

Sustainable Marketing and Changes in Consumer Preferences in the Era of Environmental Awareness

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ABSTRAK

Kesadaran global yang berkembang akan degradasi lingkungan telah secara signifikan membentuk kembali dinamika pasar dan harapan konsumen, memposisikan keberlanjutan sebagai keharusan strategis untuk bisnis kontemporer. Studi ini menyelidiki bagaimana pemasaran berkelanjutan memengaruhi pergeseran preferensi konsumen dalam konteks meningkatnya kesadaran lingkungan dan meneliti mekanisme untuk mengurangi kesenjangan sikap-perilaku yang terus-menerus dalam konsumsi hijau. Tinjauan literatur sistematis dilakukan menggunakan pedoman PRISMA, menganalisis artikel jurnal peer-review yang diterbitkan antara tahun 2020 dan 2025 dan diindeks di Scopus dan database akademik terkait. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa kesadaran lingkungan, sikap pro-lingkungan, nilai-nilai etis, dan gaya hidup berkelanjutan sangat memengaruhi niat dan preferensi konsumen terhadap produk hijau, terutama di kalangan segmen yang lebih muda, berpendidikan, dan berpenghasilan tinggi. Namun, kendala ekonomi, sensitivitas harga, asimetri informasi, dan skeptisisme terhadap greenwashing tetap menjadi hambatan utama yang mencegah perilaku pembelian berkelanjutan yang konsisten. Diskusi mengungkapkan bahwa strategi pemasaran berkelanjutan terintegrasi yang menggabungkan elemen bauran pemasaran hijau, komunikasi transparan, pelabelan ramah lingkungan yang kredibel, keterlibatan digital, dan pendidikan lingkungan yang berkelanjutan memainkan peran penting dalam mengubah kepedulian lingkungan menjadi perilaku pembelian yang sebenarnya. Kesimpulannya, pemasaran berkelanjutan memiliki potensi besar untuk membentuk kembali preferensi konsumen dan mempercepat transisi menuju konsumsi berkelanjutan, asalkan keselarasan strategis antara pendidikan, keterjangkauan, kepercayaan institusional, dan pengaruh sosial tercapai.

Kata Kunci: Pemasaran berkelanjutan; Preferensi konsumen; Kesadaran lingkungan; Konsumsi hijau; Kesenjangan sikap-perilaku

ABSTRACT

The growing global awareness of environmental degradation has significantly reshaped market dynamics and consumer expectations, positioning sustainability as a strategic imperative for contemporary businesses. This study investigates how sustainable marketing influences consumer preference shifts in the context of rising environmental consciousness and examines mechanisms for reducing the persistent attitude-behavior gap in green consumption. A systematic literature review was conducted using PRISMA guidelines, analyzing peer-reviewed journal articles published between 2020 and 2025 and indexed in Scopus and related academic databases. The findings demonstrate that environmental awareness, pro-environmental attitudes, ethical values, and sustainable lifestyles strongly affect consumers' purchase intentions and preferences toward green products, particularly among younger, educated, and higher-income segments. However, economic constraints, price sensitivity, information asymmetry, and skepticism toward greenwashing remain major barriers preventing consistent sustainable purchasing behavior. The discussion reveals that integrated sustainable marketing strategies incorporating green



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marketing mix elements, transparent communication, credible eco-labeling, digital engagement, and continuous environmental education play a decisive role in converting environmental concern into actual purchasing behavior. In conclusion, sustainable marketing holds substantial potential to reshape consumer preferences and accelerate the transition toward sustainable consumption, provided that strategic alignment among education, affordability, institutional trust, and social influence is achieved.

Keywords: Sustainable marketing; Consumer preferences; Environmental awareness; Green consumption; Attitude–behavior gap

INTRODUCTION

Global environmental degradation, climate change, and escalating ecological risks have fundamentally reshaped consumer values and market dynamics worldwide. Contemporary consumers increasingly evaluate products and brands not only on traditional criteria such as price and functional quality, but also on the environmental and social consequences associated with production, distribution, and consumption processes. This paradigm shift has elevated sustainability from a peripheral corporate concern to a central determinant of competitive advantage and long-term business viability. A growing body of evidence indicates that environmental awareness has become a dominant force influencing consumer attitudes, purchase intentions, and actual buying behavior across both conventional retail channels and digital marketplaces (Štofejová et al., 2023; Dangelico et al., 2022; Sun et al., 2024).

