



9. Sustainability Marketing: A Study on Balancing Profitability with Social and Environmental Responsibilities

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ABSTRACT:

As businesses increasingly recognize the importance of sustainability, the concept of sustainability marketing has gained prominence as a means to balance profitability with social and environmental responsibility. GITNUX MARKETDATA REPORT 2024 says that in worldwide Globally, 66% of consumers are willing to pay more for sustainable goods, 91% of plastic waste isn't recycled and 93% of CEOs believe that sustainability will be important to the future success of their companies. This study aims to explore the strategies and challenges associated with sustainability marketing.. The study also examines the role of stakeholders, including consumers, employees, investors, and regulatory bodies, in shaping organizational approaches to sustainability. by offering practical insights and recommendations for businesses seeking to adopt sustainable marketing practices, this research contributes to the growing body of knowledge on sustainability marketing. It highlights the importance of authenticity, transparency, and long-term thinking in building trust and credibility with consumers while delivering positive social and environmental impacts. Ultimately, this study provides valuable guidance for organizations navigating the complex landscape of sustainability marketing in pursuit of both financial success and societal well-being.

Introduction:

Sustainability marketing, also known as sustainable marketing or green marketing, refers to a strategic approach adopted by businesses to balance profitability with social and environmental responsibility. This form of marketing goes beyond traditional profit-driven models and emphasizes the integration of ethical, social, and environmental considerations into business strategies. The goal is to create value not only for the company but also for society and the environment

Sustainability marketing, a dynamic and transformative approach to business, seeks to harmonize profitability with social and environmental responsibilities. In an era marked by a heightened awareness of climate change, resource depletion, and social inequality, businesses are recognizing the imperative to integrate ethical and sustainable practices into their core strategies. As the renowned environmentalist and author, Paul Hawken, aptly put it, "We do not have an environmental crisis, a social crisis, and an economic crisis. We have one crisis that is essentially social, environmental, and economic in nature."

History of Sustainability Marketing:

From the environmental awakening of the 1960s to the rise of sustainable brands today, the journey of sustainability in business has been marked by continual evolution. Early movements like Rachel Carson's "Silent Spring" and the first Earth Day laid the foundation, while companies like Ben & Jerry's pioneered Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). The 1990s introduced the Triple Bottom Line concept, and the 2000s saw the rise of sustainable reporting. In the 2010s, sustainability became a core aspect of marketing strategies, exemplified by Patagonia. Presently, businesses are embracing circular economy principles and innovative solutions, such as Adidas' use of recycled ocean plastic, signaling a continued commitment to environmental consciousness and innovation.

Stakeholders Impact Sustainability Strategies:

stakeholders, including consumers, employees, investors, and regulatory bodies, play a central role in shaping organizational approaches to sustainability in the context of sustainability marketing. By understanding the expectations, preferences, and influence of each stakeholder group, companies can develop tailored sustainability strategies that balance profitability with social and environmental responsibilities and create value for stakeholders and society at large. Effective stakeholder engagement and collaboration are essential for driving meaningful change and advancing sustainable development goals.

Review of Literature:

Muhammad Nur Afiat, Anita Lestari, authors Nurul Afifah (2023) (1) In today's global economy, the demand for sustainable business practices is paramount, requiring companies to balance financial success with environmental responsibility. This study focuses on the energy industry in West Java, Indonesia, highlighting its economic importance and environmental challenges. Findings reveal a growing commitment to clean technologies and emissions reduction among energy companies, leading to competitive profitability and improved access to capital. Successful business models integrate environmental and financial objectives while emphasizing stakeholder engagement. These insights underscore the significance of aligning environmental and financial management for sustainable business, offering valuable guidance for policymakers and industry practitioners alike.

