

A Systematic Review of Nigerian Articles on Sustainable and Green Marketing and Consumer Behavior

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Abstract

The world is changing as more thought is now being given to the environment and how our actions affect the sustainability of the environment and life. As a result, eco-friendly products are in high demand and more companies are held accountable for their actions that damage the eco-system. Seeking to meet the demand for environmental sustainability, Nigerian companies have embraced green and sustainable marketing solutions. To this end, this paper examines the concept of green and sustainable marketing, interrogate the level of awareness and practice of green and sustainable marketing among Nigerian firms, and assess the marketing strategies employed as well as how this practice affects consumer behaviors in purchasing and using eco-friendly products using systematic literature review method. A total of 20 empirical works published between 2018 and 2024 by Nigerian authors were selected following purposive sampling technique and used for this systematic review using PRISMA guidelines. Findings demonstrate that there is increasing awareness about green products and green marketing among Nigerians firms especially the oil and gas sector and the consumers.

Keywords: Green products, green marketing, Environmental Sustainability, Sustainable marketing, Consumer behavior, Nigeria

Introduction

Recently, the debate about environmental sustainability and the role businesses play in achieving it has increased. People are now seeing the impact business practices on the eco-system and how these affects the sustainability of life among humans, plants and animals. The main tenet of environmentally friendly products is to avoid, minimize, and completely eradicate negative effects on the land, water, and atmosphere. These goods are therefore a helpful tool for resolving waste, noise, and environmental challenges. In this context, businesses regularly design and manufacture environmentally friendly products, while promoting these products and their brands by informing consumers about their commitment to the environment through different channels (Acee-Eke & Nwokah, 2019).

Consumer behavior refers to the actions and decisions people make when they choose, buy, use, and discard a product. The consumer behavior process begins with the need recognition and awareness of available products to meet the need (Kotler et al., 2022; Solomon, 2018). Therefore, recognizing the need to be environmentally sustainable, awareness about green products and companies that offer them and the decision to go for these products are aspects of consumer behavior. Companies create awareness through green marketing campaigns of green products, which influences their target audience's behavior.

A product is considered “eco” if its manufacturing, distribution, and overall marketing process are beneficial and less damaging to the surroundings. Green marketing consists of the creation, delivery and propagation of the values of ecological products (Singh, 2023). It is equally the practice of advertising products or services as environmentally safe. The phrase "green marketing" first emerged in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and it changed during this time (Acee-Eke & Ikegwuru, 2022). Concerns about climate change and its impact on human life have made consumers conscious of the products they purchase. Companies therefore hope to reduce their carbon footprints and implement green manufacturing and marketing strategies to attract more consumers. World reports on the adverse effects of carbon emissions, greenhouse gas emissions, ozone layer depletion, etc., are all factors that contribute to the growing consciousness of and demand for green products (World Bank Group, 2023).

Sustainable marketing is beyond value creation for eco-friendly products, it deals with ESG (environmental, social, and governance) sustainability given long-term profits and future use. It encourages relationship building, accountability, transparency, etc. (Okonkwo & Chukwudi, 2023). As defined by Philip Kotler, (2022) “the concept of sustainable marketing holds that an

organization should meet the needs of its present consumers without compromising the ability of future generations to fulfill their own needs". Further explained, sustainable marketing is ensuring all promotion activities minimize long-term negative effects on the environment, business, economy, and society at large. Examples of sustainable marketing practices include recyclable materials, promoting renewable energy, selling durable materials, etc.

Environmental issues have become a major concern for any organization that wants to succeed in stiff competition (Acee-Eke & Ikegwuru, 2022). The benefits of green marketing can therefore not be overemphasized. Green marketing plays a very pivotal role in creating vast awareness on issues concerning the environment and helps in communicating the drives of customer demand for greener products (Daniel, 2019). Green and sustainable marketing appeals to new and niche markets lowers production costs through renewable energy and recycling and helps the environment by reducing climate-harmful practices.

