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# ECO-Branding: Consumer Responses to Sustainability Claims in Advertising

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## Abstract

*Eco-branding has recently become an essential marketing strategy, highlighting the increasing consumer consciousness regarding environmental concerns and the need for sustainable business practices. This study examines how consumers react to sustainability assertions made in branding and marketing messages. Utilizing cross-disciplinary research from marketing, psychology, and environmental studies, the study examines the impact of eco-branding on shaping consumer perceptions, attitudes, and buying behavior.*

*The study highlights crucial elements that influence consumer reactions, such as the perceived genuineness of environmental assertions, the lucidity and openness of communication, and the consistency between brand image and sustainability stories. It additionally examines how "greenwashing"—in which false or overstated environmental assertions create consumer doubt and opposition—affects brand trustworthiness. The study additionally analyzes demographic and psychographic factors like age, education, and environmental awareness that influence consumer reactions to eco-friendly communications.*

*Results indicate that although eco-branding can enhance customer loyalty and brand value, its effectiveness mainly relies on authenticity, consistency, and true corporate dedication to sustainability. The document emphasizes effective strategies for marketers aiming to responsibly utilize eco-branding, such as third-party certifications, lifecycle disclosures, and stakeholder involvement.*

*In the end, this paper enhances the comprehension of the role sustainability claims play in the branding ecosystem and provides guidance for brands seeking to maneuver through the intricate terrain of eco-friendly marketing. Through the synthesis of existing research, the paper highlights the significance of honesty and clarity in fostering enduring consumer trust within a progressively eco-aware marketplace.*

**Keywords:** Branding, Eco branding, consumer

## Introduction

In recent years, growing environmental consciousness and the pressing nature of climate change have changed how companies interact with customers. Consequently, sustainability has become not just a corporate duty but also an effective marketing strategy. The idea of eco-branding—incorporating environmental values into brand identity and communication—has gained significance across various industries, including consumer products, fashion, automotive, and technology sectors. Eco-branding utilizes environmental themes, sustainability assertions, and eco-conscious storytelling to mold consumer views and affect buying decisions. Although numerous consumers show a preference for brands that reflect their ethical and environmental principles, a notable disparity exists between what they intend and what they actually do. The intricacy of this divide prompts essential inquiries: How do consumers understand and react to sustainability assertions? What elements affect the trustworthiness of eco-branded communications? To what degree does eco-branding result in significant behavioral change?

This paper examines the changing terrain of eco-branding, emphasizing consumer psychological reactions, market dynamics, and the efficacy of sustainability communication. It combines findings from recent empirical research and theoretical models in marketing, consumer behavior, and environmental communication.

## Objectives of the Study

1. To investigate the idea and development of eco-branding within the wider framework of sustainable marketing strategies and environmental awareness.
2. To examine theories of consumer behavior related to green marketing, concentrating on how people perceive, interpret, and respond to sustainability assertions.

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3. To evaluate the reliability and impact of environmental assertions on product labels, marketing materials, and brand messaging in shaping consumer confidence and buying choices.
4. To examine how greenwashing affects consumer perception, aiming to uncover the elements that cause doubt or dismissal of eco-branded products.
5. To determine demographic, psychological, and cultural influences that affect consumer reactions to eco-branding in various markets.

### **Literature Review**

The overlap of ecological awareness and purchasing habits has attracted considerable scholarly attention in recent years. Eco-branding, characterized as the strategic application of environmental assertions to position products and brands as ecologically responsible, has become a central theme in sustainability-focused marketing discussions

### **Perceptions of Eco-Branding by Consumers**

The perception of consumers is vital to the success of eco-branding strategies. Studies indicate that although numerous consumers convey favorable views regarding eco-friendly products, these views do not consistently result in real buying actions—a situation frequently referred to as the attitude-behavior gap (Auger & Devinney, 2007). The trustworthiness of sustainability assertions greatly impacts this divide. Claims viewed as ambiguous, uncheckable, or inflated frequently lead to doubt and diminished trust among consumers (Peattie & Crane, 2005).

