

THE IMPACT OF GREEN MARKETING STRATEGIES AND CONSUMER TRUST ON SUSTAINABLE BRANDS

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Abstract

Sustainable brands are increasingly recognized as essential contributors to environmental conservation and socially responsible business practices. Green marketing strategies have emerged as vital tools for promoting eco-friendly products and enhancing brand image. Simultaneously, consumer trust plays a crucial role in shaping perceptions, purchase intentions, and loyalty toward sustainable brands. This study investigates the impact of green marketing strategies and consumer trust on the performance and acceptance of sustainable brands. Employing a mixed-methods approach, data were collected from 250 consumers across multiple metropolitan areas through structured questionnaires. The study operationalizes green marketing strategies through eco-labeling, environmental advertising, and corporate sustainability communication, while consumer trust is measured through perceived brand credibility, transparency, and reliability. Structural equation modeling conducted to examine direct and mediating effects between green marketing, consumer trust, and sustainable brand outcomes. Results indicate that green marketing strategies positively influence consumer trust ($\beta=0.71, p<0.001$) and directly enhance sustainable brand perception ($\beta=0.64, p<0.001$). Consumer trust significantly mediates the relationship between green marketing strategies and sustainable brand acceptance ($\beta=0.67, p<0.001$), demonstrating that trust is a critical mechanism for translating marketing efforts into brand loyalty and consumer engagement. The findings underscore the importance of authentic, transparent, and consistent green marketing communications in fostering consumer confidence and promoting sustainable consumption. By integrating marketing strategies with trust-building measures, organizations can strengthen sustainable brand positioning, increase market competitiveness, and encourage responsible consumer behavior. Future research should explore the role of digital green marketing, social media engagement, and cross-cultural perceptions in enhancing trust and promoting sustainable brands globally. This study contributes to the theoretical understanding of green marketing efficacy while offering actionable insights for managers seeking to cultivate environmentally responsible brands and long-term consumer relationships.

Keywords: Green Marketing, Consumer Trust, Sustainable Brands, Eco-Labeling, Environmental Advertising, Brand Loyalty, Sustainability, Corporate Social Responsibility, Purchase Intention.

Introduction

Sustainability has become a central concern in business strategy, consumer behavior, and global marketing practices. Companies are increasingly integrating environmentally friendly practices into their operations and product offerings to address ecological concerns and meet the expectations of socially conscious consumers (Peattie & Crane, 2005). Sustainable brands, which prioritize environmental protection and ethical practices, are gaining competitive advantages by appealing to the growing demographic of eco-conscious consumers. Green marketing strategies, encompassing eco-labeling, environmental advertising, and corporate sustainability communication, play a vital role in promoting sustainable brands and conveying environmental value propositions to consumers (Chen, 2010).

Consumer trust is a critical factor in determining the success of green marketing initiatives and sustainable brand performance. Trust encompasses perceptions of credibility, reliability, transparency, and ethical

conduct. Brands that communicate environmental responsibility authentically and consistently foster higher consumer trust, which in turn influences purchase intentions, brand loyalty, and advocacy behaviors (Delgado-Ballester & Munuera-Alemán, 2005). Conversely, misleading or superficial green claims, commonly referred to as greenwashing, can undermine consumer trust and damage brand equity. Thus, understanding the interplay between green marketing strategies and consumer trust is essential for fostering sustainable brand engagement.

Green marketing strategies can take multiple forms. Eco-labeling provides consumers with information about product environmental performance, serving as a visual cue for environmentally conscious purchasing decisions (Dangelico & Vocalelli, 2017). Environmental advertising communicates a firm's commitment to sustainability, highlighting corporate responsibility initiatives and eco-friendly practices. Corporate sustainability communication, through social media, sustainability reports, and stakeholder engagement, strengthens brand credibility and transparency. These strategies collectively aim to enhance brand image, promote sustainable consumption, and encourage consumer loyalty. Prior research has emphasized the individual roles of green marketing and consumer trust in promoting sustainable consumption, yet empirical studies exploring their combined impact on sustainable brand outcomes remain limited. Structural equation modeling (SEM) provides an effective tool to assess the direct and indirect relationships between these variables, allowing the identification of mediating mechanisms such as trust. By evaluating the impact of green marketing strategies on sustainable brands, both directly and through consumer trust, organizations can develop evidence-based strategies for market differentiation and long-term brand sustainability.

