

Effect of Green Marketing on Sales Growth of Publishing Firms in Makurdi Metropolitan Area in Benue State, Nigeria

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Abstract: This study examined the effect of green marketing on sales growth of publishing firms in Makurdi metropolitan area in Benue State, Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study were to examine the effect of green product, green packaging, green price and green promotion on sales growth of publishing firms in Makurdi metropolitan area. The study used a survey design. One hundred and twenty three (123) marketing staff of 12 publishing companies in Makurdi metropolitan area formed the target population of the study. Census sampling was adopted and the entire population was sampled. Questionnaire was used to gather primary data from the respondents. Multiple regression analysis was run on the data collected and the p- values were used to accept or reject the hypotheses of the study. Findings of the study revealed that green product, green packaging, green price and green promotion all have significant effect on sales growth of publishing firms in Makurdi metropolitan area. The study therefore reached the conclusion that, adoption of green marketing strategies by the publishing firms has significant effect on their sales growth. In order to aid publishing firms to have green prices that are consumer friendly, this study advocates government intervention by way of regulating taxes imposed on packaging materials.

Keywords: Green Product, Green Packaging, Green Price, Green Promotion, Sales Growth

1. INTRODUCTION

The worsened effects of the bio-physical environment are primarily responsible for an increasing number of manufacturing companies adopting a safer and more efficient strategic stance for establishing green product chances. Consequently, many firms are considering environmental protection as their social responsibility because climate change and environmental risks are now becoming a threat to healthy living (Alkhatib, Kecskés & Keller, 2023). Consumers of products are increasingly becoming aware of the dangers of products that are not eco-friendly. Hence organizations nowadays are implementing appropriate green strategies into their marketing activities in other to help them achieve sales growth.

Sales growth refers to the increase in a company's total revenue from its products or services over a specific period of time (Li & Lee, 2022). This metric is essential for businesses to assess their financial performance and is an indicator of their ability to

attract new customers, increase market share, or expand into new markets. Sales growth can be organic (resulting from increased demand for existing products or services) or inorganic (resulting from mergers and acquisitions) (Eneizan, Wahab, Zainon & Obaid (2016). However, Maziriri (2020) asserted that for a firm to gain a competitive advantage in the marketplace and increase its sales growth, there must be an optimum level of greenness, hence the speedy adoption of green marketing practices prevailing in recent times.

Green marketing is the process of developing and promoting products and services the way customers wants or desires it, which could be in quality, convenience, affordability or performance without having a harmful effect on the environment (Atuo, 2023). That is to say green marketing encompasses the production, packaging, distribution, promotion and pricing of products in such a way that it upholds environmental responsiveness and safety. There are very many number of green marketing practices depending on the

marketing activities carried out by an organization. For this study being conducted in the book publishing sector, green product, green packaging, green pricing and green promotion are considered.

The approach and attitudes of manufacturers in the publishing industry in Nigeria regarding the environment is an issue of concern as production and consumption processes are causing negative environmental degradation, deforestation and drainage blockage in our environments. The researcher's expectation is that green marketing practices will promote sales growth of publishing firms and also solve environmental issues when the manufacturers start engaging in producing environmental friendly products. In the light of the above perspective, this study seeks identify and analyze current practices of green marketing and their effect on sales growth of publishing firms in Makurdi metropolitan area. The remaining segments of the study are arranged under literature review, methodology, analysis of hypotheses and lastly, conclusion and recommendations.

