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Green Marketing and the Green Consumer: Fundamental Pillars of Environmental Sustainability

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ABSTRACT

This study examines green marketing and its influence on consumer behavior within the context of environmental sustainability. It explores how organizations integrate environmental considerations into marketing strategies and highlights the role of green consumers in driving sustainable market transformation. The study identifies key determinants of green consumer behavior, including environmental awareness, education, economic factors, and perceived value. The findings indicate that green marketing and environmentally conscious consumption jointly contribute to environmental sustainability and improved organizational performance.

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1. Introduction

In light of the rapid evolution of contemporary development thinking, grounded in the principles of sustainability and its economic, environmental, and social dimensions, global environmental awareness has increased significantly in recent decades. This growing awareness is largely driven by intensifying environmental degradation, including pollution, global warming, acid rain, and the overexploitation of natural resources, particularly non-renewable ones.

In response to these global challenges, business organizations have begun to reassess their social and ethical responsibilities by integrating environmental considerations into their marketing strategies. This shift has led to the emergence of green marketing, an approach aimed at reducing negative environmental impacts while promoting environmental responsibility across all marketing activities.

At the same time, consumer behavior has undergone notable changes, as individuals have become increasingly aware of environmental issues and more concerned with sustainable lifestyles.

Research Problem

This study addresses the following main research question: **What are the factors driving organizations to adopt green marketing practices and consumers to engage in green behavior, and how does this contribute to environmental sustainability?**

Hypotheses

- Environmental awareness increases preference for green products.
- Green marketing positively influences consumer behavior.
- Environmental education enhances green consumer behavior.

Importance and Aim of the Study

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to understanding the growing role of green marketing in addressing environmental challenges and promoting sustainable development. It highlights the key factors influencing organizations' adoption of green marketing strategies and consumers' engagement in green behavior.

Research Methodology

This study adopts a descriptive analytical research design based on secondary data collected from peer-reviewed academic literature,

institutional reports, and international statistical databases. The descriptive component is used to present the evolution of green marketing and consumer behavior, while the analytical component examines the relationships between environmental awareness, green marketing practices, and consumer behavior.
This approach is suitable for the exploratory nature of the study, as it enables the synthesis of theoretical and empirical insights across different contexts without the limitations of primary data collection.

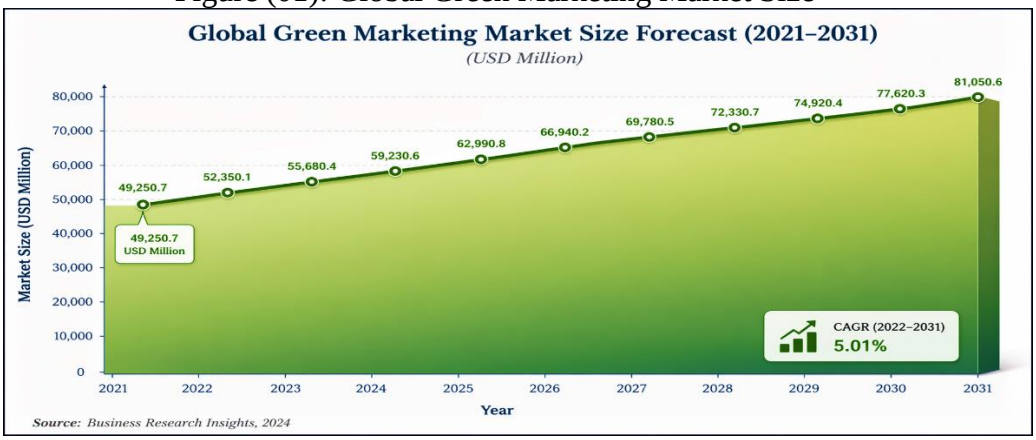
Research Methodology:

This study adopts a descriptive-analytical approach based on secondary data derived from academic literature, reports, and statistical sources. It analyzes trends in green marketing and consumer behavior and evaluates their impact on environmental sustainability. The relationship between green marketing practices and consumers' environmental awareness and eco-friendly consumption behavior is also examined.