Empirical research conducted across diverse national contexts including India, Italy, Vietnam, and Indonesia consistently demonstrates a pronounced increase in demand for sustainable products, particularly among younger, more educated, and higher-income consumer segments (Štofejová et al., 2023; G. & M., 2025; Dangelico et al., 2022; Van Phuong et al., 2025; Wulandjani et al., 2025). These consumer groups exhibit stronger pro-environmental values, greater knowledge of ecological issues, and a higher willingness to pay price premiums for environmentally responsible products. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic significantly accelerated this transformation in consumption patterns. Heightened health risks, disruptions to global supply chains, and intensified public discourse on sustainability stimulated both the frequency of sustainable product purchases and consumers' willingness to financially support environmentally responsible brands, particularly among women and environmentally conscious demographic groups (Dangelico et al., 2022; Chebeň et al., 2025).

Despite this favorable attitudinal environment, a persistent structural problem undermines the translation of environmental concern into consistent purchasing behavior: the attitude–behavior gap. While many consumers express strong environmental values and intentions to support green products, their actual purchasing decisions frequently fail to reflect these commitments. Empirical studies identify several key barriers contributing to this discrepancy, including higher prices of green products, limited product availability, consumer confusion arising from inconsistent environmental labeling, and widespread skepticism toward corporate sustainability claims, often associated with greenwashing practices (Khan et al., 2020; G. & M., 2025; Devi & Subatra, 2025; Gahlawat et al., 2025). As a result, companies face a strategic paradox: although environmental awareness and positive attitudes toward sustainability are rising, conversion into stable market demand remains fragile and uncertain.

In response to this challenge, sustainable marketing has emerged as a strategic framework designed to align corporate objectives with environmental and social responsibilities while actively shaping consumer behavior. Sustainable marketing extends beyond conventional promotional activities by embedding sustainability

principles across the entire marketing mix, including product design, production processes, packaging, pricing, distribution, communication strategies, and consumer education. Substantial empirical evidence demonstrates that well-designed green marketing strategies significantly enhance environmental awareness, strengthen positive consumer attitudes, and increase sustainable purchase intentions (Huang et al., 2024; Akgün & Bütüner, 2025; Reddy et al., 2023; Esmaelnezhad et al., 2023; Wulandjani et al., 2025). Furthermore, the strategic deployment of eco-labels and environmentally friendly packaging reduces consumer uncertainty, improves information transparency, and strengthens perceived product value (Huang et al., 2024; Gahlawat et al., 2025).

The digital transformation of marketing ecosystems has further amplified the potential impact of sustainable marketing. Online platforms and e-commerce environments provide firms with unprecedented opportunities to disseminate environmental information, engage consumers in sustainability narratives, and reinforce pro-environmental attitudes at scale. Research confirms that digital green marketing significantly enhances consumer environmental awareness and strengthens sustainable purchase intentions within online purchasing contexts (Štofejová et al., 2023; Gahlawat et al., 2025). Importantly, when sustainable marketing initiatives are integrated with systematic environmental education, they contribute to the development of long-term sustainability consciousness and foster durable consumer trust in brand commitments (De Moraes et al., 2024; Gahlawat et al., 2025).

Notwithstanding these advances, critical research gaps remain. First, much of the existing literature prioritizes the examination of environmental awareness and purchase intention, while providing limited insight into the mechanisms through which sustainable marketing strategies can effectively bridge the attitude-behavior gap and convert positive intentions into consistent purchasing behavior. Second, although cross-national studies reveal significant contextual differences in consumer responses to green marketing, few studies offer an integrative analytical framework that simultaneously incorporates psychological, social, economic, and marketing communication factors (Khan et al., 2020; Sun et al., 2024; Van Phuong et al., 2025; Wulandjani et al., 2025). Third, the increasing prevalence of greenwashing has eroded consumer trust and complicated the relationship between sustainable marketing efforts and consumer preference formation, yet its strategic implications remain insufficiently theorized and empirically explored (Devi & Subatra, 2025; Gahlawat et al., 2025; Zhou et al., 2025).

