

The Impact of Sustainable Advertising Campaigns on Consumer Behavior

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Abstract: This study examines how sustainable advertising campaigns impact consumer purchasing behavior through a qualitative, phenomenological approach involving 20 participants. Findings indicate three main influences: factors affecting the decision-making process, the impact of sustainability on individuals, and brand trust and loyalty. The decision-making process was most influenced by "individual contribution and responsibility," coded 17 times, showing its strong role in consumer choices, while product quality and efficiency had a lesser impact. The concept of being a "conscious consumer" emerged as the most significant individual influence, indicating that sustainable advertising effectively raises awareness. In terms of brand impact, "brand trust" was more frequently noted than "brand loyalty," suggesting that while sustainable ads build trust, they do not always convert it into loyalty. Overall, the study underscores the importance of responsibility, awareness, and trust in consumer behavior influenced by sustainable advertising.

Keywords: Sustainable Advertising, Purchasing, Consumer Behaviour, Decision Making

JEL Classification: M37

1. Introduction

Currently, the principle of sustainability significantly influences customers' buying habits and their engagement with companies. Consumers are increasingly aware of environmental and social issues, which directly impacts their purchase choices and brand loyalty.

Sustainable advertising is becoming essential for appealing to these environmentally aware consumers (Chen and Chang, 2012). Brands strive to fulfill customer expectations and enhance brand value by highlighting their sustainable practices and social responsibility initiatives (Schmeltz, 2012). Sustainable advertising provides customers with both the quality of products or services and their environmental and social advantages (Cronin et al., 2012). By highlighting firms' dedication to sustainability and eco-friendly initiatives, such advertising fosters trust and loyalty among customers. First and Khetriwal (2008) assert that green branding is an underexplored domain and highlight that heightened environmental consciousness has prompted customers to favor eco-friendly firms. This circumstance necessitates that businesses prioritize green marketing techniques.

In this context, the development of sustainable advertising strategies by brands can increase consumers' interest in environmentally friendly products and services. Hargroves and Smith (2005) summarize the basic principles of sustainability and emphasize the importance of prudent management of risk, recognition and appreciation of the value of nature. By embracing these principles, brands can offer consumers more sustainable and responsible choices. Sustainable advertising can help brands connect more deeply with consumers and build long-term consumer loyalty.

Protecting the environment from the negative impacts of rapid economic growth, technological advances and a growing population is a fundamental part of sustainable consumption. Sustainable consumption aims to minimize the release of harmful emissions as well as non-recyclable and hazardous waste. This approach aims to make not only individuals, but also societies and habitats more sustainable. This process requires changing consumption patterns and production methods, adopting systems that consume fewer resources and produce less waste. Thus, sustainable consumption makes significant contributions to both solving current environmental problems and preventing future environmental degradation.

This study seeks to analyze the influence of sustainable advertising on customer choices. Research indicates that sustainable advertising significantly enhances customer interest in eco-friendly products (Becan, 2024). For sustainable advertising to be effective, the material must resonate with customers' environmental consciousness and fulfill their emotional and functional expectations.

This study involved conducting semi-structured interviews with 20 individuals. The objective of these interviews was to uncover the effects of sustainable advertising campaigns on individuals with different consumer behaviors. The collected data were processed using thematic coding, and the resulting codes were further analyzed within the established categories. The findings can enhance academic research on the influence of sustainable advertising campaigns, their effects on consumer behavior, and the optimization of these commercials for greater efficacy.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Concept of Consumer Behaviors

Customer behavior refers to the systematic process of researching, selecting, purchasing, using, and evaluating various products and services that meet customer needs and preferences. This process begins with information acquisition and concludes with the assessment phase, when the consumer assesses the fulfillment of their needs (Baycan, 2017). The process of consumption behavior starts with the individual's recognition of a need for a product to satisfy their preferences or requirements, the individual thereafter seeks information regarding the product in question (Solomon et al., 2006).

The study of consumer behavior examines many psychological elements including perception, motivation, and attitudes, with socio-economic aspects such as money, education, and social standing, which jointly influence purchasing decisions (Lahiri, 2023). The shift from consumer behavior to purchasing behavior is a process shaped by many marketing and advertising methods (Schiffman & Wisenblit 2019). Consumer behavior examines how people or groups select items, services, ideas, or experiences to fulfill their wants and preferences, as well as the processes of purchasing, utilizing, or discarding these things (McCarthy, 2021). The process starts with problem recognition, when customers discern a requirement or issue necessitating a resolution (Kumar, 2016).