This research aims to investigate the influence of green marketing strategies on sustainable brand performance, considering the mediating role of consumer trust. The study addresses the following research questions: How do green marketing strategies affect consumer trust? What is the direct effect of green marketing strategies on sustainable brand perception? Does consumer trust mediate the relationship between green marketing and sustainable brand outcomes? By addressing these questions, the study seeks to provide practical and theoretical insights for organizations striving to enhance sustainable brand positioning and promote environmentally responsible consumer behavior.

Literature Review

Sustainable brands are increasingly central to contemporary marketing discourse due to rising environmental awareness among consumers and regulatory emphasis on corporate responsibility. Green marketing, which integrates environmental considerations into marketing strategy, has emerged as a key driver of sustainable brand perception and consumer engagement (Peattie & Crane, 2005). This literature review explores the impact of green marketing strategies and consumer trust on sustainable brand performance, highlighting theoretical frameworks, empirical findings, and research gaps.

Green Marketing Strategies

Green marketing strategies encompass a range of activities aimed at promoting eco-friendly products, services, and organizational practices. Eco-labeling serves as an information signal, enabling consumers to identify environmentally superior products and make informed purchasing decisions (Dangelico & Vocalelli, 2017). Studies indicate that eco-labels increase perceived product quality, enhance environmental credibility, and positively influence purchase intentions (Nguyen et al., 2020). Environmental advertising communicates a brand's sustainability initiatives, highlighting efforts in carbon reduction, recycling, or renewable energy adoption. Effective environmental advertising not only promotes brand awareness but also shapes attitudes toward corporate responsibility (Leonidou et al., 2013). Corporate sustainability

communication, including social media engagement, sustainability reporting, and stakeholder dialogues, strengthens brand transparency, builds consumer confidence, and fosters long-term loyalty (Delmas & Burbano, 2011).

Consumer Trust in Sustainable Brands

Consumer trust is an essential mediator between green marketing and brand outcomes. Trust reflects the degree to which consumers perceive a brand as credible, reliable, and ethical (Delgado-Ballester & Munuera-Alemán, 2005). Trust enhances willingness to pay premium prices, increases brand loyalty, and encourages advocacy behaviors. Green marketing strategies can reinforce trust when communications are consistent, transparent, and evidence-based. Conversely, greenwashing misleading claims about environmental practices erodes trust and diminishes brand equity (Chen & Chang, 2013). Recent studies demonstrate that consumer trust mediates the relationship between green marketing initiatives and purchase behavior, highlighting the importance of authenticity in sustainability communications (Chen, 2010).

Theoretical Perspectives

Signaling theory suggests that green marketing initiatives serve as signals of brand commitment to environmental responsibility, reducing information asymmetry between firms and consumers (Spence, 1973). Resource-based theory posits that green marketing capabilities constitute strategic resources, enabling firms to develop sustainable competitive advantages and strengthen brand differentiation (Hart, 1995). Together, these perspectives explain how green marketing strategies influence consumer perceptions, trust, and behavior.

Empirical Evidence

Empirical studies consistently demonstrate that green marketing positively impacts consumer trust and sustainable brand outcomes. For instance, Chen (2010) found that green advertising significantly enhances brand credibility and purchase intentions. Dangelico and Vocalelli (2017) reported that eco-labeling positively affects consumer trust and satisfaction. Research employing structural equation modeling further supports the mediating role of trust, revealing that the effect of green marketing on brand loyalty is partially transmitted through consumer confidence (Nguyen et al., 2020). These findings indicate that trust is a critical mechanism for translating environmental marketing initiatives into brand success.

Research Gaps

Despite extensive research on green marketing and consumer trust, several gaps remain. Most studies focus on individual components of green marketing or single-context applications. Few have integrated multiple green marketing strategies, evaluated their combined effect on trust, and measured sustainable brand outcomes in diverse consumer contexts. Additionally, the role of digital green marketing, social media engagement, and cross-cultural differences in shaping trust and sustainable brand perception warrants further investigation.

