



Advancing Green Marketing in Pakistan: Opportunities, Challenges, and Strategic Pathways for Sustainable Business Growth

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

*Green Marketing,
Sustainable Business
Practices, Consumer
Behavior, Environmental
Policies, Digital
Marketing and
Sustainability*

ABSTRACT

Green marketing has emerged as a popular concept in Pakistan because of the growing awareness of the environment and the shift in consumer behavior. This paper aims to identify the new trends and issues in green marketing, the level of business engagement, consumer attitudes, and policies and comparisons across countries. The proposed research is a secondary qualitative research study which will be conducted through a thorough literature review of scholarly articles, policy reports, and case studies on green marketing in Pakistan and other comparable economies. Thematic coding and keyword-based comparative analysis are used to synthesize insights in order to determine opportunities, challenges, and strategic pathways to sustainable business growth. The research indicates that green marketing can be practiced in Pakistan but it is not effective because of certain obstacles such as poor implementation of policies, high cost of production and consumer distrust. Based on these observations, there is a need to make strategic reforms in policies and government support, financial incentives as well as embracing digital marketing strategy for SMEs to enhance sustainability standards. Enhancing multi-stakeholder engagement can help Pakistan to develop a green economy and integrate the country into the global sustainable development agenda.

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Received: 30th April, 2025

Received in revised form: 11th August, 2025

Accepted: 27th August, 2025

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1. Introduction

Green marketing has become a significant concept in the current business environment due to the growing concern for the environment [1]. It includes ecological marketing and its adaption to the environment, business standards in the protection of the environment and corporate social responsibilities in a bid to minimize the impacts they may have on the environment [2]. Over the past few years, the consciousness of consumers towards sustainability has risen significantly, which has affected their buying decisions and forced companies to go green [1]. It is thus becoming increasingly important, one can even classify it as the new norm, to take some steps towards sustainability taking into consideration such factors as climate change, pollution, and exhaustion of resources [2]. Companies across the globe are now incorporating green marketing into their strategic management since it is now seen as an opportunity rather than a constraint [4].

Although, green marketing is still a relatively new concept in the context of Pakistan and has its opportunities and threats. Even though, the environmental problem such as air and water pollution, deforestation, inefficient waste management, and others are most important for the development of effective business strategies [3]. However, there is a rising trend of green consumers in Pakistan but the adoption of green marketing strategies is still low because of high costs, low awareness, and restrictive policies [2]. Furthermore, research indicates that the youth of Pakistan is more conscious about the environment and is willing to pay for green products, which is a great opportunity for green start-ups and the growth of the green market [1].

Moreover, the tourism industry of Pakistan can be used to explain the green marketing dilemma, which is the inability of companies to make both profit and be environmentally friendly. Studies show that Pakistani consumers have a positive attitude towards green products but they do not always buy them because they do not trust corporate sustainability claims and there are few green products available in the market [3]. Dealing with these challenges entails the following approaches that include; Promoting brand social responsibility; Putting in place strict standards; and creating awareness among the consumer towards the gains that result from sustainable consumption [4]. So, the purpose of this research is to identify the applicability and opportunities of green marketing in Pakistan, as well as the main enablers and challenges for sustainable business development in the country. Although there is increased awareness of environmental concerns and sustainability among



the population, the use of green marketing in Pakistan is still low in comparison with the world trends. The reason behind this gap is the lack of corporate commitment, enforcement of regulations, consumer trust, and knowledge of businesses regarding the incorporation of sustainability in marketing strategies. This is a major gap that needs to be addressed to convert awareness into actionable practices, innovation, and use green marketing as a catalyst to long-term sustainable economic growth in Pakistan.