1. Current Situation of Green Marketing

Recent studies indicate a significant increase in academic publications on green marketing, reflecting growing scholarly interest in this field. Empirical research is particularly prevalent in countries such as the United States, China, and the United Kingdom (Liu, 2023). Moreover, green marketing strategies have been shown to positively influence firm performance and competitive advantage (Hussain, 2023).
In addition, the global green marketing market has experienced remarkable growth, reaching approximately USD 49,250.7 million in 2021 (Business Research Insights, 2024).

Figure (01): Global Green Marketing Market Size



Source:Business Research Insights. (2024). Green marketing market size, share, growth and forecast report (2021–2031). https://www.businessresearchinsights.com

Based on Figure (01), which provides a forecast for the green marketing market from 2020 to 2031, where the market size is measured in millions of US dollars, the following observations can be made:

- **Market size:** The global green marketing market is expected to reach approximately **69,998.58 million US dollars by 2031**. This indicates steady growth over the past few years and an anticipated upward trend in the future.
- **Compound annual growth rate (CAGR):** The green marketing market is projected to record a compound annual growth rate of 3.58% during the period 2024–2031, This suggests that the market is expected to grow consistently and steadily throughout this period.

  Overall, these figures reflect positive expectations for the future development and expansion of the green marketing market.

1.1 The Most Controversial Appeal and the Most Controversial Promotional Mix

Green environmental marketing can be viewed as a translation of the requirements of social and ethical responsibility in marketing. It has emerged as a response to the increasing environmental challenges in recent years and is centered on carrying out marketing activities within specific regulatory guidelines that ensure the preservation of the natural environment and prevent environmental damage.

1.1.1.Definition of Green Marketing

The term "green" generally refers to the environment or ecological system, and directly refers to environmental components such as air, water, and land. Shrum et al. (1995) and other scholars have used the term "green" to highlight the importance that organizations attach to the physical environment.

Two dimensions have been proposed for the term "green." The first is a political dimension, which refers to the changes that governments must implement, particularly through the establishment of new environmental legislation related to environmental protection. The second is a human dimension, which focuses on the individual's personal contribution to preserving the environment.

Cu rrently, Green marketing is defined as an integrated approach aimed at minimizing environmental harm while satisfying consumer needs through sustainable exchange processes (Polonsky, 1994; Kotler & Armstrong, 2018). It extends beyond recycling initiatives to include all marketing activities that reduce environmental impact across production and consumption processes.

The American Marketing Association defines green marketing as the study of the environmental impacts of marketing activities, including pollution and energy use (Al-Bouri, 2011). Kotler and Armstrong view it as the development of environmentally responsible products, while Polonsky emphasizes that it involves exchanges that satisfy consumer needs without harming the natural environment. Stanton adds that it aims to reduce or avoid the negative environmental impacts of products, and Mintu and Lozada highlight its role in facilitating environmentally protective exchanges between organizations and individuals.

Overall, green marketing can be summarized as an integrated marketing approach aimed at influencing consumer behavior toward environmentally friendly products, promoting sustainable consumption, and ensuring environmental protection while maintaining organizational objectives.

1.1.2. Importance of Green Marketing

Green marketing is considered highly important due to the benefits it provides to business organizations, especially those with an environmental orientation. It contributes to environmental protection and the rational use of natural resources (Salhi, 2011, p. 413).

Its main advantages include:

- **Achieving owners' objectives:** Green marketing opens broad market opportunities for adopting organizations, allowing them to avoid traditional competition and gain a strong competitive position. This is especially true when dealing with environmentally friendly products, which enhance profitability and help achieve owners' goals while improving the organization's image and reputation in society.
- **Safety in product delivery and operations:** Focusing on producing safe and environmentally friendly products improves production efficiency, reduces waste and pollution, avoids legal penalties related to environmental violations, and strengthens relationships with environmental organizations and consumers.
- **Social acceptance of business organizations:** Organizations that adopt green marketing enjoy strong societal support due to the alignment of their vision and goals with environmental expectations. This improves relationships with current customers and facilitates the acquisition of new customers in the future.
- **Continuity and sustainability of activities:** By avoiding legal risks and gaining public approval, green marketing enables organizations to achieve long-term sustainability, growth, and continuity while improving their operational and commercial performance.

