

## **Channelizing Eco-Centric Marketing For Sustainable Product Consumption**

**By**

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### **Abstract**

As environmental problems continue to worsen, consumers' worries about the preservation of the environment have led to a diversity in consumer purchasing approaches toward living a greener lifestyle. Businesses are taking initiatives to build potentially environment-friendly business practices and products for the eco-friendly market industry. Eco-centric marketing is relatively a new idea that is still undergoing development. The term eco-centric marketing is the practice of promoting sustainable goods that adhere to a set of principles of eco-standards. Green marketing, environmental marketing, and ecological marketing are just a few of the terms that have been used to describe activities in this field. Eco-centric marketing and the development of sustainable products are important approaches that businesses employ to boost competitive advantages and the likelihood of attaining customer satisfaction. Eco-innovation can be used to increase the effectiveness of eco-friendly marketing by using different techniques as suggested by the findings of the research. This conceptual paper is based on exploratory research design incorporating secondary data sources from interdisciplinary journals, and research papers to suggest ways to achieve sustainability by promoting the consumption of sustainable products via eco-centric marketing. So, this paper holds potential for policymakers advocates of green lifestyle and environmental strategists.

**Keywords:** Eco-centric marketing, Eco-logical innovation, Sustainable product, Sustainability.

### **Research Objective**

To channelize eco-centric marketing through the path of sustainability for attaining responsible product consumption.

## Introduction

As a result of existing unsustainable manufacturing and consumption practices, the world's sustainability problems are worsening at an alarming rate. Even though marketing is acknowledged to be directly tied to social welfare, its consumer-centric emphasis and sometimes irresponsible tactics have prompted concerns about the vulnerability of customers to unethical marketing methods. Consumers are more worried about environmental preservation, and there is a high demand for sustainable products because of the worldwide rise of environmentalism. So, in order to secure their long-term financial success, most organizations have adopted an eco-centric form of marketing and green product development techniques that protect the environment while also meeting the needs of their target population. Eco-centric marketing is a strategic approach to managing a business so that it may effectively and profitably meet the requirements of its customers and the community while also developing long-term sustainability. Eco-friendly marketing, green marketing and environmental marketing are all terms that have been used to describe activities in this field. Eco-centric sustainable marketing considers the whole process, from product design to manufacturing and packaging to final presentation through promotion, and makes necessary adjustments through eco-friendly innovation. With Ecological innovation, eco-centric marketing can assist in the attainment of sustainability by inducing the consumption of sustainable products which also empowers firms to obtain a competitive edge.

## Literature Review

### *3.1 Decoding eco-centric marketing paradigms*

Business responsibilities are often broken down into economical, societal, and environmental spheres, similar to what the popular notion of sustainable development suggests (Peattie, 1995). Environmental concerns are likely to grow more relevant in the future, requiring creativity and innovative marketing strategies for many companies (Mahato et al., 2023). Many businesses still find it difficult and challenging to implement sustainability initiatives in their firms, so when faced with today's environmental problems, managers must devise plans to limit pollution and preserve natural resources. (Millar et al., 2012). Eco-centric marketing is a method of sustainable management that prioritizes the satisfaction of customers and other stakeholders without jeopardizing the health of the planet or its inhabitants (Nair & Menon, 2008). Eco-centric marketing affects how businesses are managed and how they connect with several participants who might be impacted by their environmental or social policies and procedures (Harini et al., 2020). Eco-sustainability and environmental marketing are gaining traction in the business world because of the numerous benefits they provide in terms of both competitiveness and commercial prospects (Sarkar, 2012). Eco-centric innovation is a novel product or method that benefits companies and consumers while also having a substantial positive effect on the environment (Fussler, 1996). Goals of eco-centric marketing:

- (a) Sustainable growth and stakeholder contentment are the goals that eco-centric marketers have long sought to achieve (Karna, J et al., 2003)
- (b) is to maximize financial gain while preserving ethical standards (Mourad and Ahmed, 2012)
- (c) educate and encourage green living since it changes customers' lifestyles and habits (Grant, 2007).

- (d) minimize the negative effects of business activities on the natural world by taking into account environmental factors in the formulation and execution of marketing strategies (Harini et al., 2020).

While purchasing commercially accessible goods, consumers are incorporating a new paradigm shift, the importance they place on a company's commitment to social responsibility in regard to the environment and long-term sustainability (Kotler, 2011). Consumers, corporations, and governments all play critical roles in setting eco-centric marketing into action. However, there are certain barriers to its widespread adoption, including a dearth of consumer education, insufficient resources, inadequate scientific understanding, lack of regulation, and intense market pressure (Singh and Pandey, 2012). To overcome these shortcomings Table 1 outlines the several ecocentric duties of customers, institutions, businesses and governments (Iyer, 1999).

