

## **Determinants of Customer Attitude Towards Green Marketing**

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**ABSTRACT:** *This is a conceptual paper that tries to bring out the relationship between marketing discipline, the natural environment and customers attitude. The notion of marketing is too vast therefore, the paper concentrated on the external dimensions of green marketing at strategic and tactical level aim to reach the consumers. Therefore, the '4ps' traditional marketing mix variables use in an innovative manner will be used as the yardstick to measure the green marketing in this paper. Nigeria is still in its infant stage on the green concept. Nigeria ranked 100<sup>th</sup> scoring 54.76 out of 180 countries for overall environmental performance <sup>1</sup> which could be due to non-challenge attitude among Nigerian consumers and marketing professionals towards the environment. Therefore, this paper aim at proposing a research model that will determine customer attitude towards green marketing. Three probable factors were identified and propose in the research model that will determine the relative contributions of customers' cognitive, conative and affective senses on their overall attitude towards the green marketing mix variables (green: products; price; promotion and place). Structured questionnaire is proposed to be sent to 524 lecturers and researchers of University of Maiduguri whom will be selected by stratified random sampling. Data will be collected online through monkey survey. Multiple regressions using SPSS will be employed to test the hypotheses postulated. It is expected that findings will provide empirical evidence on the influence and contributions of the attitude components as determinants of overall customer attitude towards green marketing which could provide informative insights on consumers' propensity to consume which could provide basis for decision making for the policy makers, current and potential green marketers and consumers.*

**KEY WORDS:** green marketing; green product; green place; green price; green promotion; environmental attitude; eco-friendly, sustainability.

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### **INTRODUCTION**

It is believed that the trend towards pro-environmental attitude developed the concept of green marketing. Green marketing is an old phenomenon which has not gain recognition until the late nineties (90s). It dates back to ancient days when there was a harmonious, Man-Nature relationship. People are encouraged to maintain nature's sustainability and reach a "man-nature" unity (Ip, 1983, cited in Thoria, 2019). Green marketing also referred to as ecological, environmental, or sustainable and even responsible marketing. It is considered as an integral

constituent of holistic marketing concept (Sandeep, Durgesh, Upasana and Yadav, 2011.). It involves the production and promotion of environmentally friendly products, services, and initiatives. To be more specific green marketing refers to a broad range of environmentally friendly practices and strategies. Over the last decade environmentalism emerged to be a vital business movement due to increasing issues related to acid rains, depletion of the ozone layer and degradation of land and many pressing issues (Dhiraj, 2014). The rising trend in environmentalism has led to increase in consumer awareness of the current pressing environmental issues. Customers' awareness of the environmental problems had changed their life. Consumer preference for green products is causing a shift to a green lifestyle thereby, affecting consumers' traditional attitude and beliefs. With the adoption of environmental culture, it is necessary to determine the extent of environmental attitude towards the green marketing in Borno state – Nigeria.

### **Justification for the study / Statement of the problem**

Nigeria as a developing nation lags behind when compared with its counter parts in the issue of environmentalism and adoption of green marketing and green products. \*Nigeria ranked 100<sup>th</sup> scoring 54.76 from total of 180 countries for overall environmental performance. This could be an indication of low awareness and perception of the environmental pressing issues and the consequences of production, consumption and waste management. Average consumers in Nigeria are conscious about their health and good living but not too aware about the detrimental effect of their consumption on the environment. As individuals they present low level of perception of the current environmental pressing issues, and not too conscious or less concern about the environment and consequences of their consumption effect on the environment. Bearing this in mind necessitated the need to propose a research model for analysing the attitude of consumers towards green marketing in Maiduguri metropolis using University of Maiduguri Academic staff (considered as elites and enlightened members of the society) to bridge the existing gap.

### **Objectives**

This paper proposes to determine customers' attitude towards green marketing. The specific objectives are to:

- (i) assess customers' cognition, affective sense and behavioural intentions towards green offerings;
- (ii) assess customers' cognition, affective sense and behavioural intentions towards green price;
- (iii) assess customers' cognition, affective sense and behavioural intentions towards green place; and

(iv) assess customers' cognition, affective sense and behavioural intentions towards green promotion.