1.2.The Green Marketing Mix

The green marketing mix is a model used to design and implement green marketing strategies. It consists of a set of elements developed to meet the needs of environmentally conscious consumers while reducing the environmental impact of products. The shift toward a green marketing mix emerged as a response to criticism of the traditional marketing mix due to its negative environmental effects (Kotler, 2002; Al-Bouri, 2016, p. 65),This concept has become a major focus of research, particularly regarding its influence on consumer behavior, organizational performance, and corporate practices. Studies show that adopting green branding, green pricing, and green promotion increases environmental awareness and encourages positive changes in consumer behavior (Sharma, 2021, pp. 53–61).

Green marketing is therefore integrated into marketing decision-making processes as an essential factor. Organizations increasingly recognize that environmental and social responsibility is not separate from their goals of growth and profit maximization. As a result, firms

develop specialized marketing mixes that align with environmental principles, ensuring coherence between marketing strategies and sustainability objectives.

Figure (02): Components of the Green Marketing Mix



Source: Prepared by the researchers based on:Leonidou, Katsikeas, Morgan, "Greening" The Marketing Mix: Do Firms Do It And Does It Pay Off?, Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, 41(2), 2013, p.151.

Below is a brief explanation of the green marketing mix shown in Figure (02).

a. Green Product

A green product is defined as a good designed or modified to meet environmental protection standards while maintaining its core functionality and reducing natural resource depletion (Gardner, 1989, p. 337). It typically involves improvements in packaging, materials, and production inputs through the substitution of harmful components with eco-friendly alternatives. The effectiveness of green products lies in balancing environmental performance with functional quality, requiring integration between marketing and production processes. This has contributed to the development of eco-design and green manufacturing approaches within sustainable production systems.

b. Pricing of the Green Product

Green products generally involve higher costs due to environmentally oriented research, development, and production requirements. This often results in premium pricing, which may limit demand in price-sensitive markets. Consequently, firms must consider consumers' willingness to pay

and perceived value when setting prices. Value-based pricing is commonly applied, assuming that environmentally conscious consumers accept higher prices in exchange for ecological benefits. Thus, green pricing is shaped by economic and behavioral factors and remains a key determinant of green marketing effectiveness, Green pricing strategies are influenced by sustainability costs and consumer willingness to pay for eco-friendly products (Christian, 2006; PwC, 2024). Marketing communication must remain transparent and avoid misleading environmental claims (Sharma, 2021).