However, with all these benefits, the Nigerian market is still notably behind in the creation and marketing of eco-friendly goods. As a result, there is low awareness and only a restricted number of elite customers direct their purchasing behavior towards products that may be deemed environmentally friendly in Nigeria. In Nigeria, people are aware of the environmental issues that directly affect them, but they are often unaware of the impact of their actions on the global environmental changes (Oseremen, 2019). According to research, only 5% of Nigerians purchase green goods, despite the country's widespread awareness of environmental issues and green marketing (Oseremen, 2019), because of low environmental consciousness, lack of green knowledge, absence of governmental policies and control (Karatu et al., 2015; Akekue-Alex et al., 2023).

Nigerian literature on green and sustainable marketing is sparse and does not really emphasize the level of awareness among citizens. Therefore, in this study, clarity of the concepts and their necessity will be discussed while establishing the impact these marketing strategies will have on improving customer purchase decisions towards environmentally sustainable products. The aim of this systematic review is to concretely establish the relationship between and impact of green and sustainable marketing on consumer behavior looking at the overall environmental good.

Objectives:

This study is guided by the following research objectives:

- To assess the increasing level of awareness about green practices among consumers and add to growing literature seeking to explain the concept.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of green and sustainable marketing in influencing consumer behavior.

Research Questions

RQ1: What is the level of awareness about green practices among consumers?

RQ2: Does green and sustainable marketing influence consumer behavior?

Literature Review

Consumer Behavior in Green Product marketing and Practices in Nigeria:

Recent Nigerian studies have examined consumers' behaviours on green products and marketing practices across various industries and highlighted the impact of green marketing Consumers behaviours and growing importance of sustainable environmental consumer behaviours. Empirically, research indicated that consumer tastes are significantly shifting toward green products as a result of the increased emphasis on environmental sustainability worldwide, growing environmental consciousness and a desire for sustainable goods.

Chinda and Umeh's (2023) study examined Nigerian customers' willingness to pay more for environmentally friendly goods and results show that, mainly as a result of growing environmental consciousness and the perceived health advantages of eco-friendly products, 50.5% of Nigerian customers are willing to pay for eco-friendly product like personal care products and household cleaning products. The study also revealed that Nigerian consumers submit their willingness to purchase eco-friendly products for its high quality and health benefits. Similarly, a more recent study exploring the impact of green marketing strategies on consumer behaviours in the FMCG industry in Nigeria found that green marketing is a major determinant of consumers purchasing decision as consumers often do not demonstrate post-purchase dissatisfaction with green products from their preferred company. Concisely, Nigerian consumers are beginning to find value in eco-friendly products and have preferred organizations for certain green products. This also reflects the place of trust in terms of the company's manufacturing of the products. The study describes green pricing as "affordable pricing that captures value of preservation of the environment (Abiodun et al., 2024). In a related study, Mande and Taofeek's (2023) study investigated how green marketing strategies affected the purchasing decision and behaviours of the Nigerian Bottling Company's customers and found economic factor of pricing, income level and price sensitivity influence consumers purchasing decisions. Though there is an increasing interest in green and eco-friendly products, consumers often consider affordability before making purchase. Hence, consumers are more likely to

purchase a green product when they consider pricing as affordable and competitive and availability of incentives like discounts, free gifts, free delivery etc. Thus, there is a significant relationship between consumer buying behaviours and green marketing.

Likewise, Okonkwo and Chukwudi (2023) found that environmental marketing strategies have a positive impact in influencing consumers purchase behaviours in Nigeria's food and beverage industry and emphasized the necessity for businesses to implement sustainable practices in order to draw in environmentally conscious customers. The study also highlighted that peer influence, social norms and cultural values are key factors that influences Nigerian consumers to purchase and use green products. People rely on recommendations from trusted sources like family members, friends and individuals from their social networks before buying and consuming green products. In a different study, Okonkwo and Chukwudi (2023) highlights that some Nigerian consumers often approach green claims with doubt due to the prevalence of false advertising otherwise called “greenwashing.” This skepticism impacts the willingness to adopt green products unless supported by reliable recommendations and endorsements from people within their social networks.

