

Can we go green and be sustainable? Examining sustainable purchase behavior and green marketing of alcohol-free drinks

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ABSTRACT:

Greenhouse emissions have continued to degrade the ecosystem, while fast-paced production and consumption patterns of producers and consumers, respectively, are not helping to attain a safe and healthy environment. This study examines the influence of green marketing for alcohol-free drinks on consumers' sustainable purchase behavior. A cross-sectional survey was used, with 345 valid respondents included in the analysis. Multiple regression was adopted in the analysis. The findings revealed that green product, green price, green place (distribution/square), and green promotion significantly influence sustainable purchase behavior, with green product exerting the greatest effect, thereby buttressing the importance of environmental consciousness in production and the need to adjust to sustainable consumption behavior. The implication is the need for strategic communication and the use of celebrity endorsement to facilitate a paradigm shift toward a practice that aligns with sustainable development – sustainable production and consumption. Therefore, policy-driven development of a sustainability education curriculum is recommended to re-engineer the minds of young consumers, thereby facilitating the creation of support groups for sustainability and the conscious purchase of sustainable products.

KEYWORDS: *Sustainable behavior, purchase behavior, greenhouse emissions, green marketing*

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INTRODUCTION

The worsening ecological climate has become a global concern as consumers and support groups push for a paradigm shift to sustainable practices in production and consumption (Anyasor, 2015), but the challenge is the majority of producers and marketers' disregard for environmental safety and consumer satisfaction, as their focus is on profit maximization (Burhan, 2020). Environmental challenges are global concerns arising from the significant effects of global warming, driven by human and productive activities. For instance, greenhouse gas emissions, along with unsustainable production practices and household consumption, are driving rapid climate change and environmental catastrophes (Donmez-Turan & Kiliçlar, 2021). Reisch et al. (2021) reveal that about 60% of greenhouse gas emissions come from household consumption, while Rafi-UI-Shan et al. (2018) highlight the connection between fast-paced, short-lived modern production and a significantly unsustainable transformation of consumption appetite. Both production and consumption practices in terms of sustainability are not about the availability of natural resources, but about their availability in the future. For instance, mass production, such as in fast fashion, creates environmental issues (Rafi-UI-Shan et al., 2018), whereas production methods that adopt eco-friendly practices generate fewer environmental issues (Panizzut et al., 2021). The new normal is shifting toward consumers' actions and contributions to sustainability, rather than a purely production-focused approach to eco-friendly products.

Therefore, the new normal on sustainability is not only for productive ventures aligning with practices that are not catastrophic to the environment but also for consumers' activities that affect sustainability. Although businesses are enjoined to be environmentally conscious and sustainable in their productive activities and practices (Masocha & Fatoki, 2018), following the implications of unsustainable practices such as environmental degradation, toxic emissions and destruction of habitat, Boutaleb and Toukabri (2026) revealed the roles of environmental awareness and cognition in motivating consumer behavior, especially the perspective of consumers' green purchase intention. Individual consumption behavior, especially in purchases and consumption, has an environmental connection, especially in sustainability (Halder et al., 2020), given that sustainable consumption behavior and environmental issues have gained literature attention, particularly in the consumer marketplace (Dong et al., 2020), in addition to the interest of researchers in understanding sustainability constraints and proffering measures to improve sustainability practices. This is due to the importance of pro-social consumption activities in environmentally sustainable consumption behavior (Halder et al., 2020), as Park et al. (2018) consider it beneficial to the environment. Consequently, environmental challenges can be addressed through environmentally sustainable changes in human behavior (Han, 2020). This is because sustainable consumption connects consumers to environmental concerns even in the food and beverage sector (Oloveze et al., 2023).