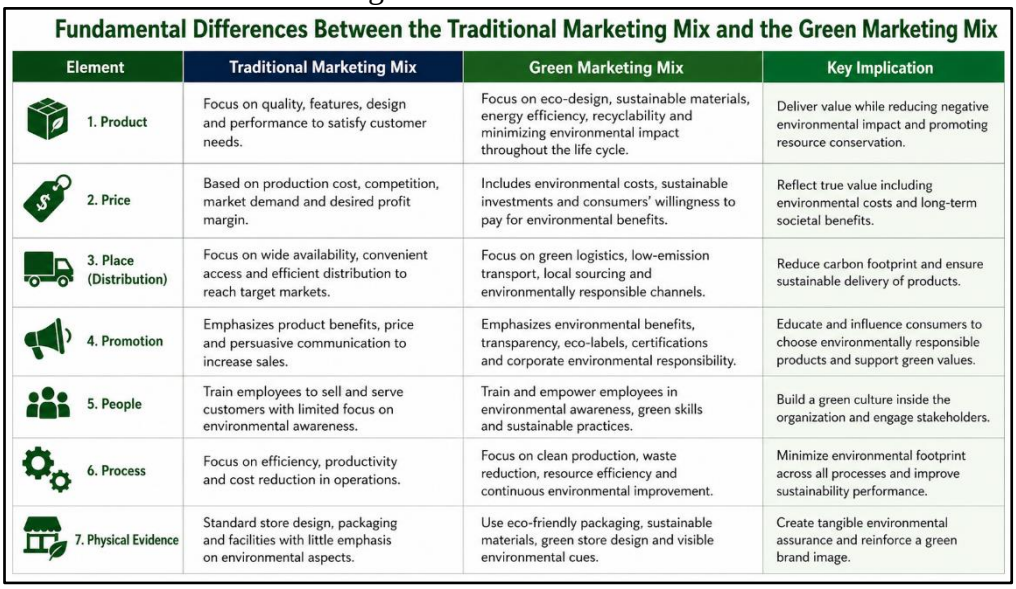
c. Promotion of Green Products

Green promotion involves communicating the environmental attributes and corporate ecological commitment through tools such as advertising, public relations, sales promotion, and personal selling. It must be credible and consistent with actual environmental performance to avoid misleading claims. The objective is to influence consumer behavior by highlighting the environmental benefits of products and encouraging sustainable purchasing decisions.

d. Distribution of Green Products

Green distribution ensures that logistics and supply chain activities comply with environmental standards. It extends beyond traditional one-way distribution to include reverse logistics, where used products are collected for reuse, recycling, or safe disposal. This system requires coordination among producers, intermediaries, and recycling entities to minimize environmental impact and recover value from waste. Consequently, green distribution represents a strategic shift toward environmentally responsible supply chain management aligned with sustainability principles.

Figure (03): Fundamental Differences Between the Traditional Marketing Mix and the Green Marketing Mix



Fundamental Differences Between the Traditional Marketing Mix and the Green Marketing Mix

Element	Traditional Marketing Mix	Green Marketing Mix	Key Implication
1. Product	Focus on quality, features, design and performance to satisfy customer needs.	Focus on eco-design, sustainable materials, energy efficiency, recyclability and minimizing environmental impact throughout the life cycle.	Deliver value while reducing negative environmental impact and promoting resource conservation.
2. Price	Based on production cost, competition, market demand and desired profit margin.	Includes environmental costs, sustainable investments and consumers' willingness to pay for environmental benefits.	Reflect true value including environmental costs and long-term societal benefits.
3. Place (Distribution)	Focus on wide availability, convenient access and efficient distribution to reach target markets.	Focus on green logistics, low-emission transport, local sourcing and environmentally responsible channels.	Reduce carbon footprint and ensure sustainable delivery of products.
4. Promotion	Emphasizes product benefits, price and persuasive communication to increase sales.	Emphasizes environmental benefits, transparency, eco-labels, certifications and corporate environmental responsibility.	Educate and influence consumers to choose environmentally responsible products and support green values.
5. People	Train employees to sell and serve customers with limited focus on environmental awareness.	Train and empower employees in environmental awareness, green skills and sustainable practices.	Build a green culture inside the organization and engage stakeholders.
6. Process	Focus on efficiency, productivity and cost reduction in operations.	Focus on clean production, waste reduction, resource efficiency and continuous environmental improvement.	Minimize environmental footprint across all processes and improve sustainability performance.
7. Physical Evidence	Standard store design, packaging and facilities with little emphasis on environmental aspects.	Use eco-friendly packaging, sustainable materials, green store design and visible environmental cues.	Create tangible environmental assurance and reinforce a green brand image.

Source: *Bukari, Z., Akolaa, A. A., Abraham, E. M., & Tsagli, S. K. (2025).* Green marketing mix and consumer purchase intention: The mediating role of organizational attractiveness and prestige. *Review of Business Information Systems, 25(2).*

The traditional marketing mix is fundamentally grounded in the classical 4Ps framework product, price, promotion, and place which prioritizes market efficiency and profit maximization. In this paradigm, product strategies emphasize functional quality, design, and performance to meet consumer demand, while pricing decisions are typically based on cost structures, competitive positioning, and profitability goals. Promotion is primarily used as a persuasive communication tool to stimulate demand, whereas distribution (place) focuses on ensuring efficient product availability at minimal logistical cost. Overall, this model reflects a linear and producer-centric approach characterized by a one-way flow of value from firms to consumers, with a predominant focus on short-term economic outcomes (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018).