Awareness of Green Practices in Nigeria

Green practices are actions aimed at preserving ecosystems and the environment. In Nigeria, they range from recycling to proper waste disposal, proper manufacturing to prevent emissions of carbon and other greenhouse gases to the atmosphere, etc. The impact of human activity on the environment is growing (Effiong et al., 2018) and humans are causing the environmental change on a massive scale; cutting forests, impounding rivers, creating unhealthy urban surroundings (Patton, 2002; Effiong et al., 2018) However, these environmental problems affect both the sustainability of life and businesses. The challenges faced by consumers today, such as the consequences of environmental problems and how to solve them in relation to economic activity, tend to make environmental consciousness a subject of concern (Ogiemwonyi et al., 2020). Awareness implies understanding and knowledge of the activities and events (such as desertification, land degradation, climate change, deforestation, atmospheric and land pollution, flooding and so on) going on around one's environment. A product which is made of raw material must be designed or manufactured in such a way that it must not destroy natural resources (Effiong et al., 2018).

Nigeria faces several environmental difficulties, such as oil spills, deforestation, indiscriminate use of pesticides, insecticides, and herbicides, flooding, erosion,

ozone layer depletion, pollution, and poor sanitation (Onuoha et al., 2022). All these effects on the Nigerian ecosystem are hazardous. In their work about green building awareness, Alotaibi et al., (2023) asserted that “In Nigeria, there are few sustainable constructions in existence because of a lack of green building knowledge, harsh economic climate and poor government regulations and laws”. They explained that water, electricity, and other crucial materials for house construction in Nigeria, particularly in Kano state, are not sustainable and cannot meet the current and future needs of the people.

There is still concern about the awareness level on green activism and therefore, practitioners and partners within the green industry must work hard to accomplish this objective (Ogiemwonyi et al., 2020). Their study explained that concerning green product value and environmental awareness, a green attitude and culture will be better developed among Nigerian youths if policymakers strongly emphasize environmental values that boost awareness.

Researchers identified components of green marketing awareness among consumers in Nigeria environmental concern, social influence, and green regulation (Ayodele et al., 2017). Environment concern has been recognized as the major factor that influences consumers purchase of organic foods (Ebhote & Odia, 2019) and it explains the extents of emotional engrossment in environmental problems (Ebhote & Odia, 2019; Lee, 2008)

Materials and Methods

This study adopted a systematic review design to synthesize research articles focusing on sustainable and green marketing within the Nigerian context. The researchers carried out a comprehensive search across multiple electronic databases on Scopus, Google Scholar, PubMed and African Journals Online to identify peer-reviewed articles published between 2018 and 2024. Keywords such as “Nigerian articles on green marketing”, “green marketing”, “sustainable marketing”, “sustainable green marketing”, “sustainable green marketing and consumer behavior in Nigeria”, “green product and consumer behavior” and “green and sustainable marketing in Nigeria”, were used for the search process. Also, the researchers examined the reference lists of selected articles to identify relevant studies or articles. Following purposive sampling technique, articles were included if they focused on sustainable and green marketing and consumer behavior in Nigeria context and were original research articles, reviews published in peer reviewed journals. Studies were irrelevant if they were not focused or relevant to the Nigerian context. Also, articles that were opinion articles, editorials, conference abstracts and included only secondary data were excluded from the study. This first comprehensive search yielded a total of 219 articles, after removing duplicates, it remained 110 articles, after reviewing titles

and abstracts, 20 articles were reviewed for the final outcome. The process of screening and selection adapted the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines. PRISMA guideline helps the research to clearly outline and select the most important elements that should be reported on sustainable and green marketing in Nigeria within the selected timeframe, study rationale, relevance (Moher et al., 2015). Articles were grouped using themes such as awareness of environmental issues, sustainability and green marketing in Nigeria, use of green marketing strategies by Nigerian industries and in Nigerian sectors and green sustainable marketing and its relationship with consumer behavior in Nigeria.