### **Research Hypotheses**

To determine customer attitude towards green marketing the hypotheses postulated were categorise as main hypotheses and sub- hypotheses. The sub hypotheses would be tested in order to arrive at the main hypotheses. \*main hypotheses postulated states that:

\*Ho1: there is no significant influence of customer attitude on green product:

the sub- hypotheses postulate that:

Ho: there is no significant influence of customer cognition on green product

Ho: there is no significant influence of customer's affective sense on green product

Ho: there is no significant influence of customer behavioural intention on green product

\*Ho2: There is no significant influence of customer attitude on green price:

Ho: there is no significant influence of customer cognition on green price

Ho: there is no significant influence of customer's affective sense on green price

Ho: there is no significant influence of customer behavioural intention on green price

\*Ho3: there is no significant influence of customer attitude on green place

Ho: there is no significant influence of customer cognition on green place

Ho: there is no significant influence of customer's affective sense on green place

Ho: there is no significant influence of customer behavioural intention on green place

\*Ho4: There is no significant influence of customer attitude on green promotion

Ho: there is no significant influence of customer cognition on green promotion

Ho: there is no significant influence of customer's affective sense on green promotion

Ho: there is no significant influence of customer behavioural intention on green promotion

## **Significance**

This research has proposed a research model which would bridge the knowledge gap by giving marketing professionals framework for understanding customers' pro-environmental purchase intentions (both internal – social inhibitions and external - price) and their attitudinal components of the environmental domain as the most important predictor of green behavioural intentions. Also the framework provides insight as to how customer attitude to green marketing affects customer propensity to consume. It shows the relevance of Attitude-Behaviour-Context (ABC) theory to the green marketing research of this kind that cannot be generalised because of differences in environments and people. It is equally relevant to stake holders as it brings to light how well the findings can be applied to businesses in marketing strategies and tactics for better results. Businesses can use environmental or green attitude to predict customers' behaviour towards the environment and succeed in changing negative attitudes to more positive ones. To the customers it could throw insights to educate, communicate and influence the society into new trend of innovations and becoming more aware about the detrimental effects of their consumption consequences to the environment.

## **Scope and Limitations**

This study is an analysis of the effect between customer green attitude (using the tri component model) and green marketing, using the 4ps of green marketing mix variables in an innovative manner. The research work used only University of Maiduguri Academic staff in Maiduguri metropolis – Borno State Nigeria.

## **Limitations**

The proposed study purposively choice to use University staff in Maiduguri being a place for learning, and choose to use educated people in order to get a more reliable result based on the understanding of the concept. Thus generalisation can be difficult. Therefore, future research is expected to include the use overt interviews to make the understanding of the concept of green easier to understand so as to cover the local populace regardless of educational level of the respondents so as to be able to generalise without prejudice or bias. Also the sample size should be increased.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Concept of Green Marketing**

Green marketing is a broad concept, it is both a marketing philosophy (as part of the societal marketing concept) and as a type of marketing (in retailing). As a type of marketing it is like industrial or service marketing and is concerned with marketing of specialised kind of product

(Saxena and Khandelwal, 2008). Sandeep et al. (2011), see green marketing as holistic concept wherein the production, marketing consumption and disposal of products/services happen in a way that is less detrimental to the environment emphasising that with growing awareness about the implications of global warming, non-biodegradable solid waste, harmful impact of pollutants, etc (p18). Green marketing emerged as a marketing practices and strategies in the last few decades, and is one area that has not gained much recognition like the other areas of marketing. Sustainability concept has caused the raising increase in consumer awareness about the environmental issues. Consumers are becoming increasingly aware about the environmental pressing issues and the consequences of their consumption on the environment which is causing a shift in consumer demand from grey products to green products. Manufacturers and marketing professionals are trying to keep up to the trend of environmentalism and green marketing.

