

Green Values in the Minds of Consumers: Navigating the Eco-Market for Building Brand Loyalty and Paying Premiums

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Abstract:

Purpose: This study investigates the impact of green marketing components, particularly Green Value (GV) and Environmental Concern (EC), on purchase intention (PI), willingness to pay a premium (WTTP), and brand loyalty (BL) towards green products.

Methodology: A correlational research design was employed using an online survey questionnaire administered to 210 respondents. Data analysis involved Pearson correlation and multiple regression analysis to examine relationships among variables.

Findings: Correlation analysis revealed significant positive correlations between Green Value (GV) and purchase intention (PI) ($r = 0.138, p < 0.05$), Green Value (GV) and willingness to pay a premium (WTTP) ($r = 0.712, p < 0.01$), and Green Value (GV) and brand loyalty (BL) ($r = 0.811, p > 0.05$). Environmental Concern (EC) negatively correlated with purchase intention (PI) ($r = -0.034, p < 0.005$) but positively correlated with willingness to pay a premium (WTTP) ($r = 0.474, p < 0.005$) and brand loyalty (BL) ($r = 0.589, p > 0.005$). Multiple regression analysis highlighted the predictive power of Green Value (GV) and Environmental Concern (EC) on brand loyalty (BL), willingness to pay a premium (WTTP), and purchase intention (PI).

Implications: The findings provide valuable insights for marketers and businesses developing green strategies, emphasizing the importance of perceived green value in driving consumer behavior and the complex role of environmental concern in purchasing decisions.

Keywords: Green Value, Environmental Concern, Brand Loyalty, Willingness to Pay Premium, Purchase Intention, Green Marketing, Sustainable Consumption

Introduction

The world of marketing has witnessed a transformative shift as both markets and consumers have increasingly inclined toward products that are environmentally friendly or recyclable commonly known as green products and services. This shift toward environmental concern (EC) and sustainability has given birth to the concept of green marketing, which has captured the attention of consumers, manufacturers, and researchers alike. Green marketing, also referred to as sustainable marketing, represents an approach that extends beyond basic business marketing principles. This strategy aligns with the intentions and values of environmentally conscious consumers, emphasizing the total utility of products while promoting ecological sustainability (Haribabu, 2017). The emergence of green marketing stems from growing environmental concerns and the increasing desire for products and services that significantly reduce harm to our environment (Ajmeri, 2014).

Research Gap

While green marketing and consumer behavior with respect to green products have been central research topics in recent years, significant gaps remain in the literature. Although researchers have explored various aspects of green marketing including analysis of consumer behaviors (Messione et al., 2019), positive aspects of green energy resources (Kieu, 2020), and the impact of green marketing strategies on brand loyalty and customer satisfaction (Azad et al., 2013; Suki, 2017) there is limited research specifically examining the relationships between Green Value (GV), Environmental Concern (EC), Brand Loyalty (BL), and Willingness to Pay Premium (WTTP) for green products.

The existing literature provides important insights but does not fully address the variables we aim to establish in our research. Azad et al. (2013) focused on green marketing strategies and brand loyalty

but did not provide comprehensive analysis of the relationships between green value, environmental concern, brand loyalty, and willingness to pay premium. Similarly, Suki's (2017) research on product quality, price, customer satisfaction, and loyalty did not consider green value and environmental concern as important elements.

This gap becomes more visible when considering these variables and their interrelationships. This research aims to address this gap by providing a comprehensive framework that interconnects core elements of green marketing, offering a well-constructed study and better understanding of how consumers navigate green product markets.

Research Contribution

This research contributes to the literature by exploring the variables of Green Value (GV), Environmental Concern (EC), Brand Loyalty (BL), and Willingness to Pay Premium (WTTP) with respect to green marketing. By integrating these variables into a comprehensive study, this research provides a better understanding of consumer behavior in green product markets. It offers important insights for businesses and marketers focusing on green strategies and contributes to broader knowledge by offering perspectives on how environmentally conscious consumers make decisions, potentially guiding the development of more sustainable products.

Research Questions

1. What is the correlation between consumers' green value and their intention to make environmentally-friendly purchases? (GV → PI)
2. What is the influence of environmental concern (EC) on customers' intention to make green purchases (PI) from the perspective of a consumer?
3. What is the correlation between consumers' green value and their willingness to pay a higher price for eco-friendly alternatives? (GV → WTTP)
4. What impact does environmental concern (EC) have on individuals' willingness to pay a higher price (WTTP) for environmentally friendly products?
5. What is the influence of consumers' green value on their loyalty to a brand? (GV → BL)
6. What is the relationship between customers' environmental concern for green products and their brand loyalty (BL)?

