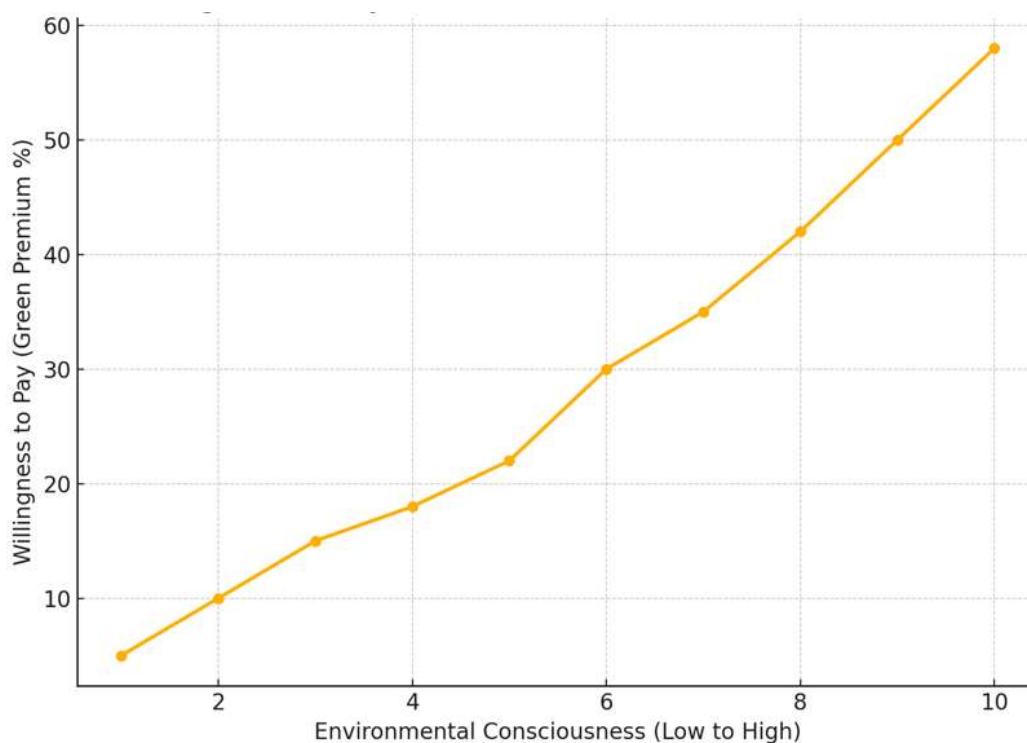


Figure 2. Consumer Willingness to Pay a Green Premium vs Environmental Consciousness

The graph in Figure 2 shows the relationship between the environmental awareness of a consumer and their willingness to pay, showcasing a positive correlation. More willing to pay deeply resonates with consumers who value environmental sustainability. Nonetheless, qualitative evidence indicates that this willingness rests on a few determinants: the actual benefit to the environment, the credibility of the eco-label, and the perceived worth of the product being evaluated. From the discussion, it was ascertained that while eco-consciousness is fundamental, brands need to also focus on the price and trustworthiness to shift intention into actual purchase habit sustainably.

V. CONCLUSION

This paper analyzes the importance of green marketing and eco-labeling in consumer buying behavior with regards to sustainable products. The study indicates that while environmental concern is an important factor, the credibility of eco-labels alongside transparent green marketing communication also plays an important role in fostering consumer trust and influencing purchasing behavior. Obstructions, especially; price sensitivity, and skepticism towards green claims still stand as major roadblocks to widespread adoption. The study stresses the importance of sustainability practices that go beyond superficial greenwashing, emphasizing authentic sustainability and rigorous branded third-party certifications. Further research could examine the long-term effect of various eco-labeling strategies on consumer retention, study the impact of behavioral nudging techniques aimed at encouraging green consumption, or analyze how the use of digital tools could increase transparency and provide stronger defenses against greenwashing.

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