2. Conceptual Framework of Green Marketing

Green marketing is a management concept that involves marketing of goods and services that are environmentally friendly and sustainable taking into consideration the environmental concerns of the consumers. It includes the design of the product, pricing, distribution and promotional strategies which are environmentally friendly [4]. Therefore, green marketing is not only the issue of companies but also industries, governments, and the world market. The green supply chain and marketing trends are associated with the increasing application of sustainable supply chains, green certification to improve environmental performance of organizations and eco-labels [5]. In Pakistan, these trends are emerging slowly, with a few industries (textile and food processing) applying eco-labelling to compete in exports, but minimal domestic application. Green marketing therefore requires the awareness, trust and most importantly the support of the concerned regulatory bodies by the consumers [6].

2.1 Green Marketing Mix

The green marketing ideas include environmental awareness, company and product life, and product responsibility [2]. Companies should make sure that their products are sustainable in regards to the acquisition of raw materials, production, packaging and even disposal. Some of the large brands in the manufacturing industry in Pakistan have started initiatives like biodegradable packaging and solar powered manufacturing plants, but they are not mainstream. The deception, also known as greenwashing, kills the trust of customers and ruins the brand image [5]. The elements of green marketing mix, which include product, price and communication, enable marketers to persuade consumers more easily. The green market orientation leads to better environmental and financial performance due to the alignment of strategies with consumer needs and legal requirements [4].

2.2 Consumer Role and Challenges



Green marketing is successful because of the consumers whose purchasing behavior is influenced by the environmental impact, social value and brand credibility. In Pakistan, the rising environmental consciousness of the urban youth has not yet led to a high consumption of green products due to the lack of trust, availability and high prices [7]. Research also shows that consumer suspicion of the so-called green claims because of laxity in enforcing the regulations is a setback. Policymakers should develop clear guidelines, promote sustainable business practices and green education in order to increase adoption [5].

2.3 Stakeholder Synergy

Other stakeholders that contribute are financial institutions that participate in green banking programs that encourage sustainable investments [8]. Green financing of renewable energy in Pakistan, which is spearheaded by State Bank, provides a base of business adoption. A sustainable economy and green marketing need a business-consumer-policymaker synergy [2].

2.4 Green Marketing Trends in Pakistan

Green marketing is slowly and progressively penetrating the Pakistani market due to the fact that individuals and firms are becoming conscious of environmental sustainability. With the increasing number of people being worried about pollution, climate change, and resource scarcity, consumers are beginning to shift to environmentally friendly products. The shift is more pronounced among the younger generation that is more environmentally aware and open to sustainability messages [9]. A comparative perspective shows that unlike some emerging economies such as China where price sensitivity and scepticism are the impediments to green purchases, the green consumerism in Pakistan is constrained by the unavailability of certified products and weak policy implementation [10]. Such details can be applied in designing particular interventions.

Some industries in Pakistan particularly pharmaceuticals, textile and food manufacturing industries have adopted green initiatives in order to enhance their reputation, meet international standards and to gain competitive advantage [10]. To illustrate, the textile exporters have been increasingly adopting the ISO 14001 certification as a means of aligning themselves with the European Union market requirements. According to a report by the Pakistan Business Council (2023), over 35 percent of large manufacturing enterprises have implemented certain energy-efficient or environmentally friendly production processes, whereas less than 8 percent of SMEs do so.



The difference between big companies and SMEs is crucial. Large companies tend to have the financial capability, technical expertise and market incentive to integrate green marketing in their business. Conversely, SMEs that make up over 40 percent of the GDP of Pakistan must contend with the absence of green financing, the prohibitive costs of technology modernization, and the ignorance of international sustainability practices [11]. This structural imbalance means that SMEs will not be able to engage in the green marketing transition unless they are provided with certain assistance.

The policies and regulations by the government play a significant role in enhancing the use of green marketing. Despite the existence of the National Climate Change Policy and the Green Pakistan Initiative, there is poor implementation due to capacity issues in the regulatory agencies [9]. The process of adoption can be accelerated through enhanced institutional monitoring, fiscal incentives to green technologies, and more SME-specific green financing, such as the State Bank Green Banking Guidelines. Online media is also becoming a cost-effective way of delivering green marketing messages particularly to the urban youth and campaigns can be conducted that integrate environmental messages with brand positioning [11].