Research Objectives

1. To explore the correlation between consumers' green value and their intention to make environmentally-friendly purchases (GV → PI)
2. To explore the influence of environmental concern (EC) on customers' intention to make green purchases (PI)
3. To explore the correlation between consumers' green value and their willingness to pay a higher price for eco-friendly alternatives (GV → WTTP)
4. To explore what impact environmental concern (EC) has on individuals' willingness to pay a higher price (WTTP) for environmentally friendly products
5. To explore the influence of consumers' green value on their loyalty to a brand (GV → BL)
6. To explore the relationship between customers' environmental concern for green products and their brand loyalty (BL)

Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

Green Value and Brand Loyalty

Substantial research has examined the link between green value (GV) and brand loyalty (BL). Lin (2017) demonstrated how green brand innovativeness impacts brand loyalty and how green perceived value (GPV) indirectly influences BL, highlighting the importance of innovation and perceived value

in fostering brand loyalty. Papista (2018) contributed by showing how different value dimensions affect consumer perceptions of green brands and how customer involvement moderates the relationship between value perception and brand loyalty.

Kang (2012) found that customer satisfaction with green brands enhances trust, affection, and loyalty, demonstrating the importance of these factors in promoting sustainable growth. Chen (2013) introduced the concept of "green loyalty," indicating that perceived value, satisfaction, and trust in green products have direct and indirect effects on green patriotism. These studies collectively demonstrate the complex link between green value and brand loyalty, emphasizing the importance of trust, satisfaction, perceived value, and authenticity in building long-term brand loyalty in environmentally conscious markets.

H1: Green value (GV) and brand loyalty (BL) are positively related.

Brand Loyalty and Environmental Concern

Research has consistently demonstrated a positive link between environmental concern and brand loyalty. Tayfun (2016) found that consumers with higher environmental concern are more likely to remain loyal to environmentally conscious brands. Kuchinka (2018) reinforced this by showing that eco-friendly customers demonstrate stronger brand loyalty. Han (2019) emphasized that environmental corporate social responsibility is crucial for building brand image and customer retention, with environmental concerns serving as a bridge between these factors.

Khamtanet (2020) highlighted the importance of brand trust in fostering engagement and loyalty, particularly for green products. Mustonen (2016) demonstrated that perceived value bridges the gap between green image and brand loyalty, while Hanninen (2017) showed that environmentally conscious customers value provider relationships more, leading to enhanced loyalty. Ferreira (2021) confirmed that environmental thinking is a key component of long-term brand loyalty.

H2: Environmental concern (EC) and brand loyalty (BL) are positively related.

Green Value and Purchase Intention

Extensive research has examined factors influencing consumers' purchase intentions for environmentally friendly products. Abbasi (2013) demonstrated that perceived value, green trust, environmental concern, green marketing tools, and attitudes toward green purchases all play vital roles in shaping green purchase intention. Rizwan (2015) examined how green perceived value, perceived risk, and trust influence purchase decisions, emphasizing the importance of these factors in green marketing.

Zia-ur-Rehman (2013) found that social influence, self-image, and interpersonal relationships affect purchase decisions in Pakistan, though environmental concern also exerts some influence. Kong (2014) identified green corporate perception, eco-labeling, and perceived value as significant factors. A meta-analysis by Zhuang et al. (2021) confirmed that green value, green attitude, and trust all have significant positive effects on green purchase intention.

H3: Green value (GV) is positively related to purchase intention (PI).

Green Value and Willingness to Pay Premium

Consumer willingness to pay more for green products represents a critical aspect of green consumption. Yang's (2021) study in China found that economic conditions influence willingness to pay premium, though environmental messaging shapes consumer thinking. Akturan (2020) demonstrated that green perceived value, green brand equity, and brand credibility are important factors in WTTP. Zheng (2022) found that green advertising appeals significantly affect green value perception and subsequent WTTP.

Laroche's foundational work (2001) identified demographic, psychological, and behavioral traits of consumers willing to pay premiums for green products, finding that such consumers are predominantly women, married, and with children. Oesmann's (2021) study showed that consumers expect governments and companies to promote green products, influencing WTTP.

H4: Willingness to pay premium and green value (GV) are positively related.