However, green marketing has been placed within the purview of sustainability, as Kar and Harichandan (2022) note the compelling pressure for companies to be environmentally conscious in their marketing strategies. The drive of green marketing is to ensure satisfaction of consumers' needs without significantly impacting the environment (Salhab et al., 2025). The drive of green marketing is to bridge the gap between businesses' ecological footprints and sustainable consumption behavior by reducing ecological footprints and encouraging the purchase of products that are not only environmentally friendly but also help minimize environmental resource depletion. When green marketing is effective, it is evident in consumers' preference for products that are not harmful to the environment (Edeh, 2020). The objective of green marketing is to drive consumer education on sustainable consumption, green value addition, and transparent business practices, while its influence on sustainable consumption is perceived to encompass value alignment in attaining sustainability, focus on demographics that are more receptive to eco-friendly products, and nudging sustainable habits via incentivization such as the reusability of product packages and discounts. Although significant pitfalls include premium pricing and greenwashing, Kar and Harichandan (2022) suggest that green marketing innovation is instrumental in addressing sustainable development challenges. Green marketing empowers companies to contribute to a safe environment, as Sharma et al. (2013) reveal its effect on the purchase of environmentally friendly products and the practice of sustainable practices. This promotes consumers' environmental awareness and their ability to contribute to environmental protection through their buying behavior (Edeh, 2020).

Recently, mistrust has been caused by greenwashing and the demand for circular practices in emerging markets, often occasioned by the failure of eco-awareness to translate into purchases (Raj et al., 2025). In the Nigerian beverage sector, the lack of clear environmental sustainability practices, poor waste management infrastructure, and weak eco-labeling and education are significant bottlenecks, as Ononogbo and Odinakachuwu (2025) indicate that sustainability is a major issue. For instance, beverage companies are negatively affecting the availability of clean water resources and ethical corporate practices (Ononogbo & Odinakachuwu, 2025). In essence, ethical practices are a concern in Nigeria's food industry (Oteh et al., 2021). The education of consumers has become paramount as productive technologies continue to advance, and consumerism remains central to consumption. While green marketing is considered essential, its aspects are incorporated into sustainable purchase behavior in the beverage industry. Therefore, the focus of this study is to examine green dimensions such as green product, green price, green distribution, and green promotion on sustainable purchase behavior.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT OF HYPOTHESES

The concept of green marketing encompasses business strategies that are entirely holistic in mitigating the environmental impacts of production while also meeting consumer needs. The dimensions cover the core pillars of marketing – product, price, promotion, and place (distribution). In other words, the orientation of green marketing dwells on green product, green price, green promotion, and green place (Apaza-Panca et al., 2024). It is useful when the focus is on stimulating demand and communicating a company's product's environmental performance to consumers (Shi et al., 2022). For instance, it helps convey the essence of sustainability, such as how green products consume less energy and produce lower emissions during production (Apaza-Panca et al., 2024).

Green product

This is a significant dimension of green marketing that responds to the environmental needs, wants, and desires of the marketplace. These needs arise as improvements to existing products, contributing to a healthier, safer environment by consuming less energy in production, thereby leading to fewer emissions

into the atmosphere (Apaza-Panca et al., 2024). Companies that are socially responsible in production contribute significantly and positively to a healthier environment and to the maintenance of a sustainable ecosystem (Mendoza et al., 2018). However, consumers need to value the eco-friendly products (Quinche, 2017) and care for a safe environment through their conscious purchases that align with the sustainability practices (Apaza-Panca et al., 2024). Such combined actions lead to sustainable economic, social, and environmental outcomes (Shi et al., 2022), which are the fundamental pillars of sustainability. The companies whose activities are productively and economically responsible safeguard the environment, particularly through their social welfare and sustainable policies (Perez et al., 2016). The extant literature shows a significant association between green purchase behavior and green product attributes (Maheshwari, 2014; Alabo, 2021). Therefore, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H1. Green product significantly influences sustainable purchase behavior of alcohol-free drinks

Green price

This is an element of the green marketing dimension that focuses on revenue. Apaza-Panca et al. (2024) show that the price perspective in green marketing should be situated within the purview of environmental considerations, standards, and green initiatives. A significant challenge with green products is their premium prices. For instance, it depends on a company's policy vis-à-vis environmental considerations (Monteiro et al., 2015). However, Belz and Peattie (2008) argue that consumers are willing to pay a premium for products that are not harmful. The extant literature shows a connection between green pricing and consumer buying behavior (Muhammed et al., 2020), as well as with the sustainability of brewing (Alabo, 2021). Following the discourse, the following hypotheses were proposed:

H2. Green price significantly influences sustainable purchase behavior of alcohol-free drinks.