Against this backdrop, the present study introduces a novel integrative perspective by positioning the attitude-behavior gap as the central analytical lens for examining how sustainable marketing influences consumer preference formation in the era of heightened environmental awareness. Unlike previous studies that primarily assess individual constructs in isolation, this research synthesizes insights from multiple national contexts and theoretical domains to develop a comprehensive understanding of how sustainable marketing strategies can align consumer values, attitudes, and behaviors within contemporary consumption systems. By explicitly linking marketing communication, consumer psychology, and socio-economic constraints, the study advances a more holistic conceptualization of sustainable marketing effectiveness. Accordingly, the objective of this study is to analyze the role of sustainable marketing in driving changes in consumer preferences under conditions of growing environmental awareness, and to identify the most effective strategic approaches for narrowing the gap between pro-environmental attitudes and actual consumer purchasing behavior. This research aims to contribute both theoretically, by

extending sustainability and consumer behavior literature, and practically, by offering actionable insights for firms seeking to build resilient competitive advantages in the emerging green economy.

METHOD

This study employed a systematic literature review approach to comprehensively examine the role of sustainable marketing in shaping consumer preferences within the context of increasing environmental awareness. Data were collected from peer-reviewed journal articles published between 2020 and 2025, sourced from major academic databases including Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar. The selection process followed predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria to ensure relevance, methodological rigor, and academic credibility. Keywords such as “sustainable marketing,” “green marketing,” “consumer preferences,” “environmental awareness,” and “sustainable consumption” were used in various combinations. Only full-text articles written in English and published in reputable international journals were included. After removing duplicates and screening titles and abstracts for thematic relevance, the final corpus of literature was subjected to full-text review to extract key theoretical insights, empirical findings, and contextual variables related to sustainable marketing strategies and consumer behavior.

The collected data were analyzed using a qualitative thematic synthesis combined with comparative analytical techniques. Thematic coding was conducted to identify recurring patterns related to drivers of consumer preference change, the persistence of the attitude–behavior gap, and the strategic mechanisms through which sustainable marketing influences consumer decision-making. Cross-study comparisons were then performed to evaluate consistencies and divergences across geographic, cultural, and market contexts. This analytical process enabled the construction of an integrative conceptual framework explaining how sustainable marketing practices mediate the relationship between environmental awareness and actual purchasing behavior. The validity of the findings was strengthened through iterative coding, peer debriefing, and methodological triangulation across multiple data sources.

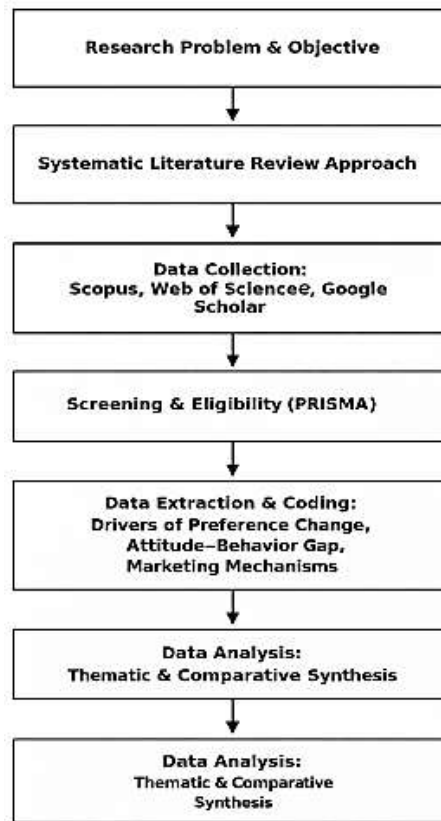


Figure 1. Research Methodology Flow

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

RESULT

The synthesis of selected peer-reviewed studies reveals consistent patterns regarding the influence of sustainable marketing on consumer preference formation in the context of increasing environmental awareness. To systematically present the key empirical insights derived from the literature, the main findings are summarized in Table 1. This table integrates evidence across diverse national and market contexts, highlighting the dominant drivers, constraints, and strategic implications shaping sustainable consumption behavior.

