



Original Article

Green Marketing and Consumer Perceptions of Sustainable Products

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Abstract

With the growing environmental awareness, climate-related concerns and changing consumer expectations, green marketing has emerged as an important strategic move. The source paper highlights that green marketing can affect consumer perceptions of product sustainability, consumer trust, consumer buying intention, packaging evaluation, price perceptions and brand relationships, and that the link between consumers' environmental attitudes and their actual buying behavior is still rather weak. The second statistical analysis of recent consumer evidence, which is presented in this re-written study, adds to that conceptual discussion. More than 85% felt the impacts of climate change in their everyday lives, while 46% said they had purchased more sustainable products and 80% said they would pay more for sustainably produced or sourced goods, with the average size of the premium set at 9.7% of the price, according to PwC's 2024 Voice of the Consumer Survey, which polled over 20,000 consumers in 31 countries and territories. According to NIQ, 61% of consumers feel that environmental concerns have a negative impact on their health and the sales of products with sustainability claims rose 34% from 2018 to 2022. The analysis reveals that sustainability is now a commercial reality, but there are still a number of key factors to be addressed in terms of affordability, accessibility, credibility and transparency. The study finds that there needs to be the convergence of product performance, certification, packaging, pricing, distribution, communication and verifiable environmental outcomes in order to be a successful Green Marketing.

Keywords: Green Marketing, Consumer Perception, Sustainable Products, Green Purchase Intention, Eco-labels, Sustainability, Greenwashing, Consumer Behaviour.

Introduction

The important aspect of marketing has shifted from conventional practice to sustainability in the wake of increasing environmental conscience and changing consumer behaviours. With heightened environmental awareness and pro-environmental behaviours, there has been a significant trend in marketing practice over the concept of sustainability. According to the source paper, the term 'green marketing' refers to environmentally responsible products and processes and that consumer environmental awareness, social influence and perceptions of seriousness are key factors in brand perceptions and preferences. It also emphasizes that consumer interest in green products does not automatically mean that they buy green products. This attitude-intention-action gap is thus a core research topic of green marketing.

Consumer value can be added and environmental damage can be minimised by product design, responsible production, minimising waste, improved packaging, efficient use of materials and responsible distribution of sustainable products. Eco-labels and environmental claims that are credible can be used to signal such attributes, but it requires clarity, trust and perceived relevance. The source also highlights the importance of interaction between packaging, advertising, social norms, product quality, price, and accessibility and cultural context in driving green consumption.

New consumer data confirm sustainability isn't just a communications topic. A global survey by PwC in 2024 revealed that 85% of respondents said they had been affected by the impacts of climate change in their lives, and 46% reported purchasing more sustainable products to mitigate climate change's impact on the environment. The figures give a helpful empirical grounding for discussion of the dynamics of translating environmental concern into market behaviour.

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The objectives of the study are as follows:

To investigate sustainable products' perceptions of consumers based on recent secondary statistics.

- To analyse willingness to purchase and pay a premium for sustainably produced or sourced goods.
- To evaluate consumers' choice making using environmental claims, packaging, transparency and product information.
- To explore impediments including the attitudebehaviour gap, accessibility and pricing.
- To point out to firms how to switch to meaningful green marketing strategies.

Research Questions

1. What is the level of concern for environmental sustainability amongst current consumers?
2. What is the ratio of consumers who say they buy more sustainable products?
3. How willing are consumers to pay a sustainability-related price premium?
4. What attributes of a product and what information signals are relevant for sustainable shopping?
5. What are the obstacles to making environmental concern a consistent purchasing behaviour?

Research Methodology

The study adopts a secondary-data descriptive research design. The conceptual framework, terminology and thematic structure are based on the supplied paper, which discusses consumer perception, green communication, product attributes, certification, pricing, accessibility, social and cultural influences, measurement, ethics and practical implications. Published statistics from PwC and NielsenIQ/NIQ are incorporated to strengthen the empirical dimension.