Dr. S. Ramesh (2023) (2) In today's business landscape, Sustainable Business Practices are no longer a trend but a necessity, intertwining commerce with environmental stewardship. The article emphasizes integrating environmental impact management into modern commerce strategies, from supply chain optimization to circular economy principles. Ethical considerations like consumer education and transparent marketing are crucial for

fostering a sustainable corporate culture. Beyond ethics, sustainability offers tangible benefits such as enhanced brand reputation and operational efficiency. Despite challenges, adopting sustainable practices fosters innovation and long-term competitiveness.

Ultimately, businesses redefine strategies to show that profitability and environmental responsibility go hand in hand in a thriving business ecosystem.

Scope of the Study:

This study on sustainability marketing aims to explore how businesses balance profitability with social and environmental responsibility. It investigates various factors influencing businesses' strategies and practices in integrating sustainability principles into marketing. By examining consumer attitudes, regulatory impacts, and industry trends, the study offers insights for businesses seeking to enhance sustainability efforts while remaining profitable.

Objectives:

- **Objective 1:** To understand the features and attributes that consumers prioritize when choosing sustainable products or services.
- **Objective 2:** To identify the consumer behaviour and perception towards sustainability marketing.

Sources of data: The methodology of the study is based on primary and secondary data collection. The data collected administering the structured questionnaire.

Analyses and Interpretation

Percentage analysis in research involves using percentages and rank correlation to analyse and present data collected during a research study. It's a common method for summarizing and interpreting numerical data, making it easier to understand and compare different variables or groups within the research.

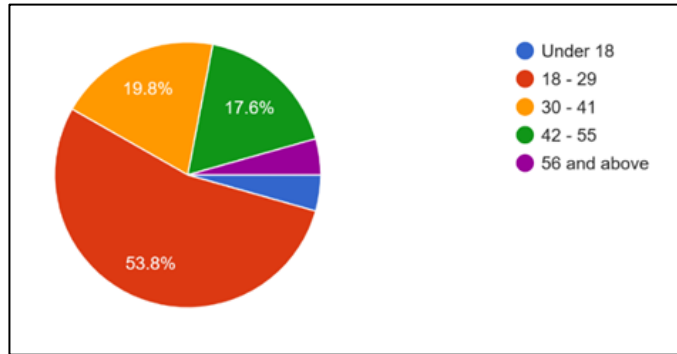
Data Analysis and Interpretation:

Table 9.1: Classification Based on Age

Age		
Age group	Frequency	Percent
18 - 29	49	53.8
30 - 41	18	19.8
42 - 55	16	17.6
56 and above	4	4.4
Under 18	4	4.4
Total	91	100

(Source: Primary Data)

Chart 9.1: Classification Based on Age



Interpretation:

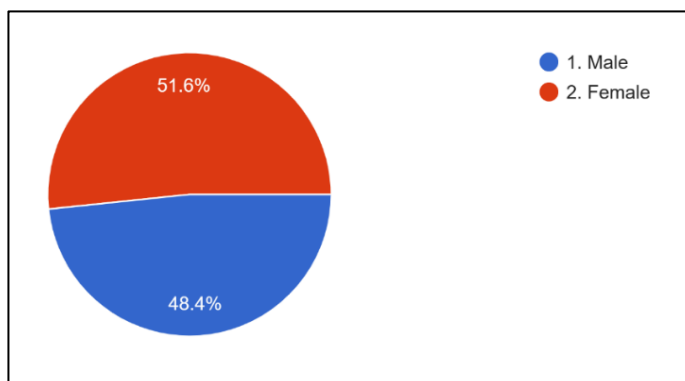
From the given table (9.1) of the data collected from 91 respondents illustrates the age distribution within the sample group. The majority of respondents fall within the younger age brackets, with the 18-29 age group comprising the largest segment, representing 53.8% of the sample.