Table 1. Summary of Research Findings on Sustainable Marketing and Consumer Preference Shifts

Key Dimension	Main Findings	Empirical Evidence
Environmental Awareness & Attitude	Environmental awareness and pro-environmental attitudes are the strongest predictors of sustainable purchase intention and behavior.	Consumers with higher environmental concern consistently demonstrate stronger green purchase intention across multiple contexts (Štofejšová et al., 2023; Dangelico et al., 2022; Khan et al., 2020; Sun et al., 2024; Wulandjani et al., 2025; Gahlawat et al., 2025).
Lifestyle & Consumer	Pro-environmental	Cross-country studies

Values	lifestyles and ethical values significantly reinforce sustainable consumption patterns, especially among younger and educated consumers.	confirm that lifestyle orientation and ethical values strongly shape green product preference (Štofejšová et al., 2023; Lubowiecki-Vikuk et al., 2020; G. & M., 2025; Van Phuong et al., 2025).
Price Sensitivity & Ability to Pay	High prices remain the primary barrier to widespread adoption of green products despite positive attitudes.	Even environmentally conscious consumers show reluctance to purchase when price premiums are perceived as excessive (Salhab et al., 2025; Devi & Subatra, 2025; Khan et al., 2020; Gahlawat et al., 2025).
Social Norms & Responsibility	Subjective norms and perceived environmental responsibility significantly mediate the transition from intention to actual purchase.	Social influence and moral responsibility consistently enhance sustainable purchase behavior (Štofejšová et al., 2023; Chebeň et al., 2025; Van Phuong et al., 2025; Sun et al., 2024).
Effectiveness of Sustainable Marketing Strategies	Green marketing mix, eco-labeling, digital green marketing, and environmental education significantly increase awareness, trust, and sustainable purchase intention.	Empirical evidence confirms strong positive effects of integrated green marketing strategies on consumer preference shifts (Huang et al., 2024; Reddy et al., 2023; Esmaelnezhad et al., 2023; Akgün & Bütüner, 2025; Yao, 2025; De Moraes et al., 2024).
Attitude–Behavior Gap	Despite rising awareness, inconsistency between intention and actual behavior persists due to pricing constraints, greenwashing skepticism, and information overload.	Persistent gap observed across multiple markets and consumer segments (G. & M., 2025; Khan et al., 2020; Devi & Subatra, 2025; Gahlawat et al., 2025).
Impact of External Shocks (COVID-19)	The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated sustainable consumption trends and increased willingness to pay for green products, particularly among women and specific demographic groups.	Behavioral shifts during the pandemic reinforced long-term sustainability orientation (Dangelico et al., 2022; Chebeň et al., 2025).

Table 1 demonstrates that environmental awareness and pro-environmental attitudes constitute the most influential determinants of sustainable purchase intentions and behaviors. Across multiple studies, consumers with higher levels of environmental concern consistently display stronger preferences for green products, confirming the central role of cognitive and attitudinal factors in shaping sustainable consumption. This effect is further reinforced by lifestyle orientation and ethical values, particularly among younger and more educated consumer segments, indicating that sustainable preference formation is deeply embedded in broader value systems rather than isolated purchasing decisions. However, the table also reveals the persistence of a significant attitude–behavior gap. Although awareness and positive attitudes are widespread, actual purchasing behavior remains constrained by economic considerations, particularly price sensitivity and limited ability to pay. This contradiction underscores the structural barriers that impede the realization of sustainable consumption, even among environmentally motivated consumers. Social norms and perceived environmental responsibility emerge as critical mediators that help bridge this gap, suggesting that sustainable behavior is strongly shaped by social influence and collective expectations.

Furthermore, the findings confirm the effectiveness of integrated sustainable marketing strategies. The deployment of a comprehensive green marketing mix, combined with eco-labeling, digital engagement, and environmental education, significantly enhances consumer trust, awareness, and long-term commitment to sustainable consumption. Nevertheless, skepticism arising from greenwashing and information overload continues to weaken consumer confidence, emphasizing the need for transparency, credible certification, and policy collaboration. Overall, the evidence presented in Table 1 supports the study’s objective by demonstrating that while sustainable marketing has substantial potential to transform consumer preferences, its real-world impact depends on the strategic alignment of marketing practices with economic accessibility, social dynamics, and institutional credibility.

DISCUSSION

This study was designed to examine how sustainable marketing influences consumer preference transformation under conditions of heightened environmental awareness and to identify strategic mechanisms capable of narrowing the persistent attitude–behavior gap. The findings summarized in Table 1 provide strong empirical support for the central argument that environmental consciousness has become a dominant force shaping modern consumption patterns, yet structural and psychological barriers continue to inhibit the full realization of sustainable purchasing behavior. This discussion interprets these findings by integrating them with established evidence from recent accredited journals, offering theoretical and practical insights into the evolving landscape of sustainable marketing. The results demonstrate that environmental awareness and pro-environmental attitudes remain the most powerful predictors of green purchase intention and behavior. This observation is consistent with extensive cross-national research showing that consumers who possess a high level of environmental concern are significantly more inclined to favor environmentally responsible products and brands (Štofejová et al., 2023; Dangelico et al., 2022; Sun et al., 2024).