Additionally, the increase of "greenwashing"—when businesses falsely represent their products as being more eco-friendly than reality—has made it more difficult for consumers to understand eco-claims (TerraChoice, 2010). Consequently, trust has emerged as a key factor in comprehending consumer reactions to eco-branding (Leonidou & Skarmeas, 2017). Brands that show transparency, possess third-party certifications, and exhibit a long-term dedication to environmental objectives are generally preferred by consumers (Rahbar & Wahid, 2011)

### **Effect on Buying Intent and Brand Commitment:**

Eco-branding can effectively impact both buying intention and brand loyalty, as long as consumers view the claims as genuine and pertinent. Research by Hartmann and Apaolaza-Ibáñez (2012) revealed that emotional connection to nature-oriented branding boosts intent to buy, particularly when environmental advantages are effectively conveyed. Likewise, consumers who share their values with a

brand's sustainability goals are more inclined to foster loyalty (Nguyen et al., 2019).

Nonetheless, the impact of eco-branding differs among consumer groups. Younger buyers, especially millennials and Generation Z, usually react more positively to sustainability assertions, frequently using them as a factor in brand choice (White et al., 2019). Socio-demographic aspects like income, education level, and cultural heritage also influence the intensity of consumer reactions (Dangelico & Vocalelli, 2017)

### **The Importance of Labeling and Certification:**

Eco-labels and independent certifications have become essential instruments in improving the trustworthiness of sustainability assertions. Thøgersen (2000) states that widely recognized eco-labels enhance buying choices by minimizing information asymmetry. Moreover, labels supported by well-regarded organizations tend to be more successful in building consumer trust compared to those developed internally by companies (Testa et al., 2015).

The rise of numerous eco-labels may create confusion and decision fatigue for consumers (Atkinson & Rosenthal, 2014). This indicates a necessity for standardization and education regarding sustainable product labeling to enhance consumer comprehension and promote eco-friendly buying

### **Impact of Digital and Social Media:**

The growth of digital marketing has changed the way eco-branding messages are conveyed and perceived. Social media channels allow brands to communicate stories regarding their ecological influence in more engaging and open manners. Endorsements by influencers and user-created content related to sustainable products can greatly enhance consumer engagement and trust (Lim et al., 2020). Nonetheless, the credibility of digital sustainability stories is constantly examined, highlighting the necessity for coherent communication and actionable proof

### **Methodology**

Relevant literature was sourced from academic databases including **Scopus, Web of Science, JSTOR, ScienceDirect, and Google Scholar**. The search was conducted using a combination of keywords and Boolean operators. Only articles published between **2010 and 2024** were considered to ensure the inclusion of recent and relevant developments. Both qualitative and quantitative studies were reviewed to provide a balanced analysis of consumer attitudes and behaviors toward eco-brands.

## Discussion

The results highlight a nuanced, context-dependent connection between eco-branding and consumer actions. Despite clear consumer interest in sustainable brands, the success of sustainability marketing largely relies on perceived trustworthiness, specificity of claims, and relevance to the context.

A key insight from the literature is the disparity between consumer intention and real behavior, often called the "attitude-behavior gap." Though consumers frequently show interest in sustainable products, their actual buying choices are swayed by cost, convenience, and brand recognition (Auger et al., 2010). This indicates that eco-branding, though impactful, cannot function separately from larger value propositions like quality and cost-effectiveness.

The issue of greenwashing makes consumer reactions more complex. Vague or deceitful assertions not only weaken confidence in specific brands but also reduce trust in sustainability marketing overall. Clarity, validation, and endorsements from external sources seem crucial for preserving consumer confidence in environmental assertions.