**Table 1:** *Relating eco-centric responsibilities with stakeholders*

<b>Stakeholders</b>	<b>Eco-centric responsibilities</b>
Consumers	Prioritizing the long-term usage and longevity of things above their short-term convenience for consumption, discarding or recycling. Consumption of products using irreversible techniques should be minimized.
Institutions	Instead of focusing on increasing the supply of ecologically unsound products, growth and development should be refocused on reducing the demand for such items.
Business	Fostering a society that values thrift, longevity, and creativity. More emphasis on scope economies (creating variety with the same resources) and less on the economics of scale.
Government	Instead of competing on "environmental product quality" or partially recycled manufacturing waste, businesses should compete on price by reducing resource usage. Prioritize regional ecological demands and biosphere dynamics ahead of world trade.
	Instead of relying on the market to resolve questions of distributive justice, Government should take responsibility for ensuring that everyone's fundamental needs are met.

In order to generate long-term profitability, corporations have started to use environmental marketing and sustainable product development techniques that protect the environment and fulfil customer preferences (Yan & Yazdanifard, 2014). Eco-centrism may aid in the long-term success of an industry by establishing a spirit of collaboration, partnership, and innovation among rival companies (Child et al., 2005; Nidumolu et al., 2009).

### **3.2 Propelling sustainable products via eco-friendly marketing inventions**

The worldwide consumption of products and services by consumers has skyrocketed over the last ten years, which has led to the loss of the earth's resources and catastrophic harm to the environment (Chen & Chai, 2010). The role marketer is to guide customers towards purchases that have the minimum negative impact on the environment. Market research and advertising may help with this reorientation (Kinoti, 2011). Eco-friendly marketing encompasses a wide range of practices, such as making modifications to goods, altering manufacturing methods, redesigning packaging, and rethinking promotional strategies (Popescu et al., 2017). New products or processes that benefit companies and consumers while also considering lowering their environmental effects are referred to as eco-centric innovations

(Fussler, 1996). Eco-innovation may be seen as a unique corporate asset that enables organizations to acquire a competitive edge while simultaneously enhancing the effectiveness of environmentally responsible marketing (Harini et al., 2020). The growth of eco-centric innovation is a win-win strategy for addressing problems between economic progress and environmental conservation since several businesses are eager to invest and exert greater effort in this area (Chang & Taylor, 2016). As a long-term marketing strategy, eco-friendly marketing requires careful consideration of how well company management understands and implements the plan (Funaru, 2014). Most businesses in the 20th century understood their customers' real purchasing habits, motivations, and other aspects well enough to use eco-friendly marketing strategies (Yan & Yazdanifard, 2014). According to Peattie and Crane (2005), the development of sustainable products is based on authentic ecological innovation, with proper presentation of the products' green advantages and value propositions to ultimate consumers. Sustainable products have been shown to have less negative outcomes, fewer dangers, fewer hazardous ingredients, lower health problems, higher rates of recycling, and a high environmental impact (Azevedo et al., 2011). Designing green goods and a marketing plan around them should be influenced by consumers' real consumption habits and segmented accordingly (Ginsberg, 2004). To generate demand for sustainable goods and services, more effective green brands, packaging, labelling, and advertisement tactics must be developed. (Juwaheer et al., 2012). Different strategies used by business firms to attract consumers towards sustainable products using eco-friendly marketing techniques:

a) Green Advertising - as a promotion tool Green Advertising is a kind of marketing that encourages creative and innovative approaches to highlight the product (Davis, 1993). Customers' purchase choices would be greatly influenced if they were given reliable advertising information regarding eco-friendly products, such as eco-labels, trademarks, designs, etc (Mahato et al., 2022). Marketers are increasingly turning to green advertising featuring pollution-free messaging to get customers interested in their products and educate them on environmental concerns (Ankit & Mayur, 2013).

b) Awareness Programmes – Consumers propensity to pay extra for sustainable goods is correlated with their level of environmental consciousness (Gan et al., 2008). In order to raise people's levels of environmental awareness, the company has to develop a more effective business plan for eco-friendly goods that makes use of the most effective channels of media (Mahato & Seth, 2022). Samsung's "Planet First" environmental initiative was created to strike a balance between consumers' insatiable want for cutting-edge technology and the company's ethical obligation to reduce its products' negative effects on the planet (Laric and Lynagh, 2010).