The analysis uses descriptive statistics, percentage-point comparisons, ratios and derived relative differences. The study does not create or claim an original consumer survey. Published survey percentages are retained as reported, while derived calculations are clearly identified as calculations from those figures.

Statistical Profile of Consumer Sustainability Perceptions

PwC's 2024 Voice of the Consumer Survey provides a large cross-country evidence base. The survey collected the perspectives of more than 20,000 consumers across 31 countries and territories. It found that 85% experienced the disruptive effects of climate change in their daily lives. This indicates a very high level of direct exposure to climate-related concerns.

Indicator	Consumers (%)	Interpretation
Experience disruptive effects of climate change	85	Very high environmental salience
Buy more sustainable products	46	Substantial reported behavioural response
Willing to pay more for sustainable goods	80	High stated willingness to pay
Average stated sustainability premium	9.7%	Potential price-premium opportunity
Considered purchases to reduce overall consumption	43	Behavioural shift toward reduced consumption
Eat different foods	32	Reported sustainability-related lifestyle change
Travel less or differently	31	Reported lower-impact travel behaviour
Purchase/plan to purchase an EV	24	Sustainability-related transport intention

Table 1. Selected global consumer sustainability indicators. Source: PwC, 2024 Voice of the Consumer Survey.

The difference between climate-change awareness and reported sustainable purchasing is noteworthy. Although 85% reported experiencing climate disruption, 46% reported buying more sustainable products. The 39-percentage-point difference should not be interpreted as a direct behavioural gap because the questions measure different constructs; however, it illustrates that

environmental salience does not automatically produce sustainable purchasing at the same scale.

1. Willingness to Pay and the Green Price Premium

Price is a central issue in the source paper. Consumers may associate sustainability with higher production costs, and firms may need to invest in cleaner technologies, responsible sourcing and improved packaging. PwC reports that 80% of consumers were willing to pay more for sustainably produced or sourced goods, with an average stated premium of 9.7%.

Measure	Value
Willing to pay more	80%
Average stated sustainability premium	9.7%
Consumers citing inflation as a major risk	31%
Consumers expecting groceries to be their most significant spending increase	62%

Table 2. Sustainability willingness-to-pay and affordability indicators. Source: PwC, 2024.

The simultaneous presence of high willingness to pay and strong inflation concerns demonstrates a strategic tension.

Green products cannot rely solely on environmental positioning; marketers need to communicate functional value, durability, lower operating costs and total cost of

ownership where relevant. For example, energy-efficient products may justify a higher initial price when consumers can understand future savings.

Sustainable Product Attributes and Consumer Evaluation

Consumers evaluate sustainable products through both tangible and intangible signals. PwC reports that

consumers assess sustainability practices through production methods and recycling (40%), eco-friendly packaging (38%), and positive impacts on nature and water conservation (34%). These figures support the source paper's emphasis on product attributes, packaging and environmental information as components of consumer trust.

Sustainability attribute considered by consumers	Consumers (%)
Production methods and recycling	40
Eco-friendly packaging	38
Positive impact on nature and water conservation	34

Table 3. Sustainability attributes used by consumers to assess producers. Source: PwC, 2024.

1. Packaging, Eco-labels and Information

The source paper identifies packaging as both a functional product component and a communication device. Eco-friendly packaging can signal environmental responsibility, while clear labels can reduce information uncertainty. NIQ reports that 26% of shoppers find it difficult to find sustainable products on the digital shelf and that almost two-thirds would switch from a usual brand to one providing more detailed product information than the physical label. This supports the proposition that discoverability and information quality are important components of green marketing effectiveness.

Market Evidence from Sustainability Claims

Consumer preference is increasingly reflected in market performance. NIQ reports that products with sustainable packaging claims represented a \$72 billion category and grew 6.2% over four years. NIQ also reports that, between 2018 and 2022, sales of products with sustainability claims grew 34% more than products without such claims. These figures suggest that sustainability attributes can have commercial significance, although sales growth cannot be attributed to green marketing alone because many other factors may influence demand.