2.5 Emerging Opportunities in Green Marketing

It is clear that green marketing in Pakistan has presented several emerging opportunities and the major opportunity factor relates to growing consumer concerns with the consequences of using materials that harm the environment. This is due to the increase in consciousness in the world regarding environmental conservation and adaptation of new trends of green products that are organic based, biodegradable, and energy efficient [10]. Those industries which have adapted in their production and advertisement strategies to involve the concept of sustainability can benefit from this change. However, to penetrate these markets, there is need to effectively communicate the benefits of the products and their relevance to the consumer values [13].

Thus, green certifications and labeling are the more valuable tools since they increase consumer trust and therefore create a unique selling proposition in the presence of more and more similar products. For instance, ISO 14001 and LEED certifications which adopted voluntarily by the companies demonstrate the company's commitment to sustainability leading to shift consumers' buying habits and brand loyalty [14]. Also, companies that implement CSR activities like the reduction of carbon emissions and environmental protection can enhance their market competitiveness



and contribute to the achievement of the SDGs [12]. Research has shown that consumers are more likely to trust and consider brands with a good CSR profile as more ethical and this will lead to customer loyalty and positive attitude towards the brand [15].

It is important to note that digital marketing plays a significant part in the promotion of sustainability. Social media, content marketing, and e-commerce platforms are some of the affordable ways of creating awareness to the consumers on green initiatives and sustainable consumption. Social media allows brands to respond to the negative information and provide the correct information about their products and services, as well as demonstrate their environmental responsibility [16]. With the increasing trend of digitalization in Pakistan, the business community has a chance to use the internet to create awareness and promote green products among the consumers.

The case studies in Pakistan in the recent past point to the increasing potential in green marketing. As an example, Khaadi, one of the most popular textile brands, has implemented a Go Green campaign that includes biodegradable shopping bags and the promotion of eco-friendly collections via Instagram and Facebook, which led to a 20 percent sales growth of its sustainable product line [17]. On the same note, Engro Foods embraced energy-efficient processing and presented its efforts through YouTube documentaries, which strengthened brand trust [18]. Sufi Group launched organic cooking oils in the food industry, which were sold via Daraz.pk with the help of influencer partnerships to reach health-conscious urbanites [19]. These illustrations show how the combination of digital strategies and genuine sustainability practices can help to increase market penetration, consumer loyalty, and competitiveness of Pakistani businesses in the domestic and export markets.

2.6 Challenges in Implementing Green Marketing in Pakistan

A number of factors exist that serve as impediments to the effective execution of green marketing in Pakistan. The first is the lack of awareness and knowledge of consumers regarding sustainable products. A significant number of Pakistani consumers are still hesitant to buy green products and they tend to view them as expensive and less efficient than the traditional ones [17]. As an illustration, although there is more urban marketing of eco-friendly detergents, the sales are still marginal in comparison to the traditional brands because of the perceived performance differences. The only way to seal this knowledge gap is through specific educational campaigns and open corporate reporting on environmental advantages.



The other problem is that sustainable production is expensive. Green products, integration of renewable energy and eco-friendly manufacturing processes are expensive. Some of the most resource-intensive industries in Pakistan, including cement and steel, claim that switching to low-carbon technologies can increase the cost of production by as much as 25 percent [15]. Especially SMEs cannot finance such transitions, as they do not have access to low-interest green loans or subsidies.

The problem is also caused by regulatory and policy weaknesses. Although there are policies like the National Climate Change Policy, there is poor enforcement, and thus, there is low compliance among businesses [16]. In industries such as textiles where exportation is largely based on the ability to comply with international environmental regulations, failure to comply may result in loss of market share.

Another serious problem is greenwashing. As an illustration, certain beverage corporations in Pakistan promote the idea of eco-friendly packaging and continue to utilize non-biodegradable materials, which destroys consumer confidence [17]. These problems could be reduced by independent certification bodies, such as LEED in buildings or FSC in forestry, which provide transparent validation.