Results/Findings

Generally, findings of the systematic review revealed that the level of awareness about green activities and challenges are not high in Nigeria, but at least a 48% of environmental concern was detected. Also, Nigerian companies are now taking initiative to use green marketing strategies both for their business sustainability, corporate image, consumer loyalty, influencing consumer behavior, etc. Finally, there is a relative relationship between green marketing and consumer behavior.

Awareness of Environmental Issues, Sustainability, and Green Marketing in Nigeria

The findings from the reviewed articles provide varied insights into green awareness and practices in Nigeria. Six articles were analyzed on this subject. For instance, Alotaibi et al. (2023) explored green building awareness among residents and constructors in Kano State. The study revealed that approximately 97% of respondents were aware of green building systems, including solar power, proper ventilation, and energy-saving appliances, while only 3% were unaware. However, when examining eco-friendly waste disposal practices, the study found that 67.3% of respondents reported sending their refuse to landfills, 33.9% to recycling and reuse, while some households engaged in incineration. These findings highlight a gap between green awareness and active environmental sustainability practices among Nigerians.

Similarly, a study by Ogiemwonyi et al., (2020) indicated that although Nigerian consumers are informed about green practices, their attitudes are not significantly influenced by this knowledge, and awareness alone does not translate to embracing green culture. The authors recommended that green practitioners and policymakers develop more robust and effective environmental awareness strategies to enhance green culture adoption.

Ebhote and Odia (2019) studied “Environmental Marketing Awareness and Consumer Purchase Behavior: A Survey Of Food And Beverage Products In Nigeria”, and recommended that these companies be conscious of the ecological nature of their product as consumer knowledge about eco-friendly products is on the rise, concluding that the growing awareness is as a result of campaigns from various consumer protection agencies. Similarly, Otali and Ujene (2020) concluded that the level of awareness about sustainability practices among construction firms in Niger Delta is high. They argue that a high level of knowledge should help construction companies adopt sustainable practices, which should ultimately increase the performance of these companies.

A different study concluded that television and radio shows play significant roles in the awareness and strategic management of green marketing and should be used to encourage reportage and footage of environmental issues (Effiong et al., 2018)

Use of Green Marketing Strategies by Nigerian Industries and in Nigerian Sectors

The reviewed industries included food and beverage, construction, polythene manufacturing, financial technology, and oil and gas. Additionally, two studies focused on local government areas (LGAs) in Nigeria and small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Among these, the food and beverage industry were the most studied.

Green marketing strategies refers to the green product, green price, green promotion and green place which is also known as green marketing mix (Acee-Eke & Ikegwuru, 2022). Green products are offerings from companies that do not affect the environment or the natural ecosystem when consumers use them. They come in a wide range of shapes and sizes. Some are made from recycled materials and are considered efficient because they save money, water, energy and/or gasoline. Their packaging is also non-harmful to the environment (Acee-Eke & Nwokah, 2019). Green price is the cost paid by the customer to get a particular product/service. Tactical pricing strategies used by firms may include to incentives for returning recyclable packaging and increasing the cost of eco-unfriendly products (Arseculeratne & Yazdanifard, 2014; Acee-Eke & Ikegwuru, 2022). Green promotion involves relating true information to the public in a way that does not affect their interests and those of the environment at large. It highlights the eco-friendly characteristics a company has to offer. Green place emphasizes that all distribution activities reduce emissions in the transportation of raw and finished products and secure recycling procedures for customers.

The findings show that in the food and beverages industry, Acee-Eke and Nwokah (2019) noted there is a trade-off between growing their market share

(i.e., customer base) and immediate profitability because eco-product packaging and eco-product labeling both have a positive association with market share but a negative relationship with profitability. Obafemi and Ihunwo (2022) concluded that there is a positive and significant correlation between business success and green marketing methods. They advised companies in this sector to adopt these methods as they are expected to improve customer relationships, develop niche products, and increase competitive advantage of the company. In assessing the impact of green marketing on the corporate image of fast-moving consumer goods in Lagos, Folasayo (2019) concluded that it does influence but pointed out the major challenge of green marketing faced by companies as communication.