In contrast, the green marketing mix expands this conventional framework by integrating environmental sustainability into all marketing decisions. The green product dimension emphasizes eco-design, recyclability, reduced environmental impact, and the use of renewable or non-toxic materials. Green pricing reflects not only production and sustainability-related costs but also consumers' increasing willingness to pay for environmentally

responsible products. Green promotion shifts toward transparent communication, environmental education, and credible sustainability claims, while actively avoiding greenwashing practices that may undermine consumer trust. Similarly, green distribution (place) incorporates sustainable logistics, carbon footprint reduction, reverse logistics, and circular supply chain systems. Unlike the traditional model, the green marketing mix follows a circular and regenerative logic, embedding feedback loops such as reuse, recycling, and product recovery systems. This reflects a long-term orientation aimed at balancing economic performance with environmental protection and social responsibility, aligning with the principles of sustainable development and circular economy thinking (Kumar et al., 2021; Groening et al., 2023; Peattie & Belz, 2022).

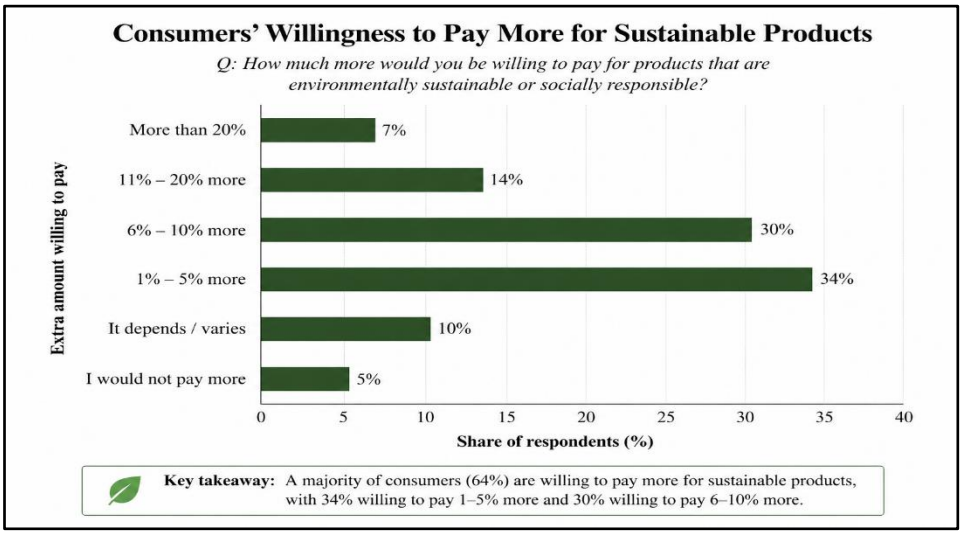
This recent study confirms that the Green Marketing Mix fundamentally differs from the traditional marketing mix in that it integrates environmental dimensions across all elements of the 4Ps (product, price, promotion, and place). It further explains that this transformation is not limited to improving marketing performance alone, but extends to enhancing environmental sustainability and building organizational value by increasing corporate attractiveness and reputation among environmentally conscious consumers.

2. Green consumer

The shift toward a sustainable market is increasingly driven by green marketing strategies targeting green consumers individuals strongly guided by environmental values and sustainability principles. This consumer segment plays a key role in enhancing the environmental performance of organizations adopting green marketing practices, as recent literature confirms a strong link between green consumer behavior and rising demand for sustainable products (Groening et al., 2023; Kumar et al., 2021).