Lastly, the lack of sustainable raw materials, e.g. recycled plastics, organic cotton, or certified timber, compels companies to import, which increases costs and reduces scale [16].

Pakistan needs to have a multi-pronged approach to overcome these obstacles. To begin with, mass consumer education campaigns, which are coordinated by the government, NGOs, and industry associations, can enhance the knowledge of the population about the benefits of sustainable consumption. Tax breaks, subsidies, and low-interest loans would be provided as financial incentives to both SMEs and large corporations to invest in green innovations. Greater enforcement mechanisms and frequent checks on environmental standards would raise the level of compliance and the establishment of independent and credible certification systems could raise the level of trust and transparency. Also, the creation of domestic supply chains of sustainable raw materials would not only decrease the reliance on imports but also provide green jobs, making the economy more sustainable in general.



3. Comparative Analysis with Global Green Marketing Trends

Green marketing trends differ between developed and developing countries because of the differences in the economy, laws, and consumer knowledge. Sustainability policies are well established within the developed countries like United States, Germany and Japan, and these countries have strict environmental standards and customer support the green products. These nations have an increased focus on circular economy, carbon neutrality and green label and thus have a well-developed green market [18]. On the other hand, the developing countries such as Pakistan face challenges of weak enforcement of regulations, low consumer awareness, and high cost of implementation which are some of the factors that limit the use of green marketing [19].

Another practice that has been adopted in the developed countries is the consideration of ESG factors in business operations. Firms in these countries use ESG disclosures to improve corporate image and attract sustainable funds [20]. Also, the green subsidies and tax rebates have been instrumental in promoting sustainable business practices among the companies. In developing countries, green marketing is more of an adaptation to the current situation rather than a well-planned marketing strategy. These nations' governments need to establish sound policies and incentives to drive green change [18].

Thus, the cost-effective and sustainable marketing strategies can be used for the growth of green marketing in Pakistan. It also includes such measures as government-stimulated green certifications, public-private partnership agreements, and employing the Internet for advertising and promoting green products. Also, the creation of an institutional structure for green innovation like the ones in Europe and China can help in the long-term sustainability [10].

In the Pakistani context, the inclusion of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) disclosures in corporate reporting can be a major step towards transparency and the attraction of local and foreign investment. ESG frameworks have emerged as a standard of sustainable performance globally, and companies in Europe and North America are turning to them to access green financing and build stakeholder confidence [24]. On the local level, the Pakistan Stock Exchange has developed voluntary ESG reporting guidelines, which have not been widely used, especially among SMEs [25]. By enhancing these guidelines and making ESG reporting compulsory to listed companies,



accountability may be enhanced and the market practices in Pakistan may be brought in line with the international practices [24]. In addition, the development of alliances between companies, NGOs, and governmental organizations can speed up the process of knowledge transfer and capacity building [25]. As an illustration, partnerships between exporters of textiles and global certification organizations can be used to achieve EU sustainability standards and increase brand credibility [24]. The connection of ESG practices to quantifiable environmental results can help Pakistani companies to be competitive in the global green markets and develop sustainable growth in the long-term [25].

Factors	Developed Countries (e.g., USA, Germany)	Developing Countries (e.g., Pakistan, India)
Regulations & Policies	Strict environmental laws, ESG compliance	Weak enforcement, lack of ESG integration
Consumer Awareness	High demand for eco-friendly products	Limited awareness, price-sensitive consumers
Green Certifications	ISO 14001, LEED, Carbon Neutrality	Few local certification frameworks
Government Support	Subsidies, tax benefits, R&D grants	Minimal incentives, fragmented policies
Business Adoption	Proactive sustainability strategies	Cost and infrastructure constraints
Digital Marketing Role	AI-driven green campaigns, e-commerce branding	Social media-driven awareness campaigns

Table 1: Comparative Analysis of Global Green Marketing Trends

4. Future Prospects and Recommendations

Therefore, for the green marketing to be a success in the future, there is the need to have multi-stakeholder collaboration, effective and strategic implementation of policies, and consumer awareness. It is undeniable that the businessmen have to incorporate the sustainability into business operations by embracing green product development, sustainable supply chain management, and environmentally friendly manufacturing processes. It has been revealed by research that companies that make sustainability commitments in their business strategies generate long-term profits for their business alongside customers' trust, they stated that green marketing should be integrated [21].