Another significant element is the division of consumer reactions. Younger consumers often emphasize ethical consumption more vigorously and are typically more receptive to digital narratives, social media promotion, and engaging campaigns. Nonetheless, this demographic shows increased sensitivity to authenticity, frequently analyzing brands for alignment between their claims and behaviors (Naderi & Van Steenburg, 2018).

Ultimately, the expanding collection of studies highlights the necessity for uniform eco-labeling methods, more precise descriptions of sustainability measurements, and cooperation across industries to establish consistent and credible frameworks. In the absence of such systems, the promise of eco-branding as a catalyst for sustainable consumption might be inadequately leveraged.

## Limitations Of the Study

Although this paper provides important perspectives on consumer reactions to sustainability assertions in marketing, certain limitations should be recognized. Initially, the range of the literature examined might not entirely encompass all regional or cultural viewpoints, especially from underrepresented economies or developing markets. Local norms, levels of environmental awareness, and regulatory frameworks can greatly impact consumer behavior concerning eco-branding, and these factors might not be consistently examined in all studies featured in this review.

Secondly, the dependence on existing literature implies that this paper is limited by the methods, sample groups, and theoretical frameworks used in the original research. Differences in research quality and design can influence the applicability of the combined results. For example, numerous studies on consumer behavior are carried out in controlled settings, which might not truly represent actual purchasing situations.

Third, the ever-changing characteristics of consumer perspectives on sustainability present a challenge. With the rapid evolution of environmental issues and marketing tactics, the significance of certain findings may decrease as time progresses. This time restriction indicates a requirement for continuous studies to monitor changing consumer demands and market reactions.

Ultimately, although this paper seeks to highlight general trends and patterns, it does not present a meta-analysis or statistical synthesis of findings, which might yield stronger quantitative evidence regarding effect sizes or correlations.

## Prospective Outlook

The increasing focus on sustainability in marketing offers significant chances for additional research and practical implementation in eco-branding. Future research could investigate changing consumer views on sustainability assertions across various cultural and demographic groups, as these elements greatly affect brand confidence and buying choices. Moreover, exploring the lasting effects of eco-branding on brand equity and consumer loyalty can offer more profound understanding of sustainable business expansion.

Developments in digital marketing and social media channels present encouraging opportunities for assessing immediate consumer interaction with sustainability messaging, enabling marketers to customize communication approaches more efficiently. Furthermore, research across disciplines such as psychology, environmental science, and marketing might improve insights into the cognitive and emotional factors influencing eco-friendly consumer behavior. From a practical standpoint, there is an opportunity to create uniform frameworks and certifications that guarantee transparency and trustworthiness in sustainability assertions, thus lessening consumer doubts and issues related to greenwashing. Ultimately, examining the combination of eco-branding with innovative technologies like blockchain for supply chain clarity could transform the way sustainability is conveyed and validated in marketing approaches.

Focusing on these aspects, forthcoming research and innovation can enhance the function of eco-branding.

in encouraging sustainable consumption and generating beneficial environmental effects

## Conclusion

This paper emphasizes the rising importance of eco-branding as a strategic approach in modern marketing, fueled by heightened consumer awareness and concern for environmental sustainability. The evidence highlights that consumers are typically open to sustainability assertions, as long as they view these assertions as trustworthy, transparent, and in harmony with genuine corporate actions. Nonetheless, the effect of eco-branding on consumer actions is complex, shaped by elements like demographic traits, cultural beliefs, and personal environmental awareness.

Although eco-branding provides companies a significant chance to stand out and foster trust, the obstacles of greenwashing and skepticism continue to be major hindrances to its success. Consequently, marketers need to emphasize authentic sustainability initiatives, transparent communication, and validation systems to build enduring consumer loyalty and favorable brand equity.

Future studies ought to further examine the evolving interplay between eco-branding approaches and shifting consumer expectations, especially in varied international markets. This allows companies to refine their strategies to achieve both profitability and environmental accountability, thereby fostering more sustainable consumption habits globally.

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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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