Understanding consumer behavior is essential for the marketing sector as it enables the customization of tactics to align with the distinct demands and preferences of the target audience, hence enhancing the probability of purchase (Nassè, 2021). The amalgamation of many advertising channels and the tactical use of marketing mix components—product, price, place, and promotion—are essential in directing customers through the decision-making process and transforming their behavior into real purchases (Lee,

2017). The shift from consumer behavior to purchasing behavior involves a complex interaction of psychological, social, and marketing elements, all of which are profoundly impacted by effective advertising strategies (Fan, 2022).

Understanding the variables that shape consumer behaviour is crucial for businesses aiming to adapt their marketing strategies effectively. Consumer behaviour is influenced by a myriad of factors, from psychological and economic to social and technological. This synthesis of research papers explores these variables, providing insights into how they influence consumer decision-making processes. While these factors provide a comprehensive view of the variables that influence consumer behaviour, it is important to note that consumer behaviour is dynamic and can be influenced by emerging trends and unforeseen circumstances. While these factors provide a comprehensive view of the variables that influence consumer behaviour, it is important to note that consumer behaviour is dynamic and can be influenced by emerging trends and unforeseen circumstances.

Psychological and Personality Factors:

Psychological factors play an important role in consumer behaviour. These include individual personality traits that can influence purchase decisions. For example, personality traits such as openness and conscientiousness can influence how consumers respond to marketing stimuli and make purchase decisions (Liu et al., 2017).

The study of psychological factors also integrates economic knowledge to address business challenges and suggests that understanding these factors can lead to more effective marketing strategies (Lichev, 2017).

Economic and Situational Variables:

Economic conditions such as income levels significantly influence consumer behaviour. Higher income levels can increase the influence of personality traits on purchase decisions, while lower income levels can limit this influence (Liu et al., 2017).

Situational factors, including need and price necessity, are also critical. For example, while price is an important factor for most commodities, it is less important for health-related purchases (Stávková et al., 2008).

Social and Cultural Influences:

Social factors such as peer group recommendations and social accreditation are particularly influential in the purchase of technology products. High- and medium-tech products are often purchased based on peer recommendations, while low-tech products are influenced by brand reputation and social approval (Sakkthivel, 2011).

Cultural trends, including demographic changes and globalisation, also shape consumer behaviour. These trends require businesses to adapt their marketing strategies to remain competitive (Novotný & Duspiva, 2014).

Environmental and Ethical Considerations:

The growing concern for environmental sustainability is influencing consumer behaviour, especially among environmentally conscious consumers. This demographic is increasingly considering the environmental impact of their purchases, which influences their purchasing decisions (Salinas et al., 2004).

2.2. Sustainability and Marketing

The concept of sustainability, defined as the effort to meet present needs while preserving the ability of future generations to meet their own, has significantly evolved since its prominent recognition in the 1987 Brundtland Report (Kosmopoulos, 2024). In 2015, the circular economy emerged as a significant option to attain this equilibrium (Kosmopoulos, 2024). As the circular economy aims to reduce waste and maximize resource efficiency, energy-efficient technologies play a vital role in supporting these goals by minimizing environmental impact while fostering economic growth (Geissdoerfer et al. 2017). Batov (2024) and Batov (2024) argues that the use of contemporary, energy-efficient technology is perceived as a means to attain sustainable economic growth by reducing environmental harm while enhancing productivity and competitiveness. As the circular economy gained traction as a model for achieving sustainability, it also influenced the ways in which sustainability has been interpreted by various stakeholders (Kirchherr et al. 2017). The widely accepted concept of sustainability has been interpreted differently by governments, corporations, and organizations, leading to diverse policies and sometimes contradictory approaches (Caverly, 2023).

Incorporating sustainability into marketing strategy is a complex task that requires a comprehensive approach that addresses both internal and external company factors.

The convergence of sustainability and branding is essential, as it impacts consumer behavior and business culture, necessitating a fundamental transformation in organizational culture and strategic thought to develop genuine narratives linked with ethical principles (Kadam, 2024). For emerging multinational corporations, incorporating sustainability into corporate strategy is essential for maintaining legitimacy and competitive relevance, enabling subsidiaries to meet global standards and develop unique competencies (Trujillo et al., 2023).

Green marketing strategies markedly strengthen companies' environmental commitment and green innovation efficacy, satisfy customer demand for eco-friendly products, and bolster competitiveness and sustainability (Ali, 2024). Integrating sustainability into marketing strategy entails aligning corporate operations with sustainable practices, promoting innovation, collaborating with stakeholders, and adapting culturally to attain long-term business success and environmental stewardship.