Recent empirical evidence shows that consumers are increasingly willing to pay a premium for environmentally friendly products. Global studies estimate that consumers are willing to pay around 9–30% more for sustainable goods depending on product type and context (Drupp et al., 2023; PwC, 2024). Similarly, earlier findings indicate that approximately 12% of American consumers around 25 million individuals are willing to pay additional costs for eco-friendly products (Christian, 2006). Overall, sustainability has become a significant determinant in purchasing decisions rather than a secondary preference (Peattie & Belz, 2022).

Figure (04): Illustrates consumers' willingness to pay for sustainability.



Source : Nielsen (2015), The Sustainability Imperative: New Insights on Consumer Expectations.

Figure (04) indicates that consumers are increasingly willing to pay a premium for goods and services offered by environmentally responsible companies. The data are based on a Nielsen survey of 30,000 consumers across 60 countries, yielding the following key findings:

- 55% of consumers surveyed in 2014 were willing to pay more for sustainable products and services, compared to 45% in 2011, reflecting a growing global interest in sustainability.
- At the regional level, consumers in Asia-Pacific (64%), the Middle East and Africa, and Latin America (63%) show the highest willingness to pay a sustainability premium, while North America (42%) and Europe (40%) record the lowest levels.

Overall, these results highlight an increasing global trend toward sustainability and a growing acceptance of paying higher prices for environmentally friendly products. This tendency has been steadily rising since 2011, indicating the emergence of a new consumer behavior characterized by environmental awareness, responsibility, and support for ecological balance.

2.1 Definition of the Green Consumer

The concept of the green consumer reflects individuals who demonstrate high environmental awareness and prefer environmentally friendly products (Elkington, 1994; Shrum et al., 1995). Their purchasing decisions are guided by ecological values, sustainability concerns, and perceived environmental benefits. This behavior highlights the increasing importance of environmental considerations in shaping consumer choices and market demand.

In conclusion, the green consumer represents a key driver of sustainable consumption, as their behavior is shaped by environmental awareness, social influence, and a commitment to supporting eco-friendly products, thereby encouraging organizations to improve their environmental performance.

2.2 Green Consumer Behavior

Green consumer behavior refers to environmentally responsible purchasing decisions influenced by awareness, education, and ecological values (Joshi & Rahman, 2015; White et al., 2019). Consumers increasingly consider sustainability when selecting products, reflecting a shift toward more conscious consumption patterns.

Key characteristics of green consumer behavior include high environmental concern, careful evaluation of product information before purchase, and consumption patterns shaped by learning, social influence, and cultural factors. Such behavior encompasses all stages of consumption from product selection to usage, disposal, recycling, and even boycotting environmentally harmful products aiming to minimize environmental impact (Nguyen et al., 2022; Groening et al., 2023),Overall, green consumer behavior represents a set of actions driven by environmental values that encourage the preference for sustainable products. While it shares general features with conventional consumer behavior, it is distinguished by stronger environmental motivations and ethical considerations influencing purchasing decisions (Peattie & Belz, 2022).

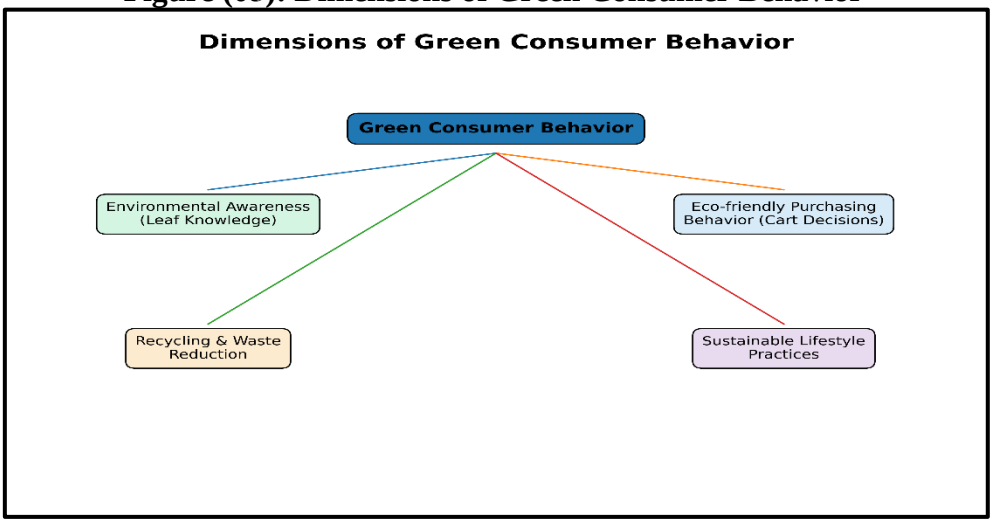
2.3 Dimensions of Green Consumer Behavior