Other findings showed that there are green marketing practices in polythene manufacturing companies as they are required for business sustainability in South Nigeria (Abanyam & Abanyam, 2021); the Nigerian mainstream oil and gas sector accept the use of green product, price, promotion and place in ensuring environmental and firm sustainability (Acee-Eke & Ikegwuru, 2022); there is a trend of green marketing used by small and medium enterprises as one of the strategies for profit maximization and upholding the tools of green marketing mix (Daniel, 2019); local administrators should adopt green marketing methods that promote economic, environmental and social sustainability (Acee-Eke & Ikegwuru, 2020); FinTech companies should prioritize sustainable practices by continually promoting paperless transactions, integrating digital tools into marketing, and introducing electronic banking solutions to minimize environmental impact and encourage a transition from traditional banking (Eko et al., 2024).

These results agree that Nigerian firms are incorporating green marketing strategies and in so doing, are benefiting in terms of influencing consumer behavior, improving corporate image, increasing market share, etc.

Relationship between Consumer Behavior and Green and Sustainable Marketing in Nigeria

Consumer behavior refers to the actions and decisions people make when they choose, buy, use and dispose of a product. The consumer behavior process starts with the need recognition and awareness of available products to meet the need (Mande & Taofeek, 2022). Therefore, as earlier stated, recognizing the need to be environmentally sustainable, awareness about green products and companies that offer them and the decision to go for these products are aspects of consumer behavior. Companies create awareness through green marketing campaigns, and this influences the behavior of their target audience.

Green marketing strategies have a strong relationship with consumer behavior and purchase decisions. Businesses that produce environmentally friendly goods will undoubtedly have an advantage over non-environmentally friendly businesses in niche markets (Mande & Taofeek, 2022; Ebhote & Odia, 2019).

Literature revealed that public perception of green products is that green products are targeted only at premium, high-earning customers (Ogiemwonyi et al., 2020). Same study also revealed that individuals with at least a bachelor's degree are more likely to advocate for and adopt green practices due to their exposure, level of reasoning and awareness of environmental benefits. This suggests that lower- and middle-class Nigerians are less influenced by green marketing strategies, as they may lack sufficient knowledge and face affordability challenges.

The effect of green advertising such as corporate, celebrity, and consumer-oriented advertising on green purchasing behavior (intention, involvement, and actual purchase behavior) was validated in a study of university lecturers in Nigeria, confirming its significant impact (Akekue-Alex et al., 2023). Similarly, another study concluded that green corporate advertising effectively fosters green purchase intention in Nigeria's South-South region (Akekue-Alex & Amue, 2019).

A cross-cultural study on "Green Product as a Means of Expressing Green Behavior" compared consumer behavior in Malaysia and Nigeria. In Malaysia, 13% and 8% of respondents purchased energy-saving products and organic food, respectively, compared to 24% and 8% in Nigeria. Additionally, 54% of Nigerian consumers purchased green products due to their health benefits, while 40% of Malaysian consumers were motivated by the environmental benefits of these products (Ogiemwonyi et al., 2020). These findings suggest that green consumer behavior is gradually gaining traction in Nigeria, driven by green marketing initiatives.

Ogiemwonyi (2022), in a study on Generation Y's buying behavior, identified key factors influencing green product adoption, including green product value, green price sensitivity, and green product trust all elements of the green marketing mix.

As rational beings, consumers evaluate various environmental factors before making purchasing decisions. Food and beverage companies in Nigeria, therefore, need to thoroughly assess the environmental impacts of their products and marketing strategies to remain competitive and sustainable (Ebhote & Odia, 2019). Therefore, this systematic review finds that there is a relationship

between green and sustainable marketing by Nigerian firms and consumer behavior at all levels.