2.3. Sustainable Consumption

Sustainable consumption encompasses ecological, economic, and social dimensions to ensure that the use of goods and services meets present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own. This process necessitates minimizing environmental harm and promoting resource efficiency throughout all phases of production and consumption of products and services (Buzoianu et al., 2023).

The theoretical framework of sustainable consumption expands its reach while highlighting its complexity, resulting in overlapping notions and challenges in practical application (Merino et al., 2023). Bhar (2023) asserts that sustainable consumption behavior is influenced by elements like consumer knowledge, socio-cultural norms, and economic policy. In areas like the Global South, the implementation of the neoliberal economic model and the aspiration to enhance socio-cultural circumstances frequently result in overconsumption and pose difficulties in fostering sustainable practices (Bhar, 2023). Governments have a crucial role in fostering sustainable consumption by developing policies and legislation that promote ecologically responsible consumer behavior (Sargin and Dursun, 2023). Education has a crucial role in cultivating pro-environmental behavior and teaching sustainable consumption attitudes in future generations (Al-Nuaimi & Al-Ghamdi, 2022). Despite the augmented awareness and backing for sustainable consumerism, studies indicate that personal initiatives to adopt eco-friendly practices exert minimal influence on total environmental degradation, owing to prevailing economic and societal structures (Bhar, 2023).

Sustainable consumption is a complex concept that integrates environmental, social, and economic aspects to mitigate the adverse effects of consumer behavior on the environment. It encompasses consumer behaviors aimed at reducing waste and safeguarding the requirements of future generations (Sargin & Dursun, 2023).

To achieve sustainable consumption, individuals, companies, and governments need to work together to align economic activities with ecological balance and social well-being, thus ensuring a sustainable future for everyone (Eren & Şengün, 2022). Sustainable consumption is a multifaceted concept that combines environmental, social, and economic dimensions to reduce the negative impacts of consumer behavior on the environment. It includes actions taken by consumers to minimize waste and ensure that the needs of future generations are not compromised (Sargin & Dursun, 2023).

Consumer behavior is influenced by a variety of factors, including awareness, attitudes, and perceived benefits of sustainability. For example, consumers increasingly make purchasing decisions based on environmental safety, social benefits, and economic growth due to a growing awareness of sustainability issues (Zaman & Sarpong, 2023). The circular economy model, which emphasizes the reuse and recycling of products, plays a crucial role in sustainable consumption by encouraging zero-waste practices and extending product life cycles (Bogusz et al., 2023). Young consumers in particular demonstrate significant engagement in sustainable behaviors, particularly in food consumption, emphasizing the importance of awareness and attitudes in shaping sustainable consumption patterns (Wyrwa et al., 2023).

3. Purpose, Research Questions, and Methodology

This study aims to examine the influence of sustainable advertising strategies on customer behavior. The research questions of the study are as follows.

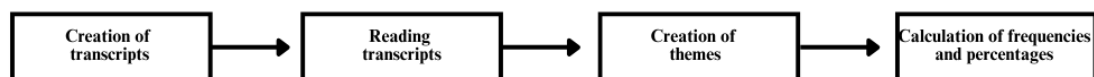
- 1- How do sustainable advertising campaigns affect the consumer's decision-making process?
- 2- How do sustainability-oriented advertising campaigns affect individuals' approach to the concept of sustainability?
- 3- How do sustainable advertising campaigns affect consumers' trust and loyalty to the brand?

This study aims to reveal their perspectives on the impact of sustainable advertising campaigns on consumer purchase behaviour and to evaluate their experiences in this regard. The study was classified as "phenomenological research" among qualitative research methodologies. Phenomenological research is a qualitative methodology that seeks to comprehensively comprehend participants' perceptions, meanings, and experiences about a certain event.

Thematic analysis was used to clarify the participants' perspectives on sustainable ads. Thematic analysis is a comprehensive review and interpretation of research pertaining to a given subject to elucidate the findings (Çalık & Sözbilir, 2014).

The order of data analysis in the research progressed as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Stages of Data Analysis



3.1. Data Analysis Process: Reviewing Transcriptions and Developing Themes

Following the generation of the transcripts, the data approximation step began. At this stage, the transcripts were carefully examined multiple times to understand the participants' comments and their manner of responding to the questions.

Significant statements and phrases were discerned during the analysis of the transcripts. The phrases were subsequently categorized based on the codes and themes established in accordance with the study's objectives.