There is no single universally accepted definition of green marketing. It has been defined by different authors according to its relevance in a context. Defining green marketing is not as simple as it sounds because it is a broad concept. Green marketing involves broad range of activities such as product modification, changes to production process, packaging modifications and modifying advertising to suit the needs of the consumers and for the betterment of safe and healthier environment. The America Marketing Association (AMA) online resource library defines Green Marketing in three different perspective: (i) as the marketing of products that are presumed to be environmentally safe (retailing definition); (ii) as the development and marketing of products designed to minimise negative effects on the physical environment or to improve its quality (social marketing definition); and (iii) as the efforts by organisations to produce, promote, package and reclaim products in a manner that it is sensitive or responsive to ecological concerns (environmental definition).

Thus green marketing is all about organisations' and businesses' practices and strategies aim at creating utility and facilitating mutually beneficial exchanges between the buyers and sellers with minimal detrimental impact on the environment. Green marketing is concern about the health and safety of both the consumers and the businesses, and also securing the environment and finite resources (wealth of nation). Developing and selling environmentally friendly goods or services, ideas and experiences by the manufacturers had become necessary due to the rising competition in the competitive markets. The paper is centred at and revolves around the external audience therefore, green marketing will be measured by the innovative 'traditional 4ps' marketing mix variables to enable the understanding of customer environmental attitude towards green marketing.

**Marketing mix:** Unlike other conventional marketing practices and strategies having 6ps, 7ps (or more) marketing mix variables, green marketing is using the most popular traditional marketing mix approach of 4ps namely, product, price, place or physical distribution and

promotion but in a conventional manner as they are expected to be applied in an innovative manner. In green marketing there is green product; green pricing; green place; and green promotion. In this paper marketing mix variables are constructs considered as appropriate yardstick to measure green marketing as it concerns customers' dimensions.

**Green product:** - A product is anything that can be offered to a market for attention, acquisition, use and consumption that might satisfy a need or want. There is no single universal definition of a green product, service, ideas or experiences. A green product is defined as product that is manufactured using toxic-free ingredients and environmentally friendly procedures, and which is certified as such by a recognised organisation (Ghodeswar, 2015 cited in Thoria, 2011). According to Keller man (1978), green products are planned with the ecological objective to reduce resource consumption and pollution and to increase conservation of scarce resources.

Eco – friendly product has been defined by Mainieri et al (1997) as ecologically safe products that can facilitate the long term goal of protecting and preserving our natural habitat (Ishasirini 2011).

Environmentally friendly product or environmentally conscious products are termed as products designed to lessen the consumption of natural resources required and minimise the adversely environmental impacts during the whole lifecycles of these products (Tseng and Hung 2013).

Thus, Green product is a product by which the materials used in its production, the process involved in the production and even the package used are all environmentally and ecologically friendly using the natural and/or recycled materials with less detrimental effect to the environ.

Green products are expected to possess some environmental benefits over and above the grey products. According to Singh (2013), environmental benefits are usually an added bonus but will often be the deciding factor between products of equal value and quality. Green product values are considered important because of their validity in nature and therefore may influence attitude.

**Green price:** - price is the amount paid for a product. Green price is the price set for green products in a way that balances consumer sensitivity to cost and the willingness to pay more for environmentally friendly goods (Grove et al. 1996). Green pricing is an offer to customers with options to support the development of renewable energy and environmental improvement (Sri Rahayu et al 2022). In green marketing price is critical and important in the sense that higher prices are charged. In most cases, Green price is higher than conventional products of equal value. Customers always expect to get value for their money from buying a product. Eric (2007) points that customers will only be prepared to pay a premium price if there is perception

on additional product value. This value may be in form of function, improved performance, design, taste or visual appeal and customisation etc (Sandeep, Durgesh, Upasana and Yadav, 2011, and Mohanasundaram, 2012). Green pricing takes into consideration the people, planet and profit in a way that takes care of the health of employees and communities and ensures efficient productivity. Some green products are associated with premium prices while some are attributed to lower prices because of their nature and lower quality (eg recycled and reusable packages reduces cost). Customers who are price conscious will not pay extra because of greening while others will be more willing to pay premium price for the sake of a better and healthier environment and their ego. Green price is a major determinant of behavioural intention in purchase decision. Environmental benefits are usually an added bonus but will often be the deciding factor between products of equal quality and value (Singh 2013). Environmentally friendly products, however, are often less expensive when product lifecycle costs are taken into consideration (Shrikath and Raju 2012).