Table 9.2: Categorization Based on Gender

Gender		
Gender	Frequency	Percent
1. Male	44	48.4
2. Female	47	51.6
Total	91	100

(Source: Primary Data)

Chart 3.2: Categorization Based on Gender



Interpretation:

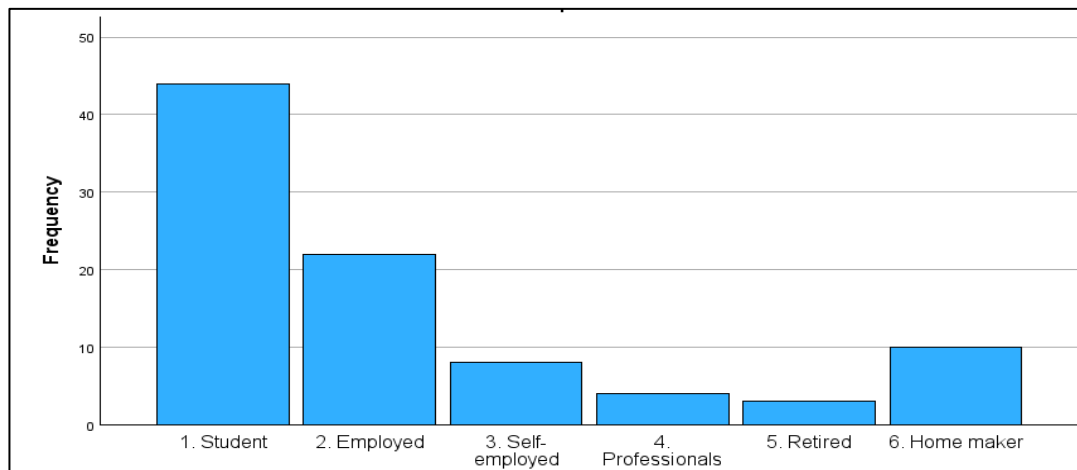
From the given table (9.2), it is evident that the data collected from 91 respondents provides insights into the gender distribution within the sample group. The table reveals that nearly an equal number of male and female respondents participated in the survey, with 44 males constituting approximately 49% of the sample and 47 females comprising around 52%.

Table 9.3: Categorization Based on Gender

Occupation		
	Frequency	Percent
Student	44	48.3
Employed	22	24.2
Self-employed	8	8.8
Professionals	4	4.4
Retired	3	3.3
Home maker	10	11
Total	91	100

(Source: Primary Data)

Chart 3.3: Classification Based on Occupation



Interpretation:

The table (9.3) presents data regarding respondents' occupations and their perceptions of whether sustainable practices contribute to long-term success. Among the 91 respondents, 48.3% identified as students, 24.2% as employed individuals, 8.8% as self-employed, 4.4% as professionals, 3.3% as retired, and 11% as homemakers.

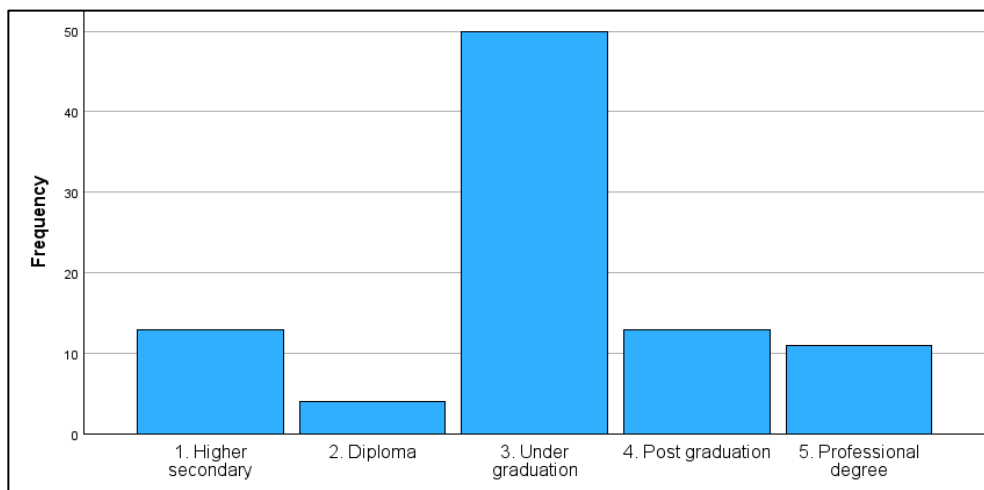
These findings reflect a diverse range of occupations among respondents, with the highest proportion being students.