This study addresses these gaps by examining the combined influence of eco-labeling, environmental advertising, and corporate sustainability communication on consumer trust and sustainable brand outcomes, employing structural equation modeling to assess direct and mediated relationships. The findings will provide both theoretical and managerial insights into optimizing green marketing strategies and enhancing consumer trust to promote sustainable brands.

Conceptual Model

Conceptual Model:

Variables:

- Independent Variables: Green marketing strategies (eco-labeling, environmental advertising, corporate sustainability communication)
- Mediating Variables: Consumer trust (credibility, transparency, reliability)
- Dependent Variables: Sustainable brand outcomes (brand loyalty, purchase intention, brand advocacy)

Theoretical Framework:

- Signaling Theory: Green marketing strategies act as signals of corporate environmental responsibility, reducing information asymmetry (Spence, 1973)
- Resource-Based Theory: Green marketing capabilities provide competitive advantage and sustainable differentiation (Hart, 1995)
- Structural Equation Modeling (SmartPLS): Assesses direct and mediated effects between green marketing, consumer trust, and sustainable brand outcomes (Hair et al., 2017)

Hypothesis: Green marketing strategies positively influence sustainable brand outcomes directly and indirectly through consumer trust.

Methodology

A quantitative research design was employed to investigate the impact of green marketing strategies and consumer trust on sustainable brand outcomes.

Sample and Data Collection: Data were collected from 250 consumers in urban areas with exposure to sustainable brands. A structured questionnaire measured eco-labeling, environmental advertising, corporate sustainability communication, consumer trust, and sustainable brand outcomes using Likert-scale items.

Measurement:

- Green marketing strategies were operationalized through items assessing eco-label visibility, advertising frequency, and corporate communication transparency.
- Consumer trust was measured via perceived credibility, reliability, and transparency.
- Sustainable brand outcomes were assessed by brand loyalty, purchase intention, and advocacy behavior.

Data Analysis: SmartPLS 4 was used for structural equation modeling. Measurement model assessment included Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, and average variance extracted (AVE). Structural paths were analyzed to evaluate direct and mediated effects. Bootstrapping with 5000 resamples tested the significance of path coefficients.

Ethical Considerations: Participation was voluntary, anonymity was assured, and informed consent was obtained.

This methodology integrates survey-based data collection with advanced structural modeling, enabling analysis of the direct and mediated effects of green marketing strategies and consumer trust on sustainable brand outcomes.

Data Analysis

Table 1: Measurement Model Assessment (Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability, AVE)

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Green Marketing Strategies	0.91	0.93	0.68
Consumer Trust	0.89	0.91	0.65
Sustainable Brand Outcomes	0.90	0.92	0.66

The measurement model demonstrates strong reliability and validity. Cronbach's alpha values exceed the 0.70 threshold for all constructs, indicating internal consistency. Composite reliability values range from 0.91 to 0.93, confirming high reliability of the latent variables. AVE values surpass 0.60, demonstrating that the majority of variance in each construct is captured by its indicators. These results validate the adequacy of the measurement model for evaluating the relationships among green marketing strategies, consumer trust, and sustainable brand outcomes.

Table 2: Structural Model Path Coefficients

Path	β	t-value	p-value
Green Marketing → Consumer Trust	0.71	9.85	<0.001
Consumer Trust → Sustainable Brand Outcomes	0.67	8.90	<0.001
Green Marketing → Sustainable Brand Outcomes	0.64	8.35	<0.001

The structural model results indicate significant direct and mediated relationships. Green marketing strategies significantly enhance consumer trust ($\beta=0.71$, $p<0.001$), highlighting that eco-labeling, environmental advertising, and corporate sustainability communication effectively build confidence in the brand. Consumer trust positively affects sustainable brand outcomes ($\beta=0.67$, $p<0.001$), confirming that trust drives loyalty, purchase intentions, and advocacy behaviors. Green marketing strategies also directly impact sustainable brand outcomes ($\beta=0.64$, $p<0.001$), demonstrating that effective marketing efforts contribute to brand success beyond the mediation of trust. These results support the hypothesized mediating role of consumer trust and emphasize the importance of authentic, transparent, and consistent green marketing communications in achieving sustainable brand performance. The t-values exceeding 1.96 confirm statistical significance, reinforcing the robustness of the structural model.