Green consumer behavior is inherently dynamic and complex, making the study of its dimensions essential for developing effective marketing strategies. Unlike traditional assumptions that consumers accept any product offered, contemporary marketing recognizes the need to satisfy

environmentally conscious consumers through rational and informed approaches,Understanding the dimensions of green consumer behavior is therefore fundamental for designing appropriate marketing strategies, as this behavior encompasses multiple factors that influence purchasing decisions and shape preferences for environmentally friendly products.

Environmental awareness, education, and perceived product value significantly influence green consumer behavior and increase demand for sustainable products (Nguyen et al., 2022; Kumar et al., 2021).

Figure (05): Dimensions of Green Consumer Behavior



Source: Author's own elaboration based on Green Consumer Behavior dimensions.

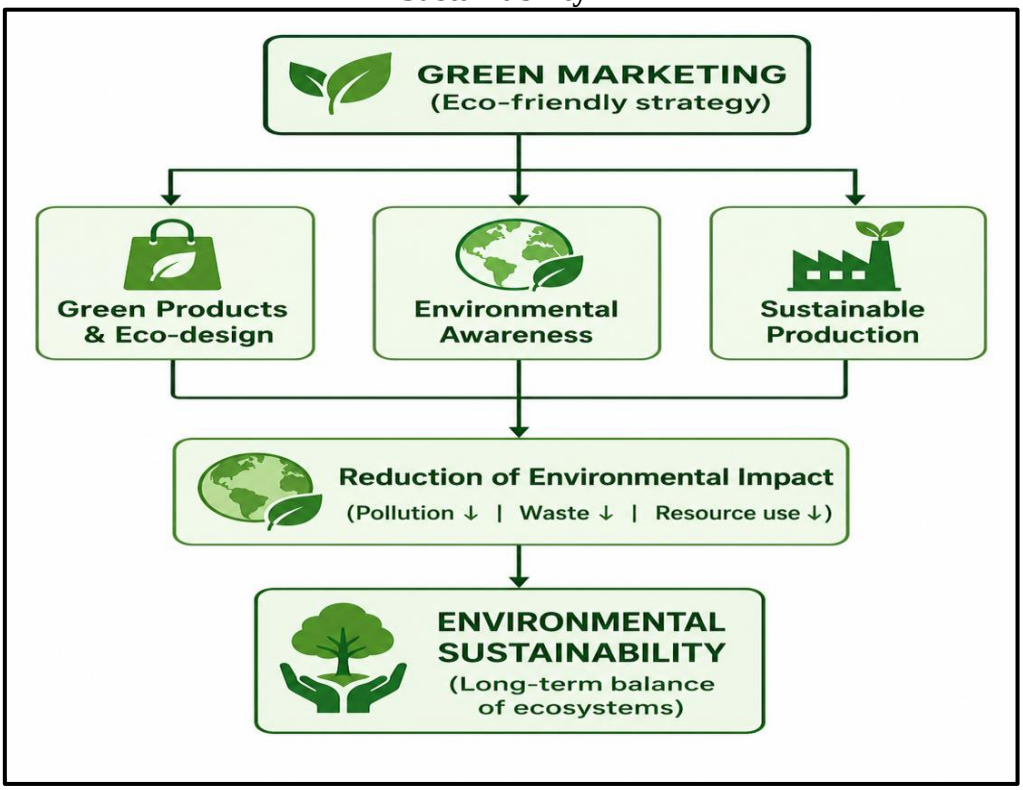
The previous figure presents a comprehensive framework of the key dimensions that shape consumer behavior when selecting and preferring environmentally friendly products over conventional ones. It highlights that analyzing the dimensions of green consumer behavior is essential for developing appropriate marketing strategies, enabling firms to effectively identify and respond to the needs and preferences of this consumer segment in alignment with environmental sustainability.