Table 9.4: Classification on Education

Education	Frequency	Percent
1. Higher secondary	13	14.3
2. Diploma	4	4.4
3. Under graduation	50	54.9
4. Post graduation	13	14.3
5. Professional degree	11	12.1
Total	91	100

(Source: Primary Data)

Chart 9.4: Classification On Education



Interpretation:

The table (9.4) provides insights into the education levels of the respondents, both completed and currently pursued. Among the 91 respondents, the majority (54.9%) are pursuing or have completed their undergraduate degrees, while 14.3% have completed postgraduate studies. These findings indicate a diverse educational background among the respondents, with a significant emphasis on undergraduate studies.

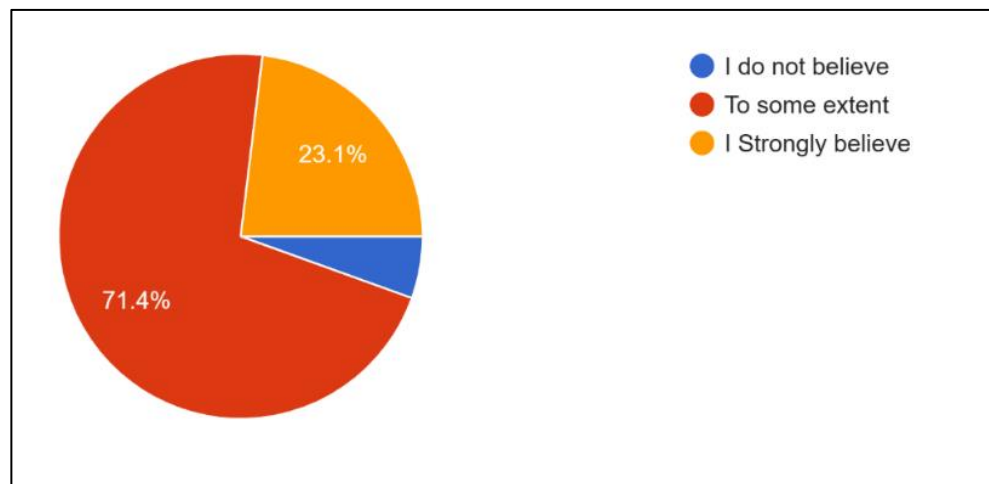
Table 9.5: Consumers Beliefs Regarding Companies' Ability to Balance Profitability with Sustainability

Belief Level		
	Frequency	Percent
I do not believe	5	5.5
I Strongly believe	21	23.1

Belief Level		
	Frequency	Percent
To some extent	65	71.4
Total	91	100

(Source: Primary Data)

Chart 9.5: Consumers Beliefs Regarding Companies' Ability to Balance Profitability with Sustainability



Interpretation:

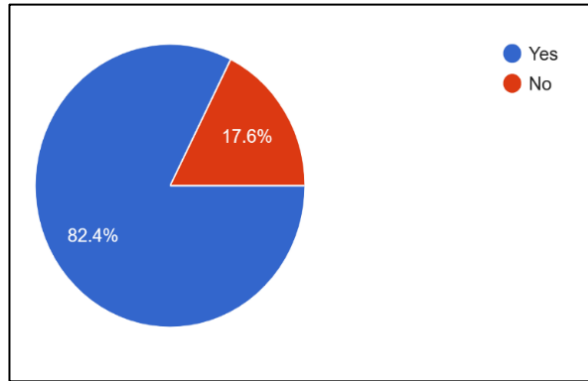
The table (9.5) reflects respondents' beliefs regarding companies' ability to balance profitability with social and environmental responsibility. Among 91 respondents, opinions vary: A minority of respondents, comprising 5 individuals or 5.5% expressed disbelief, a larger portion of respondents, accounting for 65 individuals or 71.4% believed to some extent, and notably 21 respondents or 23.1% strongly believed in companies' capacity to achieve this balance.