1.1 Objective of the Study

The ultimate goal of this study is to ascertain the effect of green marketing on sales growth of publishing firms in Makurdi Metropolitan area in Benue State, Nigeria. In specific terms, the study seeks to:

- i. Examine the effect of *green product on sales growth of publishing firms in Makurdi Benue State*.
- ii. Examine the effect of *green packaging on sales growth of publishing firms in Makurdi Benue State*
- iii. Examine the effect of *green price on sales growth of publishing firms in Makurdi Benue State*
- iv. Examine the effect of *green promotion on sales growth of publishing firms in Makurdi Benue State*

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Concept of Green Marketing

Green marketing refers to the marketing of products and services that are seen to be environmentally safe for the consumers. Green marketing which is also known as environmental marketing or suitable marketing is a process where an organization design, promote, price and distribute its products or services in such a way that it promotes environmental friendliness and protection (Atuo, 2023). This implies that green marketing is a business strategy that focuses on promoting products or services based on their environmentally friendly attributes. Green marketing means minimizing a product's environmental impact through product redesign, sustainable manufacturing, and integrated marketing campaigns (Alkhatib, Kecskés & Keller, 2023). This approach involves integrating sustainability and environmental

considerations into various aspects of marketing, such as product development, branding, promotion, and distribution. Green marketing starts with the creation of products that have a reduced negative impact on the environment. This may involve using sustainable materials, designing products for energy efficiency, or minimizing waste in the production process. Businesses engage in green marketing by emphasizing the eco-friendly aspects of their products or services in their advertising and branding. This can include highlighting features like recyclability, energy efficiency, reduced carbon footprint, or organic ingredients (Ismail, Amani & Changalima, 2023). It's important to note that green marketing must be transparent and honest. Exaggerating or making false environmental claims, often referred to as "greenwashing," can damage a company's reputation and lead to legal consequences.

Green marketing strategies in the publishing industry involve promoting and practicing environmentally friendly initiatives to reduce the environmental footprint of book production and distribution. Green product, green price, green packaging, and green promotion are concepts in green marketing that can be applied in the publishing industry to promote environmentally responsible practices and products.

I. Green Product

A "green" product is one that is environmentally friendly and causes little harm to the environment (Li & Lee, 2022). Green products emanate from product-related decisions and actions that aim to preserve or benefit the natural environment through energy and/or resource conservation as well as pollution and waste reduction. A product could be called "green" if its production process is eco-friendly and less damaging to the environment (Eneizan, Wahab & Bustaman, 2015). Every business is responsible for reducing the environmental pollution in its production process. To have a green product, the raw materials comprising a product must be obtained in such a way that natural resources are preserved. In the publishing industry, a green product could refer to books and publications that are produced using sustainable materials like recycled paper or certified sustainable paper from responsibly managed forests. Publishers may also offer digital versions of their books (e-books) to reduce the need for physical production and distribution, which aligns with the concept of a green product.

II. Green Packaging

Green packaging, also referred to as sustainable packaging or eco-friendly packaging, is fully comprised of naturally occurring substances, can be reused or recycled and is prone to degradation, and encourages environmental sustainability during its whole lifespan (Maziriri, 2020). In addition, green packaging is that which is safe and good for the environment as well as the health of people and animals (Hao, Liu, Sha, Ji, & Fan, 2019). In the publishing industry, green packaging can

involve using eco-friendly packaging materials like recyclable or biodegradable packaging for physical books. Publishers can minimize packaging waste by opting for minimalistic designs and using packaging that is easy to recycle.

III. Green Price

Green pricing strategies involve offering eco-friendly products at competitive prices. The practices of green pricing consider both the economic and environmental costs of production and marketing, while simultaneously providing value for customers and a fair profit for business (Majeed, Aslam, Murtaza, Attila & Molnár, 2022). From the tactical perspective, firms can undertake pricing actions, such as rebates for returning recyclable packaging and charging higher prices for environmentally unfriendly products. Publishers price their environmentally responsible publications competitively to encourage more readers to choose them over less sustainable options. Discounts or incentives for purchasing e-books, which have a lower environmental impact, is also part of green pricing strategies in the publishing industry.

IV. Green Promotion

Green promotion is a promotion that addresses the relationship between a product or service and the environment, promotes a green lifestyle, or presents a corporate image of environmental responsibility (Verleye, De Ruyck, Vermeulen & Schoenaers, 2023