c) Pricing of Sustainable Products - Money plays a significant role in consumers' decision-making while adopting eco-centric sustainable products (Ksenia, 2013). Businesses may set prices for a variety of products and services based on how eco-friendly they are (Kotler, 2011). Customers with a low sensitivity for pricing are more likely to pay a premium for eco-friendly goods than they would be to spend the same amount for a conventional product of the same quality and value (Eze & Ndubisi, 2013).

d) Green Packaging - Packaging provides several benefits including the ability to draw in customers, provide important details about the product, position the item in the buyer's mind, and set it apart from the competition (Morel and Kwakye, 2012). Therefore, it's fair to say that packing matters, particularly from a consumer's point of view while making a purchase decision (Rajendran et al., 2019).

From the points of view of decreased ecological concerns, more economic development, increased safety, equal allocation of natural resources, increased well-being, healthier lifestyles, and social responsibility, green consumption aids in increasing quality of life (Kilbourne et al., 1997). Consumers are getting more environmentally conscious. This concern could result in increased environmental awareness (Miller and Layton, 2000) and sustainable goods purchase habits (Roberts, 1996).

### ***3.3 Intertwining sustainability with ecological marketing***

Sustainable growth will need the adoption of environmental marketing methods by businesses to ensure the sustainability of their marketing operations (Garg, 2015). Eco-friendly marketing may be seen as a predictor of sustainable development since its primary goal is to ensure that all marketing efforts are made in a way that minimizes negative impacts on the natural environment (Kinoti, 2011). In the year 1995, Shrivastava stated that companies should prioritize eco-centric sustainability as a core component of their success. Positive feelings shown by customers toward eco-friendly items have a colossal impact on both brand value and the likelihood of future purchases (Chen, 2010). Conventional criteria like economics, quality, and customer needs need to be supplemented with considerations of societal and environmental implications, and the functionality needed, in order to successfully incorporate sustainability in both product and service creation (Maxwell et al., 2003). Business firm's strategy for intertwining sustainability with eco-friendly marketing:

A) Transitional Strategies - sustain an anthropocentric philosophy of knowledge and the prevailing social paradigm is easily recognizable in the contemporary business arena (Borland & Lindgreen, 2013). They're linked with policies that promote environmental and social efficiency (Young and Tilley, 2006). Continuous improvement and gradual shifts are the results of these transitional tactics, which are linear, cradle-to-grave, open-loop, dualistic methods (Hart & Milstein, 1999).

B) Transformational Strategies - adopt an eco-centric perspective and the idea of ecological responsibility (Purser et al., 1995). Transformative approaches combine eco-effectiveness with social effectiveness by operating within the bounds of existing ecosystems (McDonough & Braungart, 2002) and stand for techniques that consider the whole life cycle from beginning to end; are founded on systems thinking, have a closed loop, are visionary and result in disruption and innovation (Porter, 2008).

At first, a business may use transitional strategies that promote eco-efficient practices, such as the regulate, reducing, reusing and recycling to implement new attitudes, beliefs, and behaviour among workers, vendors, buyers, and other stakeholders (Borland and Lindgreen, 2013). As a result, the shift toward transformational strategy is facilitated if the company adopts a behavioural change in the area of eco-effectiveness (McDonough & Braungart, 2002).

## **Research Methodology**

- Research Method: Qualitative
- Paper Category: Conceptual
- Research Design: Exploratory
- Qualitative Research Tool: Grounded Theory Approach
- Data Mining Technique: Systematic approach
- Research Mechanism applied: Inductive process
- Sources of Data: Secondary Sources of Data



