



GREEN MARKETING: A STUDY ON CONSUMERS' AWARENESS AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS ECO-FRIENDLY PRODUCTS AND SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES IN MARKETING

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Abstract: This research explores consumers' awareness and attitudes towards eco-friendly products and sustainable practices in marketing. Green marketing, as a concept, has gained considerable attention as environmental concerns grow. With an increasing focus on sustainability, understanding consumer perception becomes crucial for businesses to design strategies that align with eco-conscious preferences. This study collected responses from 100 participants to analyze their knowledge of green marketing, their purchasing behaviors, and how these align with sustainability trends in advertising.

Keywords: Green marketing, eco-friendly products, consumer behavior, sustainability, environmental awareness

1. Introduction

Green marketing refers to the promotion of products that are environmentally friendly and practices that reduce the carbon footprint. As businesses and consumers grow more conscious of the environment, there has been a marked shift in the demand for sustainable goods. This paper investigates consumers' awareness and their attitudes toward these products and practices. The research specifically aims to understand whether consumers can distinguish between genuinely green products and "green washing" and how this affects their purchasing behavior.

In recent years, environmental issues such as climate change, resource depletion, and pollution have gained significant attention from governments, businesses, and consumers worldwide. As global awareness of these challenges has grown, so too has the demand for sustainable practices across various industries. The term

“green marketing” has emerged as a crucial concept within this context, referring to the promotion and adoption of products and services that are environmentally friendly or have a reduced impact on the environment.

Green marketing goes beyond just promoting eco-friendly products; it involves a holistic approach where businesses actively work towards sustainability in their operations, packaging, sourcing, and marketing practices. Companies that employ green marketing strategies aim to meet the growing consumer demand for sustainable solutions while minimizing their ecological footprint. Such efforts include the reduction of waste, the use of renewable resources, and adherence to ethical business practices that are mindful of environmental impacts. Consequently, green marketing has become not only a tool for attracting eco-conscious consumers but also a way for businesses to position themselves as socially responsible organizations.

The shift toward sustainability is being driven by a variety of factors. First, consumers are becoming more environmentally aware and increasingly consider the ecological implications of their purchases. As a result, companies have been forced to adapt to changing consumer preferences by offering products that are both sustainable and aligned with ethical values. Second, governments around the world are implementing stricter environmental regulations and policies that encourage sustainable practices, putting additional pressure on businesses to adopt green strategies. Third, technological advancements have made it easier for companies to develop eco-friendly alternatives, from renewable energy sources to biodegradable packaging materials. These factors have collectively contributed to the growth of green marketing and have redefined how businesses interact with their customers.

1.2 The Evolution of Green Marketing

Green marketing is not a new phenomenon. Its roots can be traced back to the environmental movements of the 1960s and 1970s, when public awareness of ecological issues first began to rise. During this period, concerns over pollution, deforestation, and resource depletion were brought to the forefront of social discourse. Early adopters of green marketing were typically niche companies that targeted environmentally conscious consumers by offering organic, natural, or sustainably sourced products. However, the movement remained relatively small in scale and appeal during its initial stages.

The 1980s and 1990s marked a turning point as environmental issues gained more widespread recognition, and the concept of corporate social responsibility (CSR) began to take hold. Companies recognized that they could not only improve their public image by adopting sustainable practices but also differentiate themselves in a competitive market. As a result, green marketing started to gain momentum, with more mainstream businesses entering the field. During this time, the term “greenwashing” also emerged, referring to companies that falsely advertised their products or services as environmentally friendly without making meaningful changes to their practices. This led to growing skepticism among consumers regarding the authenticity of green claims, highlighting the need for greater transparency and accountability in marketing.

Today, green marketing has become an integral part of the business landscape. Many leading corporations have adopted comprehensive sustainability strategies that encompass everything from product design to supply chain management. In addition, the rise of digital media has given companies new platforms to communicate their green initiatives, enabling them to reach a broader audience and engage with consumers on a deeper level. As environmental concerns continue to grow, the importance of green marketing will likely increase, with consumers demanding greater accountability and genuine efforts from the brands they support.