The findings reinforce the theoretical proposition that cognitive and affective components of environmental consciousness function as fundamental drivers of sustainable preference formation. In particular, Sun et al. (2024) emphasize that

environmental awareness directly shapes both internal motivations and external purchasing behavior through complex mediated pathways, confirming that sustainability-oriented cognition is no longer marginal but increasingly mainstream in consumer decision-making. Moreover, this study reveals that sustainable preferences are not solely individual psychological phenomena but are deeply embedded in consumers' broader lifestyle orientations and ethical value systems. The prominence of lifestyle and value-driven consumption patterns observed in the findings aligns with the conclusions of Lubowiecki-Vikuk et al. (2020), who argue that responsible consumption increasingly reflects identity construction and moral self-concept rather than isolated transactional choices.

Similarly, empirical evidence from India, Vietnam, and European markets indicates that younger, more educated, and higher-income consumers demonstrate stronger alignment between environmental values and consumption behavior, thereby accelerating the diffusion of sustainable products across diverse socio-economic contexts (G. & M., 2025; Van Phuong et al., 2025; Wulandjani et al., 2025). These converging results suggest that sustainable marketing strategies must be designed to resonate with consumers' self-identity and moral narratives in order to achieve durable preference transformation. The impact of external systemic shocks, particularly the COVID-19 pandemic, further amplifies the dynamics identified in this study. The pandemic acted as a critical catalyst that intensified environmental awareness, increased sustainable purchase frequency, and strengthened consumers' willingness to pay price premiums for green products, especially among women and specific demographic segments (Dangelico et al., 2022; Chebeñ et al., 2025). This transformation underscores the adaptive nature of consumer values and demonstrates how crises can accelerate structural changes in consumption systems. The pandemic therefore provides a natural experiment confirming that sustainable preferences can evolve rapidly when environmental and health concerns become salient and personally relevant.

Despite these encouraging trends, the persistence of the attitude-behavior gap remains one of the most consequential findings of this study. Although consumers increasingly express strong environmental concern and favorable attitudes toward sustainable products, these psychological commitments frequently fail to translate into consistent purchasing behavior. The results identify several interconnected constraints underlying this discrepancy, with price sensitivity emerging as the most dominant barrier. Numerous studies confirm that even environmentally conscious consumers often hesitate to purchase green products when price premiums are perceived as excessive or unjustified (Salhab et al., 2025; Devi & Subatra, 2025; Khan et al., 2020). This tension highlights the structural contradiction between ethical aspirations and economic realities, revealing that sustainable consumption cannot be sustained without addressing affordability and value perception. Beyond price considerations, informational barriers and trust deficits further exacerbate the attitude-behavior gap. The findings indicate that consumer confusion regarding eco-labels, skepticism toward corporate environmental claims, and concerns about greenwashing significantly undermine confidence in green products.

Gahlawat et al. (2025) argue that inconsistent labeling standards and misleading sustainability claims erode consumer trust, thereby weakening the motivational force of environmental awareness. Devi and Subatra (2025) similarly demonstrate that limited transparency and weak regulatory oversight intensify consumer doubt, ultimately discouraging green purchasing despite positive intentions. These insights highlight the necessity of credible certification mechanisms and transparent communication

frameworks to restore trust and reinforce behavioral commitment. Social dynamics also play a critical role in shaping sustainable behavior. The results confirm that subjective norms and perceived environmental responsibility function as powerful mediators between awareness and action. Consumers are significantly more likely to engage in sustainable purchasing when they perceive strong social expectations and moral obligations to do so (Štofejová et al., 2023; Chebeň et al., 2025; Van Phuong et al., 2025; Sun et al., 2024).

This social embeddedness of sustainable behavior suggests that marketing strategies must extend beyond individual persuasion and engage collective values, community influence, and social identity processes to achieve lasting behavioral change. In this context, the study's findings provide compelling evidence regarding the effectiveness of integrated sustainable marketing strategies. The green marketing mix, encompassing environmentally responsible product design, sustainable packaging, transparent promotion, ethical pricing, and eco-friendly distribution channels, consistently strengthens environmental awareness, trust, and purchase intention (Huang et al., 2024; Akgün & Bütüner, 2025; Reddy et al., 2023; Esmaelnezhad et al., 2023; Wulandjani et al., 2025).