Temporary codes were initially established in the participants' phrases by the use of frequent comparison during the topic development process. The newly acquired data were compared with the previous codes about similarities and differences. This comparison was repeated with each subsequent code. When the categorisation phase of all the interviews with 20 participants was completed, the themes and codes that emerged were also evaluated by the expert. The themes and codes obtained from the research data are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Themes and Codes Obtained from Data Analysis

Themes	Codes
Factors affecting the consumer's decision-making process	Individual Environmental sensitivity Individual Contribution and Responsibility Ethical understanding of the brand Corporate Social Responsibility Product Quality and Efficiency Consumer Values and Brand Harmony Price / Economy
The impact of the concept of sustainability on the person	Being a Conscious Consumer Awareness
Brand Trust – Loyalty	Brand Trust Brand Loyalty

3.2. Data Collection

A semi-structured interview form consisting of 10 questions has been created to align with the aim of the study on the influence of sustainable advertising campaigns on customer behavior. This interview form aims to elucidate the aspects influencing consumer decision-making processes, consumer awareness, and brand trust and loyalty in relation to sustainable advertising strategies. A pilot study was conducted with 3 people to evaluate the comprehensibility, readability and answerability of the developed interview form.

Questions

1. How do sustainable advertising campaigns affect your brand perception? Can you explain with an example?
2. How does your sustainability approach affect your purchasing decisions? Have you changed any product you use when you see sustainability-related adverts?
3. When you see sustainable advertising campaigns, what do you think about the brand's sustainability efforts?
4. How do sustainable advertising campaigns affect your purchasing decisions? Can you explain with an example?
5. When you learn about a brand's sustainability efforts, do you think this information affects your purchasing decision? Can you explain with reasons?
6. Do you think that a sustainability-oriented advertising campaign encourages you to buy more? Can you explain with reasons?
7. Do you think that sustainable advertising campaigns affect your purchase intention and behaviour? Could you explain with reasons?
8. Do you think that adverts about sustainability make you a more conscious consumer? Could you explain with reasons?

9. Do you think that a sustainability-related advertising campaign increases your trust in the brand? Can you explain with the reasons?
10. How would you evaluate the impact of sustainability-oriented advertising campaigns on brand loyalty?

3.3. Participants

The convenience sampling method, a subset of purposive sampling, was chosen for sample selection. This study used semi-structured interviews with 20 individuals to elucidate the impact of sustainable advertising on the participants. Table 2 presents the percentage values of the participants' demographic dispersion.

Table 2. Demographic Information of the Participants

		Number of People	Per cent
Gender	Female	7	35%
	Male	13	65%
Income Level	1-17.002 TL	1	5%
	17.003- 35.000 TL	3	15%
	35.000-50.000 TL	6	30%
	50.000+ TL	10	50%
Education	High School	1	5%
	Bachelor Degree	12	60%
	Master's Degree	5	25%
	PhD	2	10%
Age	25 -34	9	45%
	35- 45	8	40%
	45 - 55	3	15%

As seen in the Table 2, approximately 65% of the participants are women and 35% are men. In terms of income level, it is seen that 50% of the participants belong to the income level group of 50.000 TL and above. 50% of the participants have an income level below 50.000 TL. While 60% of the participants have a bachelor's degree, 25% have a master's degree and 10% have a doctorate degree. 5% of the participants are high school graduates. 45% of the participants are in the 25-34 age group, 40% are in the 35-45 age group and 15% are in the 45-55 age group.

3.4. Findings

The data indicates that the influence of sustainable advertising efforts on consumer behavior varies across three dimensions. These include elements influencing the decision-making process, the effect of sustainability on the individual, and brand loyalty and trust. Table 3 illustrates the distribution of these categories and themes among the participants.

Table 3. Frequency and Percentages of Codes

Themes	Codes	Frequency of occurrence of the code	%
Factors affecting the consumer's decision-making process	Individual Environmental sensitivity	15	%75
	Individual Contribution and Responsibility	17	%85
	Ethical understanding of the brand	12	%60
	Corporate Social Responsibility	12	%60
	Product Quality and Efficiency	7	%35
	Consumer Values and Brand Harmony	8	%40
The impact of the concept of sustainability on the person	Price / Economy	8	%40
	Being a Conscious Consumer	17	%85
	Awareness	4	%20
Brand Trust – Loyalty	Brand Trust	18	%90
	Brand Loyalty	17	%85

Within the context of variables influencing customer decision-making, the individual contribution and responsibility code was recorded 17 times, demonstrating the greatest influence, whilst product quality and efficiency were the least frequently coded under this subject. The examination of the notions of quality and efficiency in sustainable products, which are coded seven times, reveals their influence on customer purchase behavior. The quotations of T3 and T6 show that the tendency to prefer the products of companies that take concrete measures such as green washing methods and recyclable packaging and the impact of sustainability-oriented advertising campaigns are decisive in these preferences.