**Green place:** the choice of where and when to make a product available will have significant impact on customers. Very few customers will go out of their way to buy green products. Green place is about managing logistics to cut down on transportation emission thereby, in effect aiming at reducing the carbon footprint (Shil, 2012). Place represent the location where a product can be purchased. It can include physical as well as virtual store. Product distribution should be of the acceptable chemicals, and clearly and properly placed at environmentally safe place where there is no contamination whatsoever. Place is not a cost generator factor. On the contrary Awan (2011), buttress that green place has many features that can create revenue and certain outcome.

**Green promotion:** Conventional marketing communication mix variables are used for the green promotion which involves configuring the tools of promotion such as green advertisements, green marketing materials, green signage, white papers, websites, public relations, sales promotions, direct marketing and on-site promotions, videos, and presentations of a product or service by highlighting its benefits to the environment or society. Sandeep et al. (2011) suggested three types of green advertising campaigns that address a relationship between a product /services and the bio-physical environment – campaign that promotes a green life style by highlighting a product/service; and the campaign that present a corporate image of environmental responsibility.

### **The concept of Consumer attitude**

Marketers have long recognised the importance of customer attitude. Attitudes are the stand a person takes about objects, people, groups and issues. Attitudes can be said to be the way we think, feel and act towards some aspects of our environment. An attitude is an enduring organisation of motivational, emotional, perceptual and cognitive process with respect to some

aspects of the environment (Hawkins et al. 1983). Attitudes are characterised therefore, by a predisposition or state of readiness to act or react to certain stimuli, for instance attitudes are shaped by our values and beliefs, which are learned. Values which are determined by what society considers good or bad, and belief - the probability an individual attaches to given pieces of information being true. It is important to note that, beliefs need not to be true or correct, they only need to exist. Attitudes are usually directed towards certain phenomenon that is known to exist. Consumers are generally consistent in their actions, beliefs and feelings ( Umma M. and Bintu M., 2009), it is often a marketing goal to build a favourable brand believes based on the assumptions that a corresponding behaviour will also occur.

Attitude comprise of three components (as stated in most text books) and/or four components (by Fariss as in Scholl, 2002). The attitude components are: cognitive (knowledge and beliefs); affective component (feelings and emotions); conative component (willingness and behavioural intentions); and evaluative (is the function of cognition, affective and behavioural intentions) components. They stand as attitude measurement.

**Cognitive component-** the cognitive element of an attitude takes the form of beliefs about specific attribute or overall object. It is the idea which is generally a category used by humans in thinking. A person's cognition is the knowledge and perceptions that are acquired by a combination of direct experience with the attitudinal object and related information from various sources. This knowledge and resulting perceptions commonly takes the form of beliefs, such that, the consumer believes that the attitude object possesses various attributes and that specific behaviour will lead to specific outcomes.

**Affective component-** this refers to the feelings or emotions about a specific attribute or the overall attitudinal object. It is the emotional tendencies towards an object. It is simply the emotion that charges the idea. Feelings or emotional reaction towards a product is dependent on situational changes

**Conative component-** refers to the behavioural aspects- that is, the behavioural intentions towards specific attribute or overall attitudinal object. It is the willingness to accept a given object. It is a predisposition to action or exhibit a particular behaviour of some kind toward a specific object.

The three components result in manifestation of the overall attitude with respect to overall attitude to a specific attribute or object, or overall attitude orientation towards a given object. These components are usually triggered by stimuli such as product, advertisement, situations, sales representatives, retail outlets, etc.

**Environmental or Green attitude** - An eco-attitude is formed through the consumers' beliefs, concerns, values and intentions regarding environmental issues and behaviour (Schultz et al.