Notably, Huang et al. (2024) demonstrate that environmental labeling significantly enhances both consumer understanding and perceived product value, while Esmaelnezhad et al. (2023) show that sustainability-oriented marketing strategies improve corporate reputation and long-term customer loyalty. The role of digital and online marketing channels further amplifies these effects. The findings indicate that digital green marketing significantly strengthens environmental attitudes and sustainable purchase intentions, particularly within e-commerce environments. Štofejová et al. (2023) and Gahlawat et al. (2025) confirm that online platforms facilitate rapid dissemination of environmental information, enable interactive engagement, and enhance consumers' ability to evaluate sustainability claims. This digital transformation expands the reach and scalability of sustainable marketing, enabling firms to embed sustainability narratives across the entire customer journey.

Importantly, the integration of environmental education within sustainable marketing strategies emerges as a decisive factor in building long-term sustainability consciousness. De Moraes et al. (2024) demonstrate that environmental education embedded within marketing communication significantly strengthens consumers' environmental awareness, trust in brands, and long-term commitment to sustainable behavior. Gahlawat et al. (2025) similarly argue that educational content reduces consumer confusion, counters greenwashing skepticism, and reinforces informed decision-making. These findings suggest that sustainable marketing must evolve from transactional persuasion toward continuous educational engagement to foster durable preference transformation. From a strategic perspective, this study advances the theoretical understanding of sustainable marketing by positioning the attitude-behavior gap as a central challenge that determines the effectiveness of green market interventions. While previous research often examined environmental awareness and purchase intention in isolation, the present findings emphasize the importance of addressing structural barriers, trust deficits, and socio-economic constraints in tandem with psychological motivations. The study therefore contributes a more holistic framework for understanding sustainable consumer behavior, integrating cognitive, social, economic, and institutional dimensions into a unified explanatory model.

The practical implications for firms and policymakers are substantial. Businesses must design sustainable marketing strategies that simultaneously enhance environmental awareness, strengthen trust through credible communication, reduce

economic barriers through adaptive pricing models, and leverage social influence mechanisms to reinforce behavioral commitment. Policy interventions are equally critical, particularly in establishing standardized eco-labeling regulations, enforcing transparency requirements, and providing incentives that lower the cost of green products. The findings of Saputra and Asfiah (2025) and Zhou et al. (2025) underscore the importance of collaborative governance involving business, government, and civil society to create supportive ecosystems for sustainable consumption. In sum, this discussion confirms that sustainable marketing possesses significant transformative potential in reshaping consumer preferences in the era of environmental consciousness. However, its success ultimately depends on the strategic integration of educational engagement, economic accessibility, institutional credibility, and social influence mechanisms. By addressing these interconnected dimensions, sustainable marketing can move beyond symbolic commitment toward genuine behavioral transformation, thereby contributing meaningfully to global sustainability objectives.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to examine the influence of sustainable marketing on the transformation of consumer preferences in the context of growing environmental awareness and to identify strategic mechanisms capable of reducing the persistent attitude–behavior gap, and the findings confirm that environmental consciousness has become a central determinant of contemporary consumer preferences, significantly shaping attitudes, purchase intentions, and long-term loyalty toward environmentally responsible products and brands, particularly among younger, more educated, and higher-income consumer segments. Nevertheless, the results also reveal that positive environmental attitudes do not automatically translate into consistent green purchasing behavior, as economic barriers, price sensitivity, informational ambiguity, low trust in eco-label credibility, and skepticism toward corporate environmental claims continue to constrain the full realization of sustainable consumption.

The study further demonstrates that an integrated sustainable marketing strategy, encompassing a comprehensive green marketing mix, transparent communication, credible eco-labeling, digital engagement, continuous environmental education, and the reinforcement of social norms and environmental responsibility, plays a decisive role in strengthening consumer trust and in transforming environmental awareness into concrete purchasing behavior. Consequently, sustainable marketing possesses substantial capacity to reshape consumer preferences and accelerate the transition toward environmentally responsible consumption, yet its real-world effectiveness ultimately depends on strategic coherence between educational initiatives, economic accessibility, institutional credibility, and social influence mechanisms, thereby positioning sustainable marketing not merely as a symbolic branding tool but as a structural driver of long-term behavioral change and global sustainability advancement.

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