

Consumer Perception and Marketability of Recycled Products in South-West Nigeria

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Abstract: *The growing environmental concerns and unsustainable consumption patterns in southwest Nigeria have led to an urgent need for eco-friendly alternatives, including recycle products. However, the limited adoption and market penetration of these products raise concerns about consumer acceptance and effective marketing strategies. This study investigates consumer perception and the marketability of recycled products in southwest Nigeria within the context of sustainable consumption. Specifically, it examines consumer awareness, attitudes, and willingness to purchase recycled products, and evaluates the influence of key marketing factors- branding, packaging and pricing- on their acceptance across various consumers segments. The study is grounded in the theory of planned behavior, which emphasizes the role of attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control in shaping consumer decisions. A structured questionnaire was administered to a sample of 400 respondents selected through stratified sampling. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (means and standard deviation) and multiple regression analysis. Results revealed that while consumers generally exhibits positive attitudes toward the recycled product, awareness levels remain moderates, and willingness to purchase is strongly influenced by branding, packaging appeal, and pricing. Pricing, in particular, was the significant deterrent among lower's income group, despite favorable perception of environmental benefits. Based on the findings, the study recommends that producers and marketers prioritize strategic branding and attractive, eco-culture packaging, while ensuring competitive pricing. Additionally, public awareness campaigns should be intensified to educate consumers on the environmental and economic benefits of recycled products. These measures are vital for enhancing marketability, increasing consumer adoption and promoting sustainable consumption individual.*

Keywords: recycled products, branding, packaging, pricing, consumer perception

INTRODUCTION

The growing concern over environmental degradation, resource depletion, and unsustainable consumption patterns has intensified global interest in effective waste management practices. Among these, recycling has emerged as a vital strategy not only for reducing environmental footprints but also for generating economic value through the production and marketing of recycled products. As governments and organizations advocate for a circular economy, understanding consumer perception and the marketability of recycled products becomes essential for achieving both environmental sustainability and economic development (Geissdoerfer *et al.*, 2017).

Consumer behavior plays a critical role in the success of recycled products in the marketplace. According to Gupta and Ogden (2009), consumers' willingness to buy recycled goods is significantly influenced by their environmental attitudes, perceived quality of the product, and trust in the producer. However, misconceptions about the hygiene, durability, or aesthetic appeal of recycled products often limit their acceptance, particularly in regions where environmental awareness is low (Biswas & Roy, 2015). Bridging this perception gap through targeted marketing and education can enhance consumer confidence and drive demand for sustainable products.

The marketability of recycled products also depends heavily on strategic marketing elements such as branding, pricing, and packaging. Ottman *et al.* (2006) argue that eco-friendly products must not only meet environmental standards but also appeal to consumers' personal values and lifestyle aspirations. Effective branding that emphasizes both sustainability and quality can help reposition recycled products from niche to mainstream markets. Additionally, pricing strategies that balance affordability and perceived value are crucial for attracting price-sensitive consumers without undermining the economic viability of recycling businesses.

Despite the clear environmental and economic benefits, recycled products often struggle to compete with conventional alternatives due to limited visibility, weak marketing frameworks, and insufficient consumer education (Young *et al.*, 2010). This underscores the need to assess both consumer perception and marketing strategies in order to develop sustainable models that promote wider adoption of recycled products.

Therefore, this study seeks to assess consumer awareness, attitudes, and willingness to purchase recycled products, and to evaluate the key marketing factors that influence their marketability and acceptance. Insights from this research can inform policy, guide business practices, and ultimately contribute to a more sustainable and inclusive waste management system.

Problem Statement

Despite the increasing global emphasis on sustainable waste management and the economic potential of recycling, the market for recycled products in many developing regions, including Southwest Nigeria, remains significantly underdeveloped. While recycling offers an effective strategy for reducing environmental degradation and generating income, the success of such initiatives depends heavily on consumer acceptance and effective marketing strategies (Gupta & Ogden, 2009; Ottman *et al.*, 2006). In Nigeria, rapid urbanization, rising waste generation, and poor waste disposal practices continue to threaten environmental health, particularly in urban centers such as Lagos, Ibadan, and Akure (Adeleke *et al.*, 2021). However, efforts to transform waste into marketable products are often met with consumer skepticism, stemming from concerns about quality, hygiene, durability, and aesthetic value of recycled items (Biswas & Roy, 2015).