Table 9.6: Brand Loyalty Vs. Social Responsibility: Switching Considerations

Would Switch Brands		
	Frequency	Percent
No	16	17.6
Yes	75	82.4
Total	91	100

(Source: Primary Data)

Chart 9.6: Brand Loyalty Vs. Social Responsibility: Switching Considerations



Interpretation:

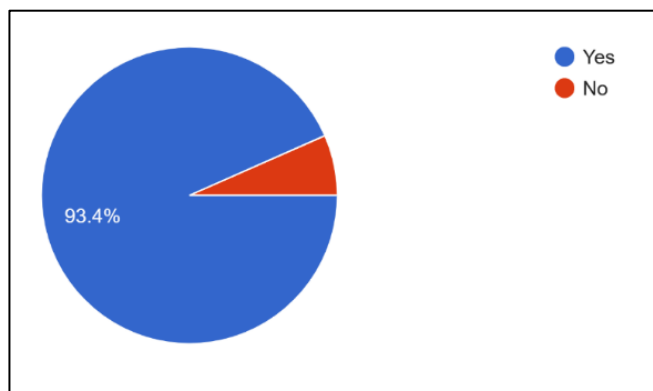
The table (9.6) shows that among 91 respondents surveyed, 82.4% expressed a willingness to switch to a brand with a stronger commitment to social and environmental responsibility. Conversely, 17.6% indicated they would not switch brands, even if a competitor demonstrated a stronger commitment.

Table 9.7: Recommendation Bias: Role of Company Sustainability

More Likely to Recommend		
	Frequency	Percent
No	6	6.6
Yes	85	93.4
Total	91	100

(Source: Primary Data)

Chart 9.7: Recommendation Bias: Role of Company Sustainability



Interpretation:

The table (9.7) illustrates respondents' likelihood of recommending a product or service based on a company's sustainability practices. Among the 91 respondents surveyed, the overwhelming majority, comprising 85 individuals or 93.4% of the sample, expressed that they would be more likely to recommend a product or service.

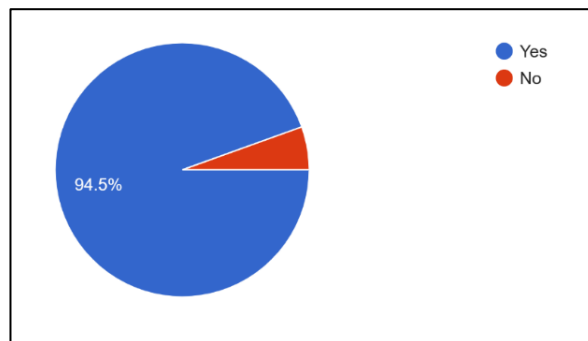
Conversely, a smaller portion of respondents, accounting for 6 individuals or 6.6% of the sample, indicated that they would not be more likely to recommend a product or service.

Table 9.8: Long-Term Prosperity Through Sustainable Strategies

Sustainable Practices Contribute to Long-Term Success		
	Frequency	Percent
No	5	5.5
Yes	86	94.5
Total	91	100

(Source: Primary Data)

Chart 9.8: Long-Term Prosperity Through Sustainable Strategies



Interpretation:

The table (9.8) presents respondents' beliefs regarding the contribution of sustainable practices to long-term business success.

Among the 91 respondents surveyed, the overwhelming majority, comprising 86 individuals or 94.5% of the sample, expressed belief in the positive impact of sustainable practices on long-term business success.