3. The Contribution of Green Marketing and the Green Consumer to Environmental Sustainability

The following figure (matrix) illustrates the main forms of interaction between green marketing from the organizational perspective and green

consumers as a driving force in promoting sustainable consumption behaviors and increasing demand for environmentally friendly products.

Figure (06): The Impact of Green Marketing on Environmental Sustainability



Source:Mei, Y., Geng, L., Cao, X., & Xie, Y. (2025). Artificial intelligence in green marketing: A systematic literature review. *Sustainability, 17*(22), 10382. https://doi.org/10.3390/su172210382

The figure highlights four possible interaction scenarios between firms (through green marketing practices) and green consumers (through green consumption behavior) in shaping environmental sustainability. The least desirable scenario occurs when neither firms adopt green marketing nor consumers engage in sustainable behavior, posing a dual threat to the environment. A second scenario reflects strong consumer commitment to green behavior, while firms lag behind, creating pressure on organizations to adjust their strategies. In contrast, a third scenario shows proactive firms adopting green marketing, but with weak consumer engagement, requiring

firms to influence behavior through marketing tools. The optimal scenario emerges when both firms and consumers actively support sustainability, leading to enhanced environmental awareness and improved sustainability outcomes (Groening et al., 2023; Peattie & Belz, 2022).

Furthermore, aligning green marketing strategies with green consumer behavior represents a critical pathway toward environmental sustainability. This is achieved through several key mechanisms: reshaping marketing philosophy toward sustainability, complying with global sustainability standards, adopting a holistic (multi-dimensional) view of markets and consumers, reducing excessive materialism, integrating ethical and environmental principles into marketing practices, and delivering sustainable value that meets evolving consumer expectations (Kumar et al., 2021; Testa et al., 2021; White et al., 2019),Overall, the integration of green marketing and green consumer behavior contributes to fostering environmental awareness, encouraging sustainable consumption patterns, and supporting the transition toward long-term environmental sustainability.

The interaction between green marketing and consumer behavior contributes significantly to environmental sustainability by reducing environmental impact and encouraging responsible consumption patterns (Peattie & Belz, 2022; Mei et al., 2025).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the adoption of green marketing has become a critical necessity for modern business organizations. As a contemporary marketing paradigm, it contributes to achieving competitive advantage while addressing growing environmental concerns. Increasing environmental awareness among stakeholders and pressure from civil society have reinforced the importance of integrating sustainability into marketing practices. Consequently, green marketing enhances organizational performance through efficient resource utilization, waste reduction, and the development of a positive corporate image, while also encouraging environmentally responsible consumer behavior (Groening et al., 2023; Kumar et al., 2021).

The findings indicate that green marketing serves as an effective tool for embedding social and environmental responsibility into business strategies and responding to environmental challenges. Its implementation relies on efficient use of natural resources, cleaner production processes, and recycling practices. Moreover, it promotes the emergence of green consumers and strengthens environmental awareness, supporting the

transition toward sustainable consumption (Peattie & Belz, 2022; Testa et al., 2021).

The study recommends that organizations integrate environmental considerations into their marketing strategies, enhance green promotional efforts, and raise consumer awareness through education and communication initiatives. Additionally, coordinated efforts between institutions are essential to foster a culture of sustainability and encourage the adoption of green consumption behaviors (White et al., 2019; Nguyen et al., 2022).

Finally, this study opens avenues for future research to further explore the practical implications and strategic implementation of green marketing in achieving higher levels of environmental sustainability and organizational effectiveness.

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