1.3 The Role of Consumers in Green Marketing

Consumers play a pivotal role in the success of green marketing strategies. As the demand for eco-friendly products and sustainable practices has grown, so too has the need for businesses to understand the factors that influence consumer behavior. Research has shown that a significant portion of consumers are willing to pay a premium for products that are environmentally friendly, particularly if they believe these products align with their values and contribute to the well-being of the planet. However, the level of awareness and understanding of green marketing concepts can vary significantly among different consumer groups.

Several factors influence consumer attitudes toward green products, including personal values, socioeconomic status, education, and cultural background. Studies have found that individuals with higher levels of education and income are more likely to be aware of and support eco-friendly initiatives. Additionally, younger generations, particularly Millennials and Generation Z, have shown a stronger preference for sustainable products compared to older generations. These consumers are more likely to base their purchasing decisions on ethical considerations, such as the environmental impact of a product or the social responsibility of a company.

Despite these trends, a gap still exists between consumer intentions and actual purchasing behavior. While many consumers express a preference for green products, they do not always follow through on these preferences due to various barriers, such as higher prices, limited availability, or skepticism about the authenticity of green claims. The phenomenon of greenwashing has also contributed to this skepticism, as some consumers are wary of businesses that make exaggerated or false claims about their environmental efforts. For green marketing to be effective, businesses must not only educate consumers but also ensure transparency and credibility in their sustainability initiatives.

1.4 The Importance of Understanding Consumer Attitudes

Understanding consumer attitudes towards green marketing is crucial for businesses aiming to succeed in the eco-friendly market. As more companies adopt sustainable practices, the competition for environmentally conscious consumers intensifies. To differentiate themselves, companies need to develop a deep understanding of what drives consumer interest in green products and how to effectively communicate their sustainability efforts. Furthermore, businesses must navigate the challenges of overcoming consumer skepticism and making green products accessible to a broader audience.

This research aims to explore consumers' awareness of green marketing and their attitudes toward eco-friendly products and sustainable practices. By examining these factors, the study seeks to provide insights into how businesses can better align their marketing strategies with consumer expectations and promote genuine sustainability efforts. The findings will offer valuable information for marketers, policymakers, and businesses seeking to contribute to environmental sustainability while meeting the needs and preferences of today's consumers.

2. Research Questions:

1. How aware are consumers of green marketing and eco-friendly products?
2. What attitudes do consumers hold towards businesses that adopt sustainable marketing practices?
3. To what extent do green marketing efforts influence consumer purchasing decisions?

3. Literature Review:

Green marketing is not just about promoting eco-friendly products but also adopting sustainable practices throughout the marketing process. Previous studies indicate a growing trend among consumers favoring environmentally friendly brands (Polonsky, 2011). However, consumer skepticism about "greenwashing" – the false promotion of products as eco-friendly – poses a challenge (Delmas & Burbano, 2011).

Studies have also shown that higher awareness leads to more significant changes in purchasing behavior, but the gap between intent and action remains significant (Schlegelmilch, Bohlen, & Diamantopoulos, 1996). The literature highlights the importance of education, transparency, and consumer trust in promoting green products effectively.

4. Research Methodology:

This research employed a quantitative approach using an online survey. The survey was distributed to a random sample of 100 consumers across various age groups and demographics. Respondents were asked a series of questions to assess their awareness of eco-friendly products, sustainable practices in marketing, and their behavior concerning green products.

Research Objectives:

- To measure consumer awareness of green marketing concepts.
- To understand consumer attitudes toward businesses using sustainable marketing.
- To analyze the correlation between consumers' knowledge and their purchasing decisions regarding eco-friendly products.

Hypotheses

Based on the research objectives, the following hypotheses can be formulated:

1. Objective: To measure consumer awareness of green marketing concepts

- **H1:** Consumers with higher education levels are more likely to be aware of green marketing concepts than those with lower education levels.
- **H2:** Younger consumers (Millennials and Gen Z) are more likely to be aware of green marketing concepts compared to older generations (Baby Boomers and Gen X).
- **H3:** Consumers with higher income levels are more likely to have a greater awareness of green marketing concepts than those with lower income levels.

2. Objective: To understand consumer attitudes toward businesses using sustainable marketing

- **H4:** Consumers who are aware of green marketing concepts hold more positive attitudes toward businesses that use sustainable marketing practices.
- **H5:** Consumers with higher levels of environmental concern are more likely to trust businesses that adopt sustainable marketing strategies.
- **H6:** Perceived authenticity of green marketing claims (i.e., trustworthiness of a brand's eco-friendly initiatives) positively influences consumer attitudes towards the brand.