Green place

Green place is often regarded as green distribution. In other literature, a green place is often referred to as a green square (Monteiro et al., 2015), although the concept remains the same. It considers the sustainability of logistics given that Ononogbo and Odinakachuwu (2025) identified logistics constraints as one of the challenges affecting the Nigerian beverage industry. Apaza-Panca et al. (2024) view green place within the context of distribution. Apaza-Panca et al. (2024) view green place in the context of distribution, especially the distribution of environmentally friendly products, which must not only be ecologically acceptable but also suitable for consumption, in line with environmental requirements and standards (Monteiro et al., 2015). Extant literature confirms a significant relationship between green places and consumer behavior (Apaza-Panca et al., 2024). In light of the discourse, the following hypothesis was proposed:

H3. Green place significantly influences sustainable purchase behavior of alcohol-free drinks

Green promotion

Promotion is a vital cog in communicating the benefits of sustainable products. Knowledge dissemination, awareness creation, and sustained information about the benefits of green products are facilitated through promotion. Approaches such as celebrity endorsement are useful tools in communicating messages to a target audience (Oteh et al., 2023). In terms of green promotion, the focus is on ethical approaches and the adoption of sustainable techniques, such as green labeling and communicating exactly what the product serves. Communication of product information should not be misleading or harmful to consumers. For instance, the information provided about products should not harm consumers or their interests (Monteiro et al., 2015), while Masocha (2021) considers eco-branding, eco-labeling, and environmental advertising significant factors affecting a company's product performance. Extant literature supports a connection between green promotion and consumer buying behavior (Alabo et al., 2021). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4. Green promotion significantly influences sustainable purchase behavior of alcohol-free drinks

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive cross-sectional survey focusing on consumers of non-alcoholic beverages in the South-East. A structured questionnaire was designed for data collection, and a 5-point Likert scale was used to measure the variables: green product, green price, green place, green promotion, and sustainable purchase behavior. A pilot survey was conducted with 30 participants, and the results led to adjustments to the questionnaire items. The instrument was validated via face and content validity with the expertise of five (5) marketing professionals, and Cronbach's alpha was used to assess item internal consistency. Given the unknown population at the time of the survey, the sample was determined through Cochran's formula as identified:

$$n = \frac{364.96}{1} = 365$$

Purposive sampling was adopted, and respondents were included based on their consumption of non-alcoholic drinks. Through SPSS v20, the analysis was conducted using multiple regression analysis with the model specified as:

$$y = f(X_n) \text{ where}$$

y = dependent variable (sustainable purchase behavior)

X_n = independent variables (X_1 =green product; X_2 = green price; X_3 =green place; X_4 = green promotion), therefore, the multiple regression model in line with the variables is specified as:

ϵ = error term

$$y = \beta_0 + \beta_1x_1 + \beta_2x_2 + \beta_3x_3 + \beta_4x_4 + \epsilon$$

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

The results revealed a sample comprising 44.7% males and 55.3% females. Also, 14.2% were aged less than 25 years, 39% were aged 26-35 years, 40% were aged 36-45 years, while about 6.8% were aged 45 years and above. The marital status of the participants in the study shows that 55.3% were married and 44.4% were single, indicating a fairly equal representation in the sample. In the education category, about 34.9% had primary education, 29.85% had secondary education, and about 35.3% had tertiary education, representing an educated sample. The income classification shows that 51.2% earn less than ₦50,000 monthly, about 41.7% earn between ₦50,000 and ₦100,000 monthly, about 4.1% earn between ₦100,000 and ₦200,000 monthly, while 3.1% earn more than ₦200,000 monthly. Generally, a higher percentage of the sample earns below the minimum wage in Nigeria, set at ₦70,000 per month.