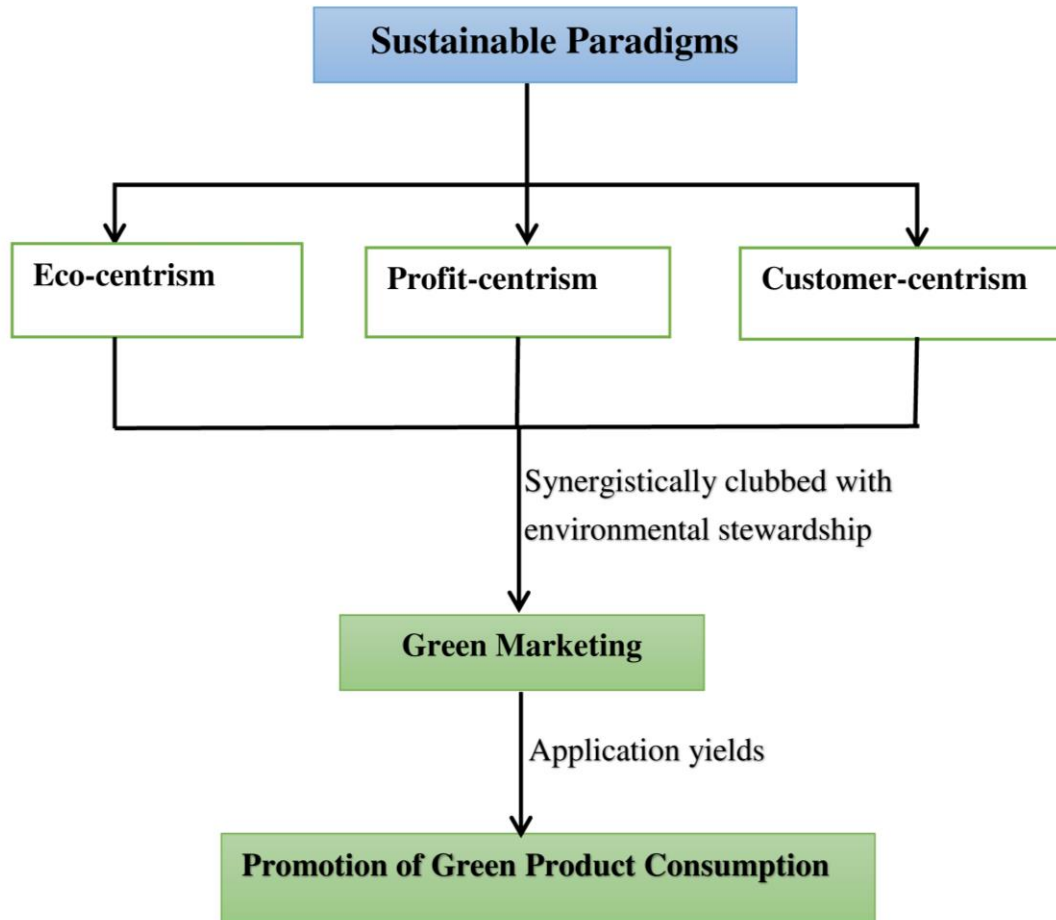
## Findings

The researchers infer the following from the application of the qualitative research approach as applied to the extensive literature:

- Businesses should promote eco-friendly sustainability as an eco-centric form of marketing is gaining popularity in the corporate sector because of the multiple advantages they give in terms of competitive edge, increased efficiency and financial possibilities.
- Firms are investing in eco-centric innovation to solve the problem of balancing between financial objectives and environment conservation and subsequent development of new goods and services, which make it a distinct corporate asset.
- To shift consumer's purchase behaviour towards sustainable products, companies are using a green promotions, awareness programmes, price sensitivity and eco-friendly packaging strategies.
- To integrate sustainability and ecological marketing practices, Business Organisations can use transitional strategies that are a mix of traditional approaches and transformational strategies that collectively use eco-effective approaches.
- Environmental concerns of consumers are taken into consideration for formulating pricing strategies for sustainable products. Due to these concerns, consumers are ready to pay a higher price for goods sourced from sustainable, ethical supply chains as these products offer healthy lifestyles.
- A consumer's propensity to buy sustainable products is proportional to the intensity with which he or she feels a need to protect the planet. The findings of this research indicate that consumers' environmental concerns are the most important and influential factors in motivating them to adopt sustainable purchasing practices.

## Conclusion

There has been a rise in the incorporation of sustainability pillars (environment, society and economy) into marketing decision-making as a result of the changing nature of global marketplaces. Consumers' intention to purchase items with a less impact on the environment has grown as environmental concerns have gained prominence. As a result, business organisations, society, regulators and the government become aware of them and implemented measures to mitigate their detrimental effects. This has created a strong impetus for businesses to shift their focus from traditional marketing approaches to eco-centric marketing methods. Companies can expand their reach, boost their financial gains, and get a competitive edge in the market with the help of eco-centric innovation as it attracts revenues, reduces environmental impacts and create value for business organisation. Marketers should take advantage of green pricing, green packaging, and green advertising to spur the demand of sustainable products over the non-green conventional products, and it is advised that successful eco-centric marketing strategies be created and executed in both corporate and government organizations.



**Figure 1: Channelizing sustainable paradigms to promote green product consumption**

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