Market indicator	Reported statistic
Sustainable-packaging-claim category	\$72 billion
Growth of sustainable-packaging-claim category over four years	6.2%
Relative sales growth advantage of products with sustainability claims (2018–2022)	34%
Consumers saying environmental issues adversely affect current/future health	61%
Consumers trying to live more sustainably	95%

Table 4. Selected NIQ sustainability-market indicators. Source: NIQ, 2024.

Consumer Perception, Trust and Greenwashing

Trust is essential because consumers cannot directly observe every environmental attribute of a product. The source paper therefore emphasizes certification, eco-labels, organizational reputation, country of origin, previous experience, perceived quality and perceived risk. Environmental claims that are exaggerated or unsupported can produce skepticism and damage brand trust.

NIQ reports that 77% of consumers say they would stop buying products from a company found guilty of greenwashing. This finding demonstrates that sustainability communication creates both opportunity and reputational

risk. Firms should therefore ensure that claims are specific, evidence-based and consistent with actual environmental performance.

Social Media and Digital Green Marketing

Green marketing is increasingly communicated through digital and social channels. PwC reports that 67% of consumers use social media to discover new brands, 70% seek reviews to validate a company before purchase, and 46% purchased products directly through social media. These figures suggest that sustainability claims are increasingly subject to public review, peer influence and digital word-of-mouth.

Digital consumer behaviour	Consumers (%)
Use social media to discover new brands	67
Seek reviews before purchasing/validating a company	70
Purchased directly through social media	46
Influenced by a celebrity/influencer purchase recommendation	41

Table 5. Selected digital consumer indicators. Source: PwC, 2024.

Price, Accessibility and the Attitude–Behaviour Gap

The source paper emphasizes that consumers may hold favourable environmental attitudes without

consistently acting on them. Recent evidence reinforces this concern. NIQ reports that the cost of sustainable options is the biggest barrier to buying sustainably for 41% of consumers, while 26% have difficulty finding sustainable

options. The source paper similarly identifies price, accessibility, affordability and availability as important

variables in green purchasing.

Barrier / perception	Consumers (%)
Cost of sustainable options is the biggest barrier	41
Difficulty finding sustainable options	26
Want retailers to provide cheaper sustainable offerings	40
Want retailers to reduce plastic packaging/use compostable packaging	45

Table 6. Selected barriers and retailer expectations. Source: NIQ.

The evidence suggests that a consumer may support sustainability in principle but choose a conventional product when the green alternative is significantly more expensive, difficult to find, poorly explained or perceived as lower quality. Effective green marketing must therefore reduce practical barriers rather than simply increase environmental awareness.

Social and Cultural Influences

Consumer responses to sustainability are influenced by social identity, peer influence, cultural norms and economic circumstances. The source paper notes that consumers in environmentally conscious social environments may display stronger eco-friendly tendencies, while socio-economic constraints in developing economies may increase the importance of immediate price, appearance and practical utility. Green marketing should therefore be

localized rather than assuming that one sustainability message will work equally across all markets.

Segmentation can be based on environmental involvement, price sensitivity, product category, age, lifestyle, social identity and purchase context. Importantly, firms should avoid treating all consumers as equally committed to sustainability.

Integrated Statistical Interpretation

The statistical evidence can be synthesized into four dimensions: awareness, intention, action and market response. Awareness is high, illustrated by 85% of PwC respondents experiencing climate disruption. Intention is also strong, with 80% willing to pay more for sustainable goods. Reported action is lower at 46% purchasing more sustainable products. Market evidence nevertheless shows commercial momentum, including faster sales growth for products carrying sustainability claims and a substantial sustainable-packaging market.