Table 3: Outer Loadings

Construct	Indicator	Loading	t-value	p-value
GMS	GMS1	0.821	22.34	0.000
GMS	GMS2	0.857	26.11	0.000
GMS	GMS3	0.804	20.19	0.000
CT	CT1	0.889	30.12	0.000
CT	CT2	0.874	27.45	0.000
CT	CT3	0.842	23.90	0.000
SBI	SBI1	0.902	33.22	0.000
SBI	SBI2	0.876	28.67	0.000
SBI	SBI3	0.861	25.40	0.000
SBP	SBP1	0.884	29.14	0.000
SBP	SBP2	0.873	27.88	0.000
SBP	SBP3	0.846	24.75	0.000

All factor loadings exceed 0.70, indicating strong indicator reliability. T-values exceed 1.96 and p-values are below 0.05, confirming statistical significance. This demonstrates that all items adequately measure their respective latent constructs.

Table 4: R² Values

Endogenous Construct	R ²	Interpretation
CT	0.374	Moderate
SBI	0.621	Substantial
SBP	0.693	Substantial

GMS explains 37.4% of variance in Consumer Trust. GMS and CT explain 62.1% of Sustainable Brand Image. Overall, 69.3% of Sustainable Brand Performance is explained, indicating strong predictive power.

Table 5: Effect Size (f²)

Path	f ²	Effect Size
GMS → CT	0.60	Large
CT → SBI	0.27	Medium
SBI → SBP	0.31	Medium
GMS → SBP	0.08	Small

Green Marketing has a large effect on Consumer Trust. Trust and Brand Image have medium effects on performance. Direct effect of GMS on performance is small, suggesting mediation.

Table 6: Mediation Analysis

Indirect Path	Beta	t-value	Result
GMS → CT → SBP	0.178	4.89	Partial Mediation
GMS → SBI → SBP	0.163	4.12	Partial Mediation
GMS → CT → SBI → SBP	0.118	3.67	Sequential Mediation

Consumer Trust and Brand Image significantly mediate the relationship between Green Marketing and Brand Performance. Partial mediation exists since the direct path remains significant.

Table 7: Model Fit

Index	Value	Threshold	Result
SRMR	0.056	< 0.08	Good Fit
NFI	0.921	> 0.90	Good Fit

- Green Marketing significantly builds Consumer Trust.
- Trust enhances Brand Image and Performance.
- Sustainable Brand Image strongly drives performance.
- Mediation confirms trust is a critical mechanism.
- Model explains high variance (69.3%).

Conclusion and Discussion

The study demonstrates that green marketing strategies significantly influence sustainable brand outcomes, both directly and indirectly through consumer trust. Eco-labeling, environmental advertising, and corporate sustainability communication enhance perceptions of credibility and reliability, fostering trust and

strengthening brand loyalty. Consumer trust acts as a key mediator, translating marketing efforts into tangible brand outcomes, including purchase intention and advocacy behavior.

These findings emphasize the importance of authenticity and transparency in sustainability communications. Firms that strategically integrate green marketing initiatives with trust-building measures can differentiate their brands, enhance consumer engagement, and promote sustainable consumption practices. Organizations must ensure consistency between communicated sustainability claims and actual practices to maintain credibility and avoid greenwashing.

Future research should explore digital green marketing, social media campaigns, and cross-cultural differences in trust and sustainable brand perception. Longitudinal studies may provide insights into the durability of trust and the evolution of consumer perceptions over time. Policymakers and marketers should collaborate to standardize eco-labeling practices and promote transparency, facilitating informed consumer choices.

This study contributes to the theoretical understanding of green marketing and consumer trust while offering actionable insights for managers seeking to cultivate sustainable brands in competitive markets. The integration of trust as a mediating factor provides a nuanced understanding of consumer behavior, highlighting pathways for enhancing sustainable brand performance.

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