Table 1: Descriptive results

Variable	Mean	Std. dev
Green product	3.99	1.157
Green price	4.20	.938
Green place	4.11	.980
Green promotion	3.96	1.166
Sustainable purchase behavior	4.04	1.134

The results in Table 1 show that the mean of all the variables was above 3.0. This indicates positive views among participants towards the variables, while the standard deviation for each variable also reveals a fair distribution around the mean, further buttressing the similarity of opinions and consistency in views.

Table 2: Regression result

Variable	Unstd. β	Std. error	Std. β	t-value	P-value	Decision	Model summary
Constant	1.197	.170		7.022	.000		
Green product	.640	.031	.696	2.740	.020	Accepted	
Green price	.235	.031	.261	7.656	.003	Accepted	
Green place	-.124	.033	-.124	-3.802	.001	Accepted	
Green promotion	.060	.022	.103	2.788	.006	Accepted	
R							.901
R ²							.687
F statistics							249.567***
Durbin Watson test							1.940

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

The model assessment in Table 2 indicates an acceptable fit, with R^2 (.687), F Statistic (249.567), and Durbin-Watson test (1.940) values within acceptable ranges. The R^2 indicates that about 68.7% of the variance in sustainable purchase behavior is explained by the independent variables. The F statistic (14.311) confirms the model's overall significance and utility, as it accounts for 73.1% of the variance in sustainable purchase behavior compared with the null model. The Durbin-Watson statistic (1.940) indicates the absence of serial correlation, as the rule of thumb is for values to be close to 2 or 2. The value of R (.901) confirms a strong

correlation between the predictors and sustainable purchase behavior. However, the green marketing measured through the dimensions as green product (H1: $\beta = .640$; $p < .020$), green price (H1: $\beta = .235$; $p < .003$), green place (H1: $\beta = -.124$; $p < .001$), and green promotion (H1: $\beta = .060$; $p < .006$), were confirmed as significant predictors of sustainable purchase behavior.

Discussion

The study focused on the influence of green marketing on the sustainable purchase behavior of alcohol-free drinks in the Southeast. The results confirmed significant effects on sustainable purchase behavior. The model's goodness-of-fit was justified by the R2 value and confirmed by the F statistics. Overall, green products are the strongest predictors of sustainable purchase behavior. The implication of green in alcohol-free drinks is revealed in the results: as products become greener, sustainable purchase behavior increases. Extant literature, such as Maheshwari (2014) and Alabo (2021), supports the finding. The importance of green products in an environment with unsustainable practices, such as unsafe production activities and water pollution, will facilitate environmental recovery while also promoting the possibility that future generations will enjoy the natural resources that were preserved. Green products meet consumer needs while not significantly harming the environment. The green dimension of this study reveals the essence of eco-labeling, reusable packaging, and the core benefits of practices that are not harmful and do not consume excessive natural resources while generating significant environmental waste. The idea of the green indicates that consumers' sustainable purchase behavior can be influenced by products that support good health and ease of disposal or reusability, unlike products that offer one-off use, thereby harming the environment. Green pricing strengthens the revenue streams of companies that practice green initiatives. The result confirmed a positive relationship between green price and sustainable purchase behavior, such that as the price of green products increases, sustainable purchase behavior increases. The connection between price and products is confirmed in the literature (Muhammed et al., 2020; Alabo, 2021), although in this study the relationship is positive rather than inverse, as established in prior studies and theory. However, products that command value and exclusivity tend to command premium prices, leading to a positive relationship between price and demand. In this regard, the connection between green pricing and sustainable purchase behavior can be justified, as green products command premium prices because their attributes align with environmental and green initiatives (Apaza-Panca et al., 2024). In other instances, consumers who understand the benefits of sustainability and are pro-environmental actors are willing to pay extra for green products (Belz & Peattie, 2008). The indication is that, as the green price reflects a company's policies, environmental standards, and initiatives, it is the primary avenue green companies use to recoup investments in green products.