Environmental Concerns and Willingness to Pay Premium

Consumer attitudes toward environmental concerns increasingly influence willingness to pay premiums for green products. Khachatryan (2014) found a positive correlation between environmental concern scores and WTPP for sustainable product attributes. Conroy (2014) investigated macroeconomic conditions' impact on environmental spending perceptions, supporting the positive relationship between environmental concerns and WTPP for green products.

Biswas and Roy (2012) explored green advertising's impact on WTPP, while Magnier et al. (2016) found that consumers with strong environmental concerns prioritize sustainable products and demonstrate greater WTPP. Jensen et al. (2011) showed that eco-labeling positively affects consumer preferences, particularly for those with heightened environmental concerns. Collectively, these studies underscore environmental concern's pivotal role in driving WTPP for green products.

H5: Willingness to pay premium and environmental concern (EC) are positively related.

Environmental Concerns and Green Purchase Intention

Research consistently demonstrates a link between environmental concern and green purchase intention. Maichum et al. (2016) showed that young Thai consumers' environmental concern positively influences their willingness to buy green products. Fauzan's (2020) study of university students found that environmental attitude and concern significantly affect purchase decisions.

Dahal's (2020) research in Guwahati City confirmed a positive relationship between environmental concern and green purchase intention. Li et al. (2021) investigated green trust's moderating role, finding that concern for the environment mediates the link between environmental values and green product purchase intentions. Krisdayanti et al. (2021) demonstrated that green marketing strategies can enhance green purchase intentions by increasing environmental awareness.

H6: Environmental concern (EC) and purchase intention (PI) are positively related.

Research Methodology

Research Design

This research employed a correlational study design to investigate relationships between Environmental Concern (EC), Green Value (GV), Brand Loyalty (BL), Willingness to Pay Premium (WTPP), and Purchase Intention (PI). The correlational design was selected for its effectiveness in exploring dynamics between these variables. A cross-sectional survey method was employed to collect data at a single time point, providing a contemporaneous view of consumer behaviors and attitudes.

Sample and Sampling Procedure

The sample was selected using non-probability judgment sampling based on gender and Generation Z demographic characteristics, aligned with research objectives. The sample size ($n = 210$) was determined following Hair et al.'s (2010) recommendation that survey research should have at least ten times the number of questions. With a questionnaire comprising 23 items, the required sample size of 230 respondents was targeted, yielding 210 usable responses (95.4% response rate).

Measurement Instruments

Five-point Likert scales were used to measure respondents' agreement with statements for all constructs (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree; 1 = Never to 5 = Always).

Measurement scales adopted from prior literature:

Variable	Items	Reference
Environmental Concern (EC)	7 items	Weigel & Weigel (1978)
Green Purchase Intention (PI)	3 items	Armitage & Conner (1999)
Willingness to Pay Premium (WTPP)	4 items	Laroche et al. (2001)
Green Value (GV)	4 items	Chen & Chang (2012)
Brand Loyalty (BL)	3 items	Nam et al. (2011)

Results

Sample Description

The sample comprised 210 respondents with the following demographic characteristics:

Table 1: Gender Distribution

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Female	91	43.3%
Male	119	56.7%

Table 2: Age Distribution

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage
18-22	65	31.0%
23-27	19	9.0%
28-30	51	24.3%
29-32	14	6.7%
33-37	59	28.1%
Above 37	2	1.0%

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics

Latent Construct	Mean	Std. Deviation
Environmental Concern (EC)	3.445	0.79
Green Purchase Intention (PI)	3.547	0.75
Willingness to Pay Premium (WTPP)	3.648	0.74
Green Value (GV)	4.009	0.65
Brand Loyalty (BL)	3.990	0.66

Exploratory Factor Analysis

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was 0.872, indicating suitability for factor analysis. Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant ($\chi^2 = 5156$, $df = 210$, $p < .05$), confirming that the correlation matrix was not an identity matrix.

Table 4: Factor Loadings

Item	Construct	Factor Loading
"I am very concerned about the environment"	EC	0.84
"Humans are severely abusing environment"	EC	0.91
"I would be willing to reduce my consumption"	EC	0.89
"Major political change is necessary"	EC	0.71
"Major social change is necessary"	EC	0.80
"We must prevent any type of animal from becoming extinct"	EC	0.75