'I prefer the products of companies that take concrete measures such as green washing methods and recyclable packaging... If sustainability advertising campaigns show that brands think about future generations and the environment.' (T3).

'I prefer brands that I am sure contribute to and support the environment, nature and the future, and that have owned the project for many years, and I both use them and tell my environment as a reference' (T6).

The concept of sustainability significantly influences individuals, with the notion of being an aware consumer receiving the highest frequency of coding. The notion of conscious consumerism, referenced 17 times, indicates that ads influence individuals. Within this subject, awareness was the least prevalent code. When we look at the opinions of T8 and T15, it is seen that they tend to support the sustainability campaigns of brands in line

with the idea of leaving a clean environment for future generations and protecting the world.

'Being a part of the movement to protect the world through my purchases gives me the feeling of contributing to a greater cause.' (T8).

'In order to leave a clean environment for future generations, I am conscious about sustainability issues and try to apply these principles in my daily life.' (T15).

Within the subject of brand trust and loyalty, brand trust is the most commonly seen code. Conversely, brand loyalty was recorded with less frequency than brand trust. When we look at the statements of T3 and T7, we see that they expect that brands should be audited by independent organisations by progressing with transparent and open communication in the field of sustainability.

'Sustainability-themed advertising campaigns reveal that brands follow transparent and open communication policies.' (T3).

'Transparent reporting of sustainability efforts by the brand and auditing of claims by independent organisations can reinforce trust.' (T7).

Research findings indicate that sustainable advertising efforts influence consumers' decision-making processes across several dimensions. Specifically, elements like personal environmental sensitivity, individual participation and accountability, ethical comprehension of the brand, and corporate social responsibility were identified as essential in influencing customer behavior. Sustainable marketing influence customers' inclination to be conscientious by enhancing brand trust.

4. Conclusion

The study's results indicate that sustainable advertising efforts significantly influence customer behavior. Consumers base their purchase decisions on variables like personal environmental awareness, individual accountability, brand ethics, and corporate social responsibility. The findings of this research indicate that sustainable advertising campaigns play a crucial role in the consumer decision-making process regarding individual involvement and responsibility.

The influence of a brand's ethical comprehension on customers and their purchase choices in sustainable advertising campaigns is complex and significant (Sarmah & Singh, 2024). In this survey, participants indicated that their concern for the brand's ethical principles influences their purchase decisions.

This research indicates that corporate social responsibility efforts implemented by businesses significantly influence customer purchasing behavior. It also elucidates the influence of sustainable advertising efforts on customer behavior. Consumers influence their purchase decisions by considering the emphasis businesses have on environmental and social obligations. Factors such as personal environmental awareness, individual accountability, brand ethics, and corporate social responsibility profoundly influence consumer choices.

Sustainable marketing is successful in fostering mindful consumerism. Participants indicated that they believed their environmentally aware purchases were influenced by the information derived from commercials. They asserted that sustainable ads enhance awareness, which effectively engages huge audiences. Cihan Becan (2024) asserts that sustainable marketing substantially enhances customer behavior by elevating awareness, altering perceptions, and influencing buy intentions. His study indicates that favorable remarks on environmental commercials, which enhance brand loyalty and emotional connections with customers, prevail, and that people often react positively to sustainability-oriented themes. This study demonstrates that sustainable advertising enhances environmental awareness, affects customer behavior, and promotes sustainable habits by shaping purchase decisions.

Participants expressed a sense of trust in businesses due to sustainable advertising initiatives. This sense of trust indicates that brands are committed to their environmental and social obligations, hence favorably influencing purchasing decisions. Trust is a crucial factor that influences the link between sustainable marketing initiatives and purchase intentions, resulting in increased customer involvement and loyalty (Khan & Fatma, 2023).

Our study findings underscore the significance of sustainability-focused advertising campaigns for businesses, demonstrating that these initiatives may enhance the long-term performance of brands. The beneficial impact of sustainability on customer behavior indicates that businesses may enhance consumer loyalty and trust by intensifying their initiatives in this domain. In this regard, a more efficient and

transparent execution of sustainability policies and advertising campaigns by enterprises can fulfill customer expectations.

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