The role of green places is confirmed to significantly influence sustainable purchase behavior. Although the result indicates a negative relationship between green place and sustainable purchase behavior, there is also evidence that green place influences it. Studies such as Apaza-Panca et al. (2024) support a link between green places and consumer behavior, while Ononogbo and Odinakachuwu (2025) also indicate the important role of green practices in logistics. A green place is sometimes identified as a green square or a green distribution, but the concept is the same. The results of this study confirm the importance of conscious green practices in the supply chain, especially those that support the environment through product delivery and recyclability. Monteiro et al. (2015) indicate that the green place must be designed to distribute green products, ensure their recycling, and align with environmental practices and standards. Green practices become important when the distribution ensures that intermediaries in the chain adopt them, while inbound and outbound distribution connect with the use and carriage of materials that support a greener environment. The green promotion aspect is also a significant predictor of sustainable purchase behavior. However, it is the least impactful predictor of sustainable purchase behavior among the others. The findings support extant literature (Alabo et al., 2021). Green promotion calls for adopting ethical approaches to communicating about green products. The messages must appropriately indicate what the green product does, the materials used in the production, expiry date and best before, the caution for use to classes of people where the case may be, and the avoidance of misleading information. In other instances, approaches intended to elicit consumer actions must be sustainable and avoid cognitive dissonance. According to Monteiro et al. (2015), the information provided should not harm the intended users or affect their interests. This calls for adopting measures that directly address consumers' needs, while clearly communicating the product's value and benefits.

CONCLUSION

The importance of green marketing on sustainable purchase behavior was considered in this study with a focus on the green marketing dimensions – green product, green price, green place, and green promotion. The importance of green products is highlighted, as they are the strongest predictors of sustainable purchase behavior. Driving sustainable purchase behavior depends not only on green products but also on green pricing, green places, and green promotion. Therefore, sustainable purchase behavior for non-alcoholic

drinks in South East Nigeria can be influenced through the green marketing dimension, with a special focus on green products. Therefore, policy-driven development of a sustainability education curriculum is recommended to re-engineer the minds of young consumers, thereby facilitating the creation of support groups for sustainability and the conscious purchase of sustainable products. The aim is to effect changes from the basics while also considering them from family perspectives. This requires significant investments in public education to inform students and families about the importance of the environment and their roles in contributing to a sustainable environment through sustainable purchasing behavior. The study had a few limitations, including the use of nonprobability sampling and a cross-sectional survey design. The study suggested considering applying other statistical approaches, such as structural equation modeling and logistic regression, to understand the roles of families and gender in sustainable purchase behavior.

Practical implications

While green products are identified as the major predictor of sustainable purchase behavior, this underscores the need for producers to adopt safe practices and sustainable materials in their production processes. This indicates that conscious efforts need to be directed towards meeting the green needs of the green consumers. This needs to identify green consumers and understand the market's sustainability and profitability, so as not to expend so much effort for little gain. However, the positive association between green pricing and sustainable purchase behavior offers an opportunity for green companies, as green consumers are willing to pay a premium for products that are not harmful. On the other hand, there is a need for more efforts in green promotion. Promotion involves creating awareness, disseminating messages, creating an impressive brand image, and strategically positioning the product in customers' minds. In this regard, green promotional practices might not only involve the use of incentives to elicit positive consumer actions but also the services of local celebrities to sway opinions and increase the use of green products. For instance, Oteh et al. (2023) found that using celebrities to endorse local products in Nigeria is important. The application of this strategy is important for directing attention from consumers' intentions to actual usage and for encouraging repeat purchases.

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