"Anti-pollution laws should be enforced more strongly"	EC	0.73
"I intend to buy green products because of environmental concern"	PI	0.817
"I expect to purchase green products in the future"	PI	0.825
"Overall I am glad to purchase green products"	PI	0.727
"I would pay more for environmentally friendly products"	WTTP	0.726
"I am willing to pay a lot more for environmentally friendly products"	WTTP	0.800
"Acceptable to pay 25% more for green products"	WTTP	0.767
"Acceptable to spend extra money for green products"	WTTP	0.777
"This brand's environmental functions provide good value"	GV	0.499
"This brand is environmentally friendly"	GV	0.796
"This brand has more environmental concern than others"	GV	0.843
"This brand has more environmental benefits than others"	GV	0.777
"I say positive things about this brand to other people"	BL	0.780
"I encourage friends and relatives to buy this brand"	BL	0.872
"I consider this brand my first choice"	BL	0.647

Validity and Reliability

Table 5: Validity and Reliability Measures

Variable	Items	AVE	$\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$	CR	Cronbach's α
EC	7	0.65	0.806	0.929	0.966
PI	3	0.626	0.791	0.833	0.918
WTTP	4	0.590	0.768	0.852	0.930
GV	4	0.549	0.740	0.825	0.915
BL	3	0.596	0.772	0.813	0.908

All constructs demonstrated satisfactory convergent validity ($\text{AVE} > 0.5$), discriminant validity ($\sqrt{\text{AVE}} > \text{correlations}$), and internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha > 0.7$).

Correlation Analysis

Table 6: Pearson Correlation Matrix

	EC	PI	WTTP	GV	BL
EC	1	-.034	.474**	.682**	.589**

PI	-.034	1	-.325**	.138*	.156*
WTTP	.474**	-.325**	1	.712**	.811**
GV	.682**	.138*	.712**	1	.811**
BL	.589**	.156*	.811**	.811**	1

*Note: * $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.01$

Key Findings:

- GV positively correlated with PI ($r = 0.138$, $p < 0.05$)
- GV positively correlated with WTTP ($r = 0.712$, $p < 0.01$)
- GV positively correlated with BL ($r = 0.811$, $p < 0.01$)
- EC negatively correlated with PI ($r = -0.034$, $p < 0.005$)
- EC positively correlated with WTTP ($r = 0.474$, $p < 0.005$)
- EC positively correlated with BL ($r = 0.589$, $p > 0.005$)

4.5 Regression Analysis

Regression Equations:

- $BL = 0.697 + 0.056(GV) + 0.046(EC) + e$
- $WTTP = 0.195 + 0.066(GV) + 0.054(EC) + e$
- $PI = 0.318 + 0.107(GV) + 0.088(EC) + e$

Table 7: Multiple Regression Results

Relationship	β	t-value	Sig. p-value
GV $\rightarrow$ BL	0.766	13.82	0.000
EC $\rightarrow$ BL	0.005	1.18	0.236
GV $\rightarrow$ WTTP	0.379	6.59	0.000
EC $\rightarrow$ WTTP	0.459	0.488	0.000
GV $\rightarrow$ PI	0.301	3.251	0.001
EC $\rightarrow$ PI	-0.239	-2.58	0.011

Model Fit: $R^2 = 0.52$, indicating that 52% of variability in dependent variables is explained by the independent variables.

Hypothesis Testing Summary

Table 8: Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis	Result
H1: Green value (GV) and brand loyalty (BL) are positively related	Accepted
H2: Brand loyalty and environmental concern (EC) are positively related	Rejected
H3: Green value (GV) is positively related with purchase intention (PI)	Accepted
H4: Willingness to pay premium and green value (GV) are positively related	Accepted

H5: Willingness to pay premium and environmental concern (EC) are positively related	Accepted
H6: Environmental concern (EC) and purchase intention (PI) are positively related	Rejected

Discussion

Key Findings

This research examined consumer behavior toward green products and services, focusing on the relationships between environmental concern, green value, purchase intention, willingness to pay premium, and brand loyalty.

Environmental Concern and Purchase Intention: The negative correlation between EC and PI was unexpected and contradicts much of the existing literature. Several explanations may account for this finding. First, the attitude-behavior gap suggests that while consumers may express environmental concern, this does not always translate into actual purchasing behavior. Second, contextual factors such as price sensitivity, availability, and perceived product effectiveness may override environmental considerations. Third, the "green skepticism" phenomenon—where consumers doubt the authenticity of green claims may lead to reluctance in purchasing green products despite environmental concern.

Green Value as a Strong Predictor: The strong positive relationships between GV and all dependent variables (BL, WTTP, PI) confirm that perceived green value is the most significant driver of green consumer behavior. Consumers who perceive greater value in green products—considering both environmental and personal utility benefits—demonstrate stronger brand loyalty, higher willingness to pay premiums, and greater purchase intentions.