Theories and Themes

An array of theories was used as a framework for the articles reviewed. This section summarizes the different theoretical approaches toward desirable green consumer behavior and green marketing strategies. 55% of the works made use of a theoretical framework in discussing consumer behavior and green marketing, while the other 45% explain the concepts without explicitly choosing a theory.

The theory of Reasoned Action/Planned Behavior was the most popular. It was propounded by Azjen (1991) to forecast a person's desire to act in a certain way at a specific time and location. According to the notion, consumers weigh the benefits and drawbacks of various course of action before deciding on the one that will maximize their expected gains. It is relevant because buyers prefer goods that will not endanger their health even if they cost more (Ebhoté & Odia, 2019).

Another profound theory used to explain green consumer behavior is the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) propounded by Petty & Caccioppo (1986). It is a broad theory that considers the thinking process a consumer goes through when responding to persuasive stimuli. Consumers may take the central route to critically analyze green promotional messages considering their message arguments or may be influenced based on the peripheral cues used in the message presentation. The two pillars of the theory explain that a consumer's green attitude and advocacy is influenced/changed either by their consideration of the merit of the offering or by an outside influence (company's green marketing strategies).

Concerning green marketing and the roles of Nigerian firms, other scholars considered the Technology Acceptance Model Theory (TAM) (Daniel, 2019), and Dynamic Theory of Innovation (Eko et al., 2024), to show the adaptability of Nigerian firms to the new rise in environmental concern by utilizing green marketing strategies. Other theories used include the sustainability model, strategic management theory (SMT), legitimacy theory, institutional theory, and greening of the organization theory.

The central themes of the articles include environmental issues and challenges, environmental awareness, the eco-system, green marketing, sustainability of businesses, consumer purchase, and green culture. Majority of the articles centered on the awareness stage of consumer behavior, while others were on

sustainable green practices of firms and then on the influence on of green awareness and marketing on consumer behavior (other stages like purchase intention and purchase).

Conclusion

Environmental issues are becoming a world concern and Nigeria is not left out. There is an increasing need for companies to be environmentally responsible in their marketing process which can impact the purchase behavior of their consumers. Therefore, this systematic literature review set out to understand the concepts of green marketing and sustainability in Nigeria and how aware Nigerians are of these concepts. The review also sought to establish a relationship between green and sustainable marketing and consumer behavior by looking at various articles which studied the concepts. After analyzing 20 articles, the essential elements of green marketing were given as green price, green product, green place and green promotion. Theories used in the studied articles asserted that consumer behavior is influenced based on their awareness of environmental challenges and the benefits they would derive from purchasing green products. Also, Nigerian firms were encouraged to generate awareness on green products and practices in their marketing campaigns. It was also found that Nigerian firms engage green marketing practices to improve their corporate image and sustainability. Green marketing strategies also are employed to provide adequate information about green processes, benefits, price, etc.

From the need recognition, awareness, information search, purchase intention, purchase decision, attitude, and post-purchase behavior, this study has confirmed that green and sustainable marketing practices (green product, price, place and promotion) have a viable effect on eliciting positive purchase intentions from consumers especially in niche markets.

Limitations

The major limitation of this study is that most of the articles reviewed focused on the “green” product and consumer behaviours and less emphasis on the marketing strategies employed in the promotion of the company’s product. Likewise, the study found that there were limited empirical research on sustainability green marketing in Nigeria which therefore result into the limited reviewed numbers of article for the study

Recommendations

Based on the findings above, it is recommended that future studies should also aim to create awareness and close the knowledge gap on green and sustainable marketing among the general Nigerian populace, particularly the lower-income demographic. Increased advocacy and education on green products could

stimulate broader adoption and create a more inclusive market for sustainable consumption. Finally, Nigerian firms are encouraged to design and implement comprehensive green marketing campaigns that not only appeal to niche markets but also foster widespread consumer education on the benefits and accessibility of green products

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