Conversely, a small minority of respondents, accounting for 5 individuals or 5.5% of the sample, stated that they do not believe sustainable practices contribute to long-term business success

Table 9.9::Importance Of Various Sustainability Features In Shaping Consumer Preferences

Features	Rate of Importance					Total	Rank
	1	2	3	4	5		
Recyclable and eco-friendly packaging	3	24	24	132	175	358	I
Fair labour practices	3	22	48	112	165	350	II
Energy efficiency	3	28	57	120	120	328	IV
Ethical sourcing	4	28	42	156	100	330	V
Certification	8	26	39	116	140	329	III

(Source: Primary Data)

Interpretation:

The rank correlation table (9.9) indicates the importance of various sustainability features in shaping consumer preferences for selecting products or services. Recyclable and eco-friendly packaging emerges as the most crucial factor, followed by fair labour practices and certification.

Energy efficiency ranks fourth, with ethical sourcing coming in fifth. This insight highlights consumers' prioritization of packaging sustainability, labour practices, and certification when making sustainable choices.

Findings for Demographic Factors:

- Data shows diverse age groups, with the majority (largest segment) being 18 to 29 years old.
- Occupational distribution is diverse, with students making up the largest group.
- Among 91 respondents, 48.4% were male and 51.6% were female.
- The most common education level among respondents was undergraduate, with 54.9% of the total sample.

Other Findings:

- findings indicate a significant majority (82.4%) expressed willingness to switch brands
- findings highlight a strong inclination (93.4%) towards recommending, suggesting a positive sentiment.
- findings indicate a strong consensus (94.5%) supporting the notion that sustainable practices are essential for long-term success.
- findings reflect varied levels of trust, with a significant portion remaining neutral.
- These findings indicate a clear prioritization of environmentally conscious practices, particularly recyclable packaging and fair labour practices, followed by ethical sourcing and certification.

Suggestions:

- The minority who are not willing to switch: consider addressing any identified barriers or dissatisfaction and Focus on delivering superior value propositions and customer experiences to improve brand loyalty and satisfaction
- Capitalize on positive word-of-mouth : continue to deliver exceptional products or services to maintain high recommendation rates and foster brand advocacy.
- Gain Trustworthiness: Focus on building trust through transparent communication, ethical practices, and consistent quality Appreciation of eco-friendly practices Incorporate consumer feedback to refine communication strategies by Utilizing various channels such as social media, packaging, and advertising to consistently convey eco-friendly initiatives
- clarity of product labels: enhance understandability, consider implementing clearer language, simpler graphics, and user-friendly formatting. Conducting usability testing with diverse groups can also help identify areas for improvement
- Information delivery methods: Utilize user-friendly language, visual aids, and concise messaging
- communication efforts: Utilize various channels such as website updates, social media, and newsletters to effectively communicate the company's commitment.
- Focus on recyclable packaging as the top sustainability factor for consumer preference Invest in fair labour practices and certification as secondary priorities Address energy efficiency next, followed by ethical sourcing. Adapt marketing to highlight these sustainability features for eco-conscious consumers. Focus on improving awareness and understanding of energy efficiency, despite its lower rank.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, the data analysis reveals several key insights into consumer perceptions and behaviours regarding sustainability in marketing. Firstly, there is a notable demographic distribution, with a predominant representation of young adults aged 18 to 29, indicating a potential target audience for sustainability initiatives. The occupational diversity among respondents,. A significant majority of respondents express belief in the importance of sustainability to some extent, with a strong inclination towards recommending and supporting companies with sustainable practices. Moreover, the findings indicate a widespread willingness to switch brands based on sustainability considerations, highlighting the growing importance of sustainability in consumer decision-making. While varying levels of trust and clarity perception exist among respondents, there is a clear prioritization of environmentally conscious practices, particularly recyclable packaging and fair labour practices. Overall, the study underscores the importance of integrating sustainability into marketing strategies and emphasizes the need for transparent communication, engaging content, and customer-centric approaches to foster consumer trust and loyalty in an increasingly sustainability-conscious market landscape.

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