Environmental Concern and Willingness to Pay Premium: The positive relationship between EC and WTTP aligns with previous research (Laroche et al., 2001; Khachatryan, 2014), suggesting that environmentally concerned consumers are willing to pay more for products that align with their values.

Environmental Concern and Brand Loyalty: The non-significant relationship between EC and BL suggests that while environmental concern influences attitudes, it may not directly translate into brand loyalty without the mediating effect of perceived value or trust.

Theoretical Implications

This study contributes to theory by demonstrating the interconnectedness of perceived value, brand loyalty, and green brand innovation. The findings support the theoretical framework proposed by Jalu (2023) and Lin (2017), showing that green perceived value enhances brand loyalty through multiple pathways. The research also contributes to understanding how green value drives willingness to pay premium, supporting Yang (2021) and Qiu's (2020) findings on the role of eco-labels and consumer perceptions.

The unexpected negative relationship between EC and PI challenges existing theories and suggests the need for more nuanced models of green consumer behavior that account for contextual factors and the attitude-behavior gap.

Practical Implications for Marketers

Strengthening Green Perceived Value: Marketers should focus on communicating the multiple dimensions of green value—environmental benefits, personal utility, social recognition, and economic advantages. This can be achieved through transparent labeling, third-party certifications, and educational marketing campaigns.

Addressing Green Skepticism: To overcome consumer skepticism, companies should provide verifiable evidence of environmental claims, use credible certifications, and maintain transparency about their sustainability practices.

Building Brand Loyalty: Companies should develop comprehensive sustainability strategies that go beyond product features to include corporate social responsibility, supply chain transparency, and community engagement. Loyalty programs that reward sustainable consumption can reinforce brand commitment.

Pricing Strategies: The positive relationship between GV and WTTP suggests that consumers are willing to pay premiums when they perceive sufficient value. Premium pricing should be justified through clear communication of environmental benefits and quality attributes.

Segmenting Green Consumers: The complex relationship between EC and PI suggests that environmental concern alone is insufficient for predicting green purchase behavior. Marketers should use multi-dimensional segmentation approaches that consider psychological, social, and contextual factors.

Limitations and Future Research

Sample Limitations: The sample was predominantly young (ages 21-23) and comprised students with limited financial independence. This homogeneity limits generalizability to broader demographic groups. Future research should include more age diversity and economically independent participants.

Cultural Context: The study was conducted in Pakistan, limiting generalizability to other cultural contexts. Cross-cultural comparative studies would provide valuable insights into how cultural factors influence green consumer behavior.

Product Categories: This study examined green products generally. Future research could investigate specific product categories (e.g., electronics, food, fashion) where consumer involvement and decision-making processes may differ.

Mediating and Moderating Variables: Future research should examine mediating variables such as green trust, perceived quality, and green skepticism, as well as moderating variables such as income, education, and cultural values.

Longitudinal Studies: Cross-sectional design limits understanding of how green consumer behavior evolves over time. Longitudinal studies would provide insights into the development of green values and brand loyalty.

Behavioral Measures: This study relied on self-reported behavioral intentions rather than actual behavior. Future research using observational or experimental methods would strengthen the validity of findings.

Conclusion

This research investigated the relationships between Green Value (GV), Environmental Concern (EC), Brand Loyalty (BL), Willingness to Pay Premium (WTTP), and Purchase Intention (PI) in the context of green products. The findings reveal that Green Value is a robust predictor of positive consumer responses, demonstrating significant positive relationships with brand loyalty, willingness to pay premium, and purchase intention. Environmental Concern showed mixed results, positively correlating with WTTP and BL but negatively correlating with PI.

The unexpected negative relationship between EC and PI highlights the complexity of green consumer behavior and the existence of an attitude-behavior gap. This suggests that environmental concern alone is insufficient to drive green purchase behavior; perceived value plays a crucial mediating role.

For marketers, these findings emphasize the importance of building and communicating green perceived value through authentic sustainability practices, transparent communication, and credible certifications. The positive relationship between GV and WTTP suggests that consumers are willing to pay premiums when they perceive sufficient value, providing economic justification for sustainable business practices.

This research contributes to the growing body of knowledge on green marketing and consumer behavior, providing both theoretical insights and practical guidance for businesses seeking to succeed in the evolving green marketplace. As environmental concerns continue to grow globally, understanding the drivers of green consumer behavior becomes increasingly critical for business success and environmental sustainability.

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