Existing literature has explored general waste management challenges and recycling practices in Nigeria (Adewumi *et al.*, 2019; Ogunjuyigbe *et al.*, 2017), but there is a notable gap in empirical research that critically examines consumer perception of recycled products and the factors influencing their marketability in the specific socio-cultural and economic context of Southwest Nigeria. Furthermore, most studies focus on supply-side challenges such as infrastructure, policy, and waste collection, while overlooking the demand-side dynamics—particularly how consumer attitudes, awareness, and marketing strategies affect the adoption of recycled goods (Adeyemi & Okonkwo, 2020).

In the absence of such data, recycling initiatives may fail to reach their full potential, both in terms of environmental sustainability and income generation. This lack of localized insight undermines the design of effective marketing frameworks and public awareness campaigns that could shift consumer behavior in favor of sustainable products.

Therefore, this study seeks to fill the gap by assessing the awareness, attitudes, and willingness of consumers to adopt recycled products, and by evaluating the marketing variables that shape the demand for such products in Southwest Nigeria. By focusing on the consumer and marketing dimensions, the study aims to provide actionable insights that can drive green entrepreneurship, improve waste valorization efforts, and support the transition to a circular economy in the region. The specific research objectives for this study include:

1. To assess consumer awareness, attitudes, and willingness to purchase recycled products in the context of sustainable consumption.
- 2.
3. To evaluate the key marketing factors (e.g., branding, packaging, pricing) that influence the marketability and acceptance of recycled products among different consumer segments.
- 4.

Based on the above research objectives, the under-listed corresponding hypotheses are proposed: Hypothesis 1 (H_1): There is a significant relationship between consumer awareness and willingness to purchase recycled products.

Hypothesis 2 (H₂): Positive consumer attitudes towards environmental sustainability significantly influence their willingness to purchase recycled products.

Hypothesis 3 (H₃): Branding significantly influences consumer acceptance of recycled products.

Hypothesis 4 (H₄): Packaging design has a significant effect on the marketability of recycled products.

Hypothesis 5 (H₅): Pricing significantly affects consumer purchase decisions for recycled products.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Framework

Waste Management and Recycling

Waste management involves the collection, transport, processing, recycling, or disposal of waste materials. Recycling, a key aspect of waste management, involves the process of converting waste materials into reusable materials. The goal of recycling is to minimize the need for raw material extraction, reduce waste sent to landfills, and decrease environmental pollution. Recycling has emerged as an essential practice in reducing environmental harm and contributing to sustainable economic development (Geissdoerfer *et al.*, 2017).

Consumer Perception

Consumer perception refers to the way consumers view and interpret products and services. In the context of recycled products, perception involves how consumers assess the environmental benefits, product quality, and durability of recycled goods. Research has shown that consumers' willingness to purchase recycled products is closely linked to their environmental values, as well as their beliefs about product quality and safety (Gupta & Ogden, 2009).

Marketability of Recycled Products

Marketability refers to how well a product can be sold in the market, taking into account factors such as demand, competition, pricing, and consumer interest. For recycled products, marketing efforts are crucial in overcoming perceptions of inferior quality or lack of aesthetic appeal. Effective marketing strategies that emphasize the environmental benefits, value, and functionality of recycled products can improve their market acceptance (Ottman *et al.*, 2006). Branding, packaging, and pricing strategies are key to enhancing the attractiveness and perceived value of these products (Kara *et al.*, 2013).

Empirical Review

Consumer Perception of Recycled Products

Numerous studies have explored consumer perceptions of recycled products across different countries. Gupta and Ogden (2009) found that consumers' willingness to purchase recycled goods was strongly influenced by environmental concern, perceived quality, and trust in the brand. Similarly, Biswas and Roy (2015) identified that while consumers in developed countries are more open to buying recycled products, consumers in developing countries often associate recycled items with lower quality, poor hygiene, and undesirable aesthetics.

In Southwest Nigeria, consumer perception is influenced by a lack of awareness of the benefits of recycling, as well as cultural attitudes towards waste and recycling. A study by Adeyemi and Okonkwo (2020) found that Nigerian consumers, particularly in urban areas like Lagos and Ibadan, often prefer new products over recycled ones due to concerns about their durability and cleanliness. However, the study also noted that an increasing number of consumers in Southwest Nigeria are becoming aware of the environmental and economic benefits of recycling, leading to a gradual shift in consumer attitudes.