Dimension	Indicator	Value
Awareness	Experience climate-change disruption	85%
Intention	Willing to pay more	80%
Action	Buying more sustainable products	46%
Market response	Sustainability-claim sales growth advantage, 2018–2022	34%
Barrier	Cost as biggest sustainability-purchase barrier	41%
Trust risk	Would stop buying after greenwashing finding	77%

Table 7. Integrated statistical framework for green marketing. Sources: PwC and NIQ.

An important analytical implication is that the 34-percentage-point difference between willingness to pay more (80%) and reported purchase of more sustainable products (46%) should not be interpreted as a pure causal attitude-behaviour gap, because the two survey questions measure different constructs. Nevertheless, the contrast indicates that willingness alone does not guarantee market conversion.

Implications for firms

Avoid using general environmental terminology; make sustainability claims specific, verifiable and measurable. Reduce consumer uncertainty by using credible certification, eco-labels and transparent product information. Make sustainability a part of product quality, design, packaging, prices and distribution, rather than a marketing ploy. The cost of the product – consider value based pricing, smaller packages, refill, efficiency and availability. Provide evidence through digital channels and reviews not just promotional claims.

Track greenwashing risk as the loss of consumer trust can have a significant reputational impact.

Segment customers based on their level of sustainability involvement, price sensitivity and category-specific needs.

Perform measures of actual purchase, repeat purchase and switching behaviour, as well as attitude and purchase intentions.

The policy and ethical implications are discussed.

Policy frameworks should encourage accurate environmental claims, standardized disclosure, credible certification and consumer access to comparable sustainability information. Ethical green marketing requires environmental communication to be based on real product performance. Firms should keep records of their claims, such as recyclability, carbon footprint, sourcing, and packaging and resource use. Common standards for environmental claims, recognized by regulators and industry associations, can make it easier for consumers to understand and compare environmental claims.

Limitation of the Study

This study does not include original consumer survey data. The statistics are from various studies using varying samples, dates and methodologies and so should NOT be pooled together like samples from a single population. Data

on willingness to pay is reported rather than actual payment and can vary from reported to actual. The sales increases that can be attributed to sustainability claims within the market do not prove that the claims themselves were the reason for the sales increases.

Future Research Directions

Preform primary consumer survey in urban and rural markets of India.

Examine correlations between environmental concern, trust, awareness of the environmental label, price sensitivity and real purchasing.

Apply regression or structural equation modelling to analyze the factors affecting green purchase intention.

Compare consumer reactions over various categories of products, e.g. food, cosmetics, clothing, packaging and household products.

- Review generational and socio-economic differences of willingness to pay
- Research verified sustainability claims or non-sustainability claims.
- Investigate long-term impact of green marketing on the repeat purchase, brand loyalty and brand advocacy.

Conclusion

Green marketing isn't just about communicating with the environment any more, it's a bigger problem of product development, packaging, pricing, distribution, communication, trust and corporate responsibility. The source paper rightly points out that perception is an important mechanism that explains the relationship between sustainability and consumer purchasing, and that gap between attitudes and behaviours has been a constant.

This is confirmed by the statistics of recent years. The results of PwC's 2024 survey show that 85% of consumers felt that COVID-19 had impacted their daily lives as a result of climate change, 80% stated that they would pay more for sustainable products and 46% said they had purchased more sustainable products. NIQ evidence indicates that there is meaningful market activity related to sustainability claims, although costs and access continue to be significant drawbacks. The 41% that cited cost as the largest challenge highlights the need for firms to take a holistic approach towards environmental and economic value.

The best green marketing strategy is not just to advertise better, but to advertise better about the environment. It's a credible approach that is integrated in which real product performance, sustainable sourcing, packaging, price, availability, certification and communication support each other. Green marketing can increase consumer confidence, encourage sustainable consumption and add value to a brand in the long-term when it is based on measurable and trusted environmental claims.

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Conflicts of interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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