2004). Environmental attitude is individual favourable - to – unfavourable emotion towards some features on the natural environment and issues about the social environment (Eagly and Chaiken, 2007). Environmental attitude is referred to as collective beliefs affected by people's behaviour on what they view regarding the environment and environment-related activities (Ogiemwonyi, Harun, Alam and Othman, 2020). Thus environmental attitude can simply be defined as people's beliefs, emotional tendencies and intentions concerning environmental issues.

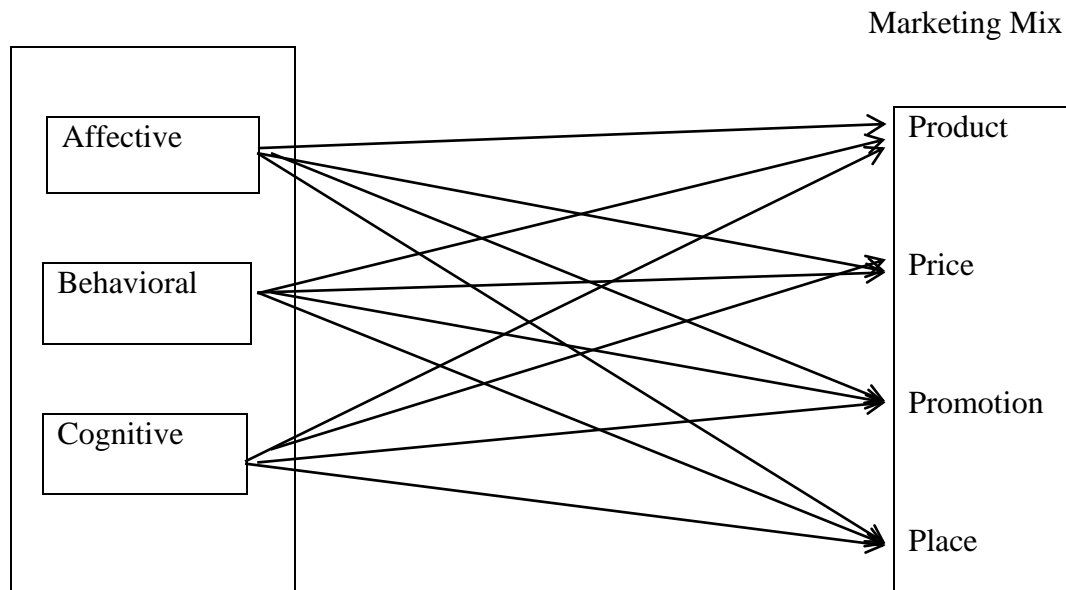
According to Ajzen (1987), the intention to perform and not to perform an act is influenced by an attitude towards the behaviour and subjective norms (social influences i.e culture, people and society). He further added that environmental attitude influences behaviour and willingness to act for environment. Gurbuz and Ozkan (2019), in a study found that a large number of individuals in Turkey hold a high level of positive attitude towards sustainable product/service, but their advocacy could not translate into behaviour and participation. It was observed that only a few of this group follow through and show this by paying premium price for their choice. Attitude may not always translate into actual behaviour.

Environmental awareness relates to individuals' emotional stands on the environment and it plays an important role in environmentalism. Environmental awareness plays an important role in going green activism which relates to individual emotional view point and emphasis regarding the environment (Ogiemwonyi et al., 2020). They further added that people with keen interest in environmental changes and its consequence on the environment will have strong attitudinal value towards greening. Welsch H., and Kuhling J. (2016), suggested that the likelihood of green product consumption is significantly related to environmental attitude towards the consumption process and the environment. However, consumers' knowledge of the environmental problems and existence of green product and services, their emotional feelings and willingness to accept or not to accept will determine their behavioural intentions on green purchases and propensity to consume green products.

Schlegelmilch et al. (1996), Attitudes are the most consistent predictor of pro-environmental purchasing behaviour and that the attitudinal components of the environmental domain is the most important predictor of green purchasing decision. Pro-environmental behaviour emanates as a result of internal motivator (eg self -identity) and external motivator (e.g price). Saunders et al. (2010) stress that strong environmental attitude leads to good cultural antecedents in launching sustainable offering. Environmental attitude predicts green culture (ogiemwonyi 2022).