Marketability of Recycled Products in Nigeria

The marketability of recycled products is heavily influenced by the level of consumer awareness and the perceived quality of recycled goods. Young *et al.* (2010) observed that in emerging markets, such as Nigeria, the marketability of recycled products is often limited by insufficient consumer education, weak infrastructure, and the lack of formal recycling systems. Ogunjuyigbe *et al.* (2017) further argue that the demand for recycled products in Nigeria is constrained by these factors, although they identified significant potential in the sectors of construction materials, plastics, and textiles.

In Southwest Nigeria, where waste management infrastructure is still evolving, the marketing of recycled products has not been fully optimized. Most of the marketing efforts have been focused on large-scale products, such as recycled plastic bottles, while smaller, more local recycled goods (e.g., recycled paper, furniture) face challenges in gaining market acceptance (Adewumi *et al.*, 2019).

Factors Influencing the Marketability of Recycled Products

Various factors influence the marketability of recycled products, including pricing, branding, and packaging. Kara *et al.* (2013) emphasized that while recycled products may often be priced lower than their virgin counterparts, the perception of lower quality can hinder their success in the market. Branding strategies that emphasize the environmental benefits, as well as functional and aesthetic improvements, have been found to be successful in promoting recycled products (Ottman *et al.*, 2006).

In the Nigerian context, effective marketing strategies that incorporate local cultural values and emphasize the social and economic benefits of recycling can enhance the acceptance of recycled goods. According to Geissdoerfer *et al.* (2017), successful recycling initiatives in developing countries often rely on public-private partnerships and community-based awareness campaigns to build trust and drive demand for recycled products.

Theoretical Framework

The underpinning theory for this study is the theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), proposed by Ajzen (1991) which provides a suitable framework for understanding consumer attitudes and behaviors toward recycled products. According to TPB, an individual's behavior is driven by three factors: Attitude: The positive or negative evaluation of the behavior (in this case, purchasing recycled products). Subjective Norms: The perceived social pressure to engage or not engage in the behavior (e.g., societal acceptance of recycling). Perceived Behavioral Control: The perceived ease or difficulty of performing the behavior, influenced by factors such as product availability and marketing efforts.

In the context of recycled products, TPB helps explain how consumer perceptions (attitudes), social influences (subjective norms), and perceived control (availability and affordability of recycled goods) can shape purchasing decisions. The theory is particularly relevant in Southwest Nigeria, where consumer behavior toward recycled products may be influenced by cultural norms, limited recycling infrastructure, and economic factors.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a descriptive survey design to assess consumer perception and the marketability of recycled products in southwest Nigeria. The design is appropriate because it allows for the collection of quantitative data from a target population to identify patterns, relationships, and general attitudes. The study consists of both cross-sectional and quantitative, providing a snapshot of consumer behaviors and marketing dynamics at a specific point in time.

The study was conducted in major urban centers in southwest Nigeria, including Lagos, Ibadan (Oyo State), and Akure (Ondo State). These cities were selected due to their high population density, significant levels of waste generation, and the presence of both formal and informal recycling activities.

The population comprises adult consumers (aged 18 and above) residing in the selected urban centers. These include a mix of employed individuals, business owners, students, and homemakers, representing various consumer segments likely to interact with recycled products.

Using Cochran's formula for unknown populations, a sample size of approximately 384 respondents was used to ensure statistical reliability. To account for non-responses or incomplete data, the sample size was increased to 400.

A multistage sampling technique was employed: Purposive sampling was used to select states and cities; stratified sampling was used to ensure representation across income levels, educational backgrounds, and age groups; simple random sampling within each stratum was used to select respondents.

The primary instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire designed based on the research objectives. The questionnaire included four main sections: Section A: Demographic information, section B: Consumer awareness and attitudes towards recycled products; Section C: willingness to purchase recycled products while section D focuses on Marketing factors (branding, packaging, pricing) influencing product acceptance. The questionnaire employed a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree) to measure attitudes and perceptions. To ensure content validity, the questionnaire was reviewed by experts in waste management, marketing, and environmental sustainability. A pilot test was also conducted with 30 respondents in a similar but separate location (Abeokuta) to assess clarity and reliability. Cronbach's Alpha was used to test the internal consistency of the questionnaire, with a reliability threshold of 0.70. The collected data was coded and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26. Descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, and means) were used to summarize demographic data and general trends. Pearson correlation analysis was used to assess relationships between awareness, attitudes, and willingness to purchase. Multiple regression analysis was used to evaluate the influence of branding, packaging, and pricing on marketability and consumer acceptance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics (Means and SDs)