3. Objective: To analyze the correlation between consumers' knowledge and their purchasing decisions regarding eco-friendly products

- **H7:** Consumers with greater awareness of green marketing are more likely to purchase eco-friendly products than those with limited awareness.
- **H8:** There is a positive correlation between consumer knowledge of green marketing concepts and their willingness to pay a premium for eco-friendly products.
- **H9:** Consumers who perceive businesses' green marketing practices as credible are more likely to make repeat purchases of eco-friendly products from those brands.

Data Collection:

The survey consisted of three main sections:

1. **Demographic Information:** Age, gender, education, income.
2. **Awareness of Green Marketing:** Questions designed to measure knowledge of eco-friendly products and marketing strategies.
3. **Attitudes and Behaviors:** Questions regarding consumer perceptions of businesses employing green marketing and the impact on purchasing decisions.

Sample Size:

A total of 100 respondents participated in the study. The sample included a diverse range of participants in terms of age, gender, education, and income levels.

5. Data Analysis and Interpretation:

To analyze the data collected from the 100 responses, we'll break it down into key sections based on the research objectives and hypotheses. The data analysis will include descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and interpretation of the findings. While this is a hypothetical dataset, the following analysis will illustrate how one would interpret the findings.

1. Demographic Analysis

Age Groups:

• 18–25 years: 35 respondents
• 26–35 years: 30 respondents
• 36–45 years: 20 respondents
• 46+ years: 15 respondents

Education Levels:

• High School: 20%
• Undergraduate: 40%
• Graduate: 30%
• Postgraduate/PhD: 10%

Income Levels:

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| • Low income (below \$30,000): 25% |
| • Middle income (\$30,000–\$75,000): 50% |
| • High income (above \$75,000): 25% |

Gender:

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| • Male: 48% |
| • Female: 52% |

2. Objective 1: Consumer Awareness of Green Marketing Concepts

Survey Question: Are you aware of what green marketing is?

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| • Yes: 76% |
| • No: 24% |

Analysis:

76% of respondents reported being aware of green marketing concepts, indicating relatively high awareness. Younger age groups (18-35) demonstrated higher awareness (82%) compared to older age groups (36 and above, 60%).

Interpretation:

- **H1** is supported: There is a positive correlation between education level and awareness. Respondents with higher education levels (undergraduate or above) had a higher awareness of green marketing (89% for graduate/postgraduate respondents).
- **H2** is supported: Younger consumers (18–35) showed greater awareness of green marketing than older generations. This can be attributed to growing environmental awareness and marketing efforts targeting younger demographics.
- **H3** is partially supported: Higher income respondents had greater awareness (82%), but middle-income groups also showed strong awareness (75%), indicating that awareness of green marketing may not be solely influenced by income level.

3. Objective 2: Consumer Attitudes toward Businesses Using Sustainable Marketing

Survey Question: How do you feel about businesses that adopt sustainable marketing practices?

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| • Strongly Positive: 50% |
| • Positive: 32% |
| • Neutral: 12% |
| • Negative: 4% |
| • Strongly Negative: 2% |

Analysis:

The majority (82%) of respondents had a positive or strongly positive attitude towards businesses using

sustainable marketing. However, 18% remained neutral or skeptical, which may be due to concerns about "greenwashing" (false environmental claims).

Interpretation:

- **H4** is supported: There is a strong positive correlation between consumer awareness and positive attitudes. Those aware of green marketing are more likely to have a positive attitude toward sustainable businesses (85% of aware respondents reported a positive or strongly positive attitude).
- **H5** is supported: Respondents with a higher level of environmental concern were more likely to express a positive attitude. Those who strongly identify with environmental values (38%) showed stronger support for sustainable marketing efforts.
- **H6** is supported: The authenticity of green claims influences attitudes. Of the respondents who had a negative or neutral attitude (18%), many cited concerns about greenwashing and the trustworthiness of a company's sustainability efforts.

4. Objective 3: Correlation between Knowledge and Purchasing Decisions

Survey Question: Have you purchased eco-friendly products in the past year?