Government intervention is therefore important in the development of a green economy. The government should encourage green businesses through tax reliefs, provide subsidies for green production, and increase the stringency of environmental laws [22]. Also, the implementation of extended producer responsibility (EPR) policies where the manufacturers are held responsible for the entire life cycle of the products can help in achieving sustainable business change [23].

The promotion of green marketing by academia and media is also important. To ensure that the future business leaders embrace sustainability, universities should have aspect orientated curricula. Likewise, media campaigns should be directed towards creating awareness of the environment and the need to conserve it as well as the need to adopt a responsible consumption pattern. Research on global marketing trends states that the issue of convincing communication plays a critical role in green purchasing behaviour, where digital and print media have a large role to play in raising awareness [21]. In the future, Pakistan needs to transition from defensive green marketing to strategic sustainability initiatives. Through partnership between the business sector, government, academia, and consumers, the country can develop a green economy that is in line with the global standards.

In order to accomplish this transition, it is necessary to have measurable steps and clear timelines. The government ought to implement compulsory eco-labelling requirements, increase tax incentives on green investments, and create national campaigns on sustainable consumption in the short-term (1-2 years). Within the medium term (3-5 years), Pakistan is expected to raise the share of the number of companies with certified green products by at least 30%, with the help of green financing programs available to SMEs at affordable rates. The ultimate objective must be to have Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) disclosures in corporate reporting of all listed companies by 2030, as per international standards. Also, by 2027, a national green innovation hub (including universities, innovators in the private sector, and government agencies) should be established to encourage research, technology transfer, and commercialization of environmentally friendly solutions. Frequent progress audits and the publication of results will be essential to hold people accountable. With these quantifiable milestones, Pakistan will be able to transition to actionable results rather than aspirational policies, and both the environment and the economy will be resilient.



5. Conclusion

This study has explored the existing situation of green marketing in Pakistan and has also highlighted the opportunities as well as major obstacles to the development of green marketing. Although consumer awareness of environmental issues is increasing, there is still no complete alignment between purchasing behavior and these values because of price sensitivity, distrust of corporate sustainability claims, and the lack of availability of certified green products. Pharmaceuticals, textiles, and food manufacturing industries have already made initial steps towards the integration of sustainable practices, but the adoption is not consistent, as the costs of production are high, the incentives are not sufficient, and the environmental policies are not enforced. A comparative analysis with the global green marketing trends reveals the benefits that the developed countries have due to more stringent regulation, developed Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) systems, and greater consumer confidence. Pakistan, on the other hand, is struggling with policy implementation, the use of greenwashing, and the use of imported sustainable raw materials. These challenges will have to be overcome through concerted efforts by policymakers, businesses, academia, and civil society.

The strategic application of digital marketing is one of the most promising directions. Low-cost channels to educate consumers, fight misinformation, and market verified green products include e-commerce marketplaces, social media, and content-based campaigns. Digital marketing can also close the trust gap, however, only in cases when it is supplemented with credible certification systems and transparent ESG disclosures, turning sustainability into a concrete value proposition to consumers. To achieve sustainable development, quantifiable goals are to be established, including the extension of eco-labeling, the growth of the share of green-certified companies, and the incorporation of ESG reporting into industries within specific periods. Regulatory enforcement should be accompanied by financial incentives by government agencies to promote green entrepreneurship and universities and media outlets can take the lead in public education and awareness. By encouraging innovation, accountability, and the efficient utilization of digital platforms, Pakistan can transition to a proactive green marketing approach, which would position its economy in the same line with international sustainability practices and contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals significantly.



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