A proposed Model for Determinants of customer attitude towards green marketing

Overall Attitude



Source: the author 2023

### Theoretical Background

Attitude - Behaviour – Context (ABC) Theory dictates that context mediates the link between attitude and behaviour (Peatti, 2010). In other words, the attitude towards a specific environmental issue is the best predictor of the environmental behaviour regarding that specific issue rather than as overall attitude toward the natural environment (Fielding et al. 2008). For marketers and researchers, the highly specific nature of the attitude-behaviour-context varies within individuals as well as across cultures (Zhao et al. 2014) and race (Johnson et al. 2004) making generalisation of green marketing result difficult (Christopher et al. 2017). This theory is found to be the most suitable for a research of this kind. Therefore, this paper adopts the use of ABC theory to guide the measurement of the instruments to be used and the focus of the analyses.

### METHODOLOGY

The proposed methodology is a descriptive survey and will adopt the use of quantitative method of collecting data necessary for the research. Primary data will be generated through structured questionnaire. Data will be collected online through the use of monkey survey which will be targeted to the selected academic staff of University of Maiduguri in order to determine their level of cognition, affective sense and behavioural intention as integral aspects of customer attitude towards green marketing. Population of this study is 1645 academic staff.

Stratified random sampling is proposed to select the respondents, and Krejcie and Morgan (1970) formulae to calculate the sample size. The sample derived at is 524 respondents. The data collected will be analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Hypotheses postulated would be tested by multiple regressions using SPSS.

The formulae used to determine the sample size  $s = X^2NP(1-P)/d^2(N-1)+X^2P(1-P)$

$$n = 3.841 \times 1645 \times 0.5(1 - 0.5) / 0.0025 \times 1644 + 3.841 \times 0.5(1 - 0.5)$$

$$n = 3280.214 \times 0.5 = 1579.61125 / 4.11 + 1.9205 \times 0.5 = 3.01525$$

$$n = 1579.61125 / 3.01525 = 523.8740157 \quad n = 524$$

## DISCUSSION

The study proposed to use University of Maiduguri Academic staff since it is issue that requires knowledge about the scenario. The research becomes necessary because of its significance to the prevailing environmental conditions. As Nigeria is characterised by low green product purchase which could be attributed to low awareness and perception of the prevailing environmental situation couple with the environmental attitude it appeared imperative to study the customer's attitude towards green marketing. The literature dwelled on the three components of attitude as yardstick for attitude measurement and the 4ps traditional marketing mix variables but in the conventional contexts referred to as the green marketing as adopted from the work of Vilkaite-Vaitone, Skackauskie and Diaz-Meneses (2022). Attention was given to the production processes for instance, the recyclable nature of the product, re-useable packaging and disposal management; higher prices charged and innovative promotion and e-place e.t.c. the proposed model is expected to provide insight to the prevailing situation of customer attitude to green marketing. The understanding of the framework will not only provide insights to better understanding of the effect of customer attitude on green marketing but will provide basis for strategic decisions for policy makers, marketers and the consumers. Understanding of the framework could lead to informative insights for better policies on public enlightenment campaigns that could create more awareness on going greening among the local populace, better strategic policies which could guide the marketers and protect the environ and consumers and save their businesses. The frame work is designed to provide informative insights that could educate the green marketers in the understanding of the determinants of both the traditional and environmental attitude of consumers toward green marketing with emphasis to green product, price, place, and promotion. Furthermore, it provides informative insights to the analyses of customers' cognition, affective sense and behavioural intentions to green marketing which could aid in making tactics and strategies for green marketing. Governmental bodies and marketers could be more equipped as to educate, communicate and influence the society on environmental attitude.

## CONCLUSIONS

Although the model - variables proposed have not been tested but it is expected that it will yield result that will give insight to the influence of customer attitude and the green product, price, place and promotion. With the gradual awareness of the environmental concern consumers are becoming brand and environmentally conscious. Though, Nigerian consumers are conscious about their health and wellbeing, but not too mindful about the detriment of their consumption on the environment and its consequences.

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