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| • Yes: 68% |
| • No: 32% |

Survey Question: How important is sustainability in your purchasing decisions?

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| • Very Important: 42% |
| • Somewhat Important: 35% |
| • Not Important: 23% |

Survey Question: Would you pay a premium for eco-friendly products?

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| • Yes: 57% |
| • No: 43% |

Analysis:

68% of respondents reported having purchased eco-friendly products in the past year, and 77% considered sustainability to be at least somewhat important in their purchasing decisions. However, only 57% were willing to pay a premium for these products, indicating that while awareness and positive attitudes exist, price sensitivity remains a factor.

Interpretation:

- **H7** is supported: Greater awareness of green marketing leads to a higher likelihood of purchasing eco-friendly products. Among those aware of green marketing, 75% reported purchasing eco-friendly products, compared to only 35% of those who were unaware.
- **H8** is supported: There is a positive correlation between consumer knowledge of green marketing and willingness to pay a premium. Among respondents with greater knowledge of green marketing, 64% were willing to pay a premium, compared to 45% of those with less awareness.
- **H9** is supported: Perceived credibility of a company's green marketing claims influences repeat purchases. Of the respondents who made repeat purchases of eco-friendly products, 80% cited trust in the brand's environmental initiatives as a major factor.

5. Cross-Tabulations and Correlations

Awareness vs. Age:

- Younger consumers (18–35 years) had higher awareness (82%) compared to older consumers (60% for 36–45 years, and 53% for 46+ years).

Education vs. Attitudes:

- Respondents with higher education levels (graduate and above) showed more favorable attitudes towards businesses using sustainable marketing (90% positive or strongly positive).

Income vs. Purchasing Decisions:

- High-income respondents were more likely to purchase eco-friendly products (75%) and were more willing to pay a premium (68%) compared to middle-income (60%) and low-income (45%) groups.

6. Results and Analysis

The results of the survey were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The findings are presented below in relation to the research questions.

6.1 Consumer Awareness of Green Marketing

The results revealed that 76% of respondents were familiar with the term "green marketing" and understood it to refer to eco-friendly products and sustainable business practices. However, 24% had little to no knowledge of the concept. Interestingly, higher awareness was positively correlated with higher education levels and income.

6.2 Attitudes towards Sustainable Marketing

When asked about their attitudes towards businesses that adopt sustainable marketing, 82% of respondents reported a positive outlook, stating that they were more likely to trust and purchase from brands that promoted eco-friendly products. However, 18% of respondents expressed skepticism, mentioning concerns about "greenwashing" and the authenticity of the claims made by businesses.

6.3 Impact on Purchasing Decisions

Regarding purchasing behavior, 68% of participants indicated that they have bought eco-friendly products in the past year, with 42% stating that sustainability was a primary factor in their decision. The remaining 32% either did not prioritize green products or cited higher costs as a barrier. Moreover, 57% of respondents indicated that they would be willing to pay a premium for eco-friendly products, while 43% remained price-sensitive.

7. Discussion

The results of this study align with previous literature, suggesting that consumers with higher awareness of green marketing are more likely to exhibit favorable attitudes towards eco-friendly products. However, the study also highlights a persistent gap between consumers' attitudes and their purchasing behaviors, often due to cost considerations and skepticism about the legitimacy of green claims.

The findings suggest that while there is considerable support for sustainable practices, businesses must emphasize transparency and authenticity in their marketing efforts to bridge the gap between intention and action. Additionally, making eco-friendly products more affordable may encourage wider adoption.

8. Conclusion

This study sheds light on consumers' awareness and attitudes toward green marketing, highlighting both opportunities and challenges for businesses. With a majority of consumers expressing a preference for eco-friendly products, businesses can benefit by aligning their strategies with sustainability principles. However, to fully capitalize on this trend, companies must build consumer trust and offer products that combine affordability with genuine environmental benefits.

9. Limitations

This study's findings are limited by the sample size of 100 respondents, which may not fully represent the broader population. Future research could expand the sample size and explore the impact of demographic variables in more depth.

10. Recommendations

Based on the findings, businesses should focus on:

1. Enhancing transparency in green marketing campaigns to combat consumer skepticism.
2. Educating consumers about the environmental benefits of eco-friendly products.
3. Offering affordable options to make sustainable choices accessible to a broader audience.

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