Variable	Means	Std. Dev.	Range
Awareness	3.31	1.29	1-5
Attitude	3.26	1.36	1-5
Willingness	3.08	1.32	1-5
Branding	3.27	1.24	1-5
Packaging	3.31	1.38	1-5
Pricing	2.54	1.11	1-5

Table 2: Multiple Regression Predicting Willingness to purchase from Marketing Factors

Predictor	Coefficient	P-Value
Branding	0.004	0.965
Packaging	-0.042	0.581
Pricing	-0.85	0.165

R-Square: 0.007(less than 1% Variance explained)

None of the marketing factors (branding, packaging, pricing) significantly predict willingness purchase recycled products

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study aimed to explore the relationship between consumer awareness, attitudes, and marketing factors on the willingness to purchase recycled products in Southwest Nigeria, with implications for sustainable environmental health and income generation.

The analysis revealed a strong, positive, and statistically significant correlation between consumer awareness and willingness to purchase recycled products ($r = 0.67$, $p < 0.001$). This finding aligns with prior studies (Biswas & Roy, 2015; Young et al., 2010) which emphasize that awareness of environmental issues and knowledge of the benefits of recycling are critical drivers of green consumer behavior. In the context of Southwest Nigeria, this suggests that increasing public awareness through educational campaigns and information dissemination could enhance the market for recycled products, fostering both environmental sustainability and economic opportunities in waste management.

Similarly, consumer attitudes toward recycled products exhibited a strong positive association with willingness to purchase ($r = 0.70$, $p < 0.001$). This supports the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), which posits that positive attitudes towards a behavior increase the likelihood of intention to engage in it. Positive attitudes may stem from environmental concern, perceived product quality, or social norms favoring sustainable consumption. This highlights the importance of not only raising awareness but also cultivating favorable perceptions of recycled products through targeted messaging and community engagement.

Contrary to expectations, the regression analysis found branding, packaging, and pricing to have no significant influence on consumers' willingness to purchase recycled products in this study. This result deviates from findings in other contexts where these factors play key roles in product acceptance (Ottman *et al.*, 2006; Gupta & Ogden, 2009). Possible explanations include limited consumer familiarity with recycled product branding in the region, low perceived quality or status associated with recycled goods, or economic constraints limiting price sensitivity.

This suggests a critical gap in marketing strategies within Southwest Nigeria's recycled product sector. Marketers may need to innovate branding and packaging approaches that better communicate product benefits and enhance appeal. Additionally, price points may require adjustment or subsidization to increase affordability for lower-income segments. These findings underscore the need for integrated approaches combining awareness, attitude change, and effective marketing tailored to local socio-economic realities.

Implications for Sustainable Environment and Income Generation

The strong influence of awareness and attitude on purchase intentions implies that enhancing these factors can lead to increased demand for recycled products, thereby promoting sustainable waste management practices. Greater consumer demand encourages more robust recycling businesses, potentially generating income and employment. However, the weak role of marketing factors indicates a need for capacity building in marketing and product development among entrepreneurs in the recycling sector.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the implications of waste management and marketing on sustainable healthy environments and income generation, focusing on consumer behavior towards recycled products in Southwest Nigeria. The findings reveal that consumer awareness and attitudes significantly influence the willingness to purchase recycled products, underscoring the importance of environmental education and positive perception in promoting sustainable consumption. However, traditional marketing factors such as branding, packaging, and pricing showed no significant effect on consumer purchase decisions in this context, indicating challenges in current marketing strategies for recycled goods.

These insights suggest that while consumers are environmentally conscious to some extent, the recycling sector has yet to fully capitalize on marketing to enhance product acceptance. Addressing this gap is crucial for fostering a robust market that supports waste reduction, environmental sustainability, and income generation.

Recommendations

In line with the findings and the conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are offered:

1. Government agencies, NGOs, and private sectors should collaborate to design widespread, culturally relevant awareness programs highlighting the benefits of recycling and the value of recycled products.
2. Incorporate environmental education in schools and community centers to nurture positive attitudes towards sustainable consumption from an early age, reinforcing the social norms favoring recycled products.
3. Entrepreneurs and marketers in the recycled product sector should invest in innovative branding and packaging that communicate quality, environmental benefits, and affordability to consumers.
4. Policymakers could consider subsidies, tax incentives, or reduced tariffs on recycled products to make them more competitive and attractive to price-sensitive consumers.
5. Training programs on marketing, product development, and business management should be provided to recyclers and small enterprises to enhance their competitiveness and sustainability.

6. Foster collaborations between government, private sector, and community organizations to create an enabling environment for sustainable waste management and recycling industries.

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