

A Study on Consumer Preference for Products Priorizing Sustainability

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Abstract

Sustainability has become a key factor influencing consumer preferences and purchasing decisions. This study examines consumer attitudes toward sustainable products, identifying key drivers that influence their choices. The research explores awareness levels, perceived benefits, and barriers to adopting eco-friendly alternatives. Using a combination of surveys and secondary data analysis, the study evaluates how demographics, pricing, and brand perception impact consumer decisions. The findings provide insights for businesses aiming to align their marketing and product strategies with sustainability trends, contributing to both environmental conservation and competitive advantage.

Keywords: Sustainability, Consumer Preference, Consumer Attitude, Awareness Levels, Perceived Benefits, Eco-friendly Alternatives, Demographics, Brand Perception, Sustainability Trends, Environmental conservation

1. Introduction

Over the last few years, the increasing awareness of environmental concerns, climate change, and resource scarcity has created more consumer interest in green products. Businesses of all sectors are embracing sustainability in their businesses, acknowledging the call for green alternatives. Consumers' demand for sustainable products differs depending on price sensitivity, their trust in brands, and concern for the environment.

This research will investigate the determinants of consumer demand for sustainable products. It will examine how sustainability affects buying behavior, what drives consumers to opt for green products, and what hinders broader adoption. Through an examination of consumer behavior, this research will assist companies in creating successful sustainability-based marketing campaigns, product development, and contributing to international sustainability objectives.

2. Objectives of the Study

This study aims to:

1. To study consumer knowledge and attitude towards sustainable products.
2. To determine major drivers of consumer choice towards sustainable products.
3. To understand the effect of price, brand reputation and ecolabel on consumer purchase decisions.
4. To investigate barriers hindering consumers towards choosing better sustainable product options.
5. To offer insights to companies for sharpening their marketing practices focusing on sustainability.

3. Literature Review

Major Research on consumer choice of sustainable products

1. Consumer Awareness and Attitude Towards Sustainability A study by Ottman (2011) – consumers who are environmentally conscious often seek sustainable products, yet gaps in awareness persist.
2. Impact of Pricing and Willingness to pay for Sustainability by Haws et al. (2014) and Wensing et al. (2020) – while consumers value sustainability, many may not agree to pay the extra amount due to unclear benefits.
3. Role of Eco-Labels and Certifications by Thøgersen et al. (2012) – eco-labels often increase consumer trust and may lead to improved purchase decisions but a certain lack of standardization and consumer skepticism about greenwashing products (Peattie & Crane, 2005) reduces their effectiveness.
4. Brand Image and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) by (Kotler & Keller, 2016) – argues that companies implementing CSR initiatives often get the benefits of better customer engagement and brand preference.

These researches showcase the importance of brands prioritizing sustainable means in manufacturing and marketing of their products often lead to better brand perception and consumer loyalty.

4. Research Methodology

This investigation adopts a secondary research methodology, and utilizes an examination of various existing literature, reports and case studies to navigate various ways through which consumers prefer sustainable products.

1. Data Collection – Reviewing academic journals, industry reports and government issuances. Review of reporting from renowned global organizations such as (UN, WEF & other environmental bodies). Cases of brands who successfully navigate sustainability are also been examined.
2. Data Analysis – Identifying key trends on consumer preference and the factors associated with sustainable products, determining impact on sustainability to overall consumer behavior and brand perception.
3. Scope and Limitations – The study relies on pre-existing data neglecting direct consumer surveys. It also suggests that the findings may not include the current shifts in the market.

5. Data Analysis and Interpretation

This part summarizes the secondary research findings to identify consumer behavior, drivers, and inhibitors of consuming sustainable products.

1. Consumer awareness and Willingness to purchase green products – There has been research that has demonstrated greater sensitivity towards sustainability, where 70% of the consumers opted for environmentally friendly products (Nielsen, 2023). But just 30-40% of them turn intention into action, mostly because of price and availability issues.
Interpretation: There is strong awareness, but there is a major gap between intention and buying behavior, for which stronger incentives and awareness are required.
2. Critical Determinants Affecting Consumer Choice
Price Sensitivity: Studies indicate more than 50% of the consumers will not pay a premium price for sustainability unless concrete benefits are guaranteed (e.g., durability, health)
Eco-Labels & Certifications: Genuine certifications (e.g., USDA Organic Fair Trade) and consumer trust, but greenwashing problems lead to loss of brand loyalty.

Interpretation: Brands must price sustainable products affordably, clearly communicate value, and be transparent to build trust.

3. Barriers to the adoption of Green Products

Higher Prices: Green products are (20-30) % pricier than conventional products, and that deters price-conscious consumers.

Limited Availability: Most environmentally friendly products are not readily available, particularly in tier 2 and tier 3 cities.

Interpretation: Increasing affordability, building distribution strength, and building transparency can increase adoption levels.

4. Market Trends and Future Potential

The international market for eco-products will increase at (9-10) % per annum (Statista, 2024).

Interpretation: Younger generation (Gen Z) value sustainability more than older generations and will define future demand. Emergence of new business models like circular economy, refill stations, and fair sourcing are gaining traction which means the market is expanding for sustainable products and businesses that value innovation and genuineness will be competitive.

6. Findings

- Although 70% of customers favour sustainable products, only 30–40% purchase them because of concerns about cost and convenience.
- **Price Sensitivity:** Unless there are definite advantages, such as durability or health benefits, more than half are reluctant to pay more.
- **Trust Issues:** Despite eco-labels, 40% of consumers have doubts about sustainability claims and worry about greenwashing.
- **Brand Influence:** Businesses with robust sustainability and corporate social responsibility initiatives enjoy more customer loyalty and trust.
- **Restricted Availability:** A lot of environmentally friendly products are difficult to find, particularly in underdeveloped nations.
- **Market Growth:** Gen Z and Millennials are boosting demand for sustainable products, which is fuelling the market's 9–10% yearly expansion.

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

7.1 Conclusion

The desire for sustainable products is growing among consumers, but price sensitivity, trust difficulties, and accessibility barriers continue to restrict actual purchasing activity. Despite the increased eco-consciousness, companies need to remove these obstacles to encourage adoption. Younger generations' growing impact and the market's expansion offer firms a great chance to adapt and follow sustainable trends.

7.2 Recommendations

1. **Make Sustainability Affordable** - Encourage adoption by offering competitive pricing, discounts, and value-driven sustainable options.
2. **Improve Transparency** - Communicate sustainability claims clearly, use credible certifications, and prevent greenwashing.

3. Improve Availability - Increase product accessibility by expanding distribution through mainstream retail and e-commerce channels.
4. Educate and Engage Consumers - Conduct awareness campaigns that highlight product benefits and environmental impact.
5. Leverage innovation by making investments in ethical sourcing, circular economy concepts, and sustainable packaging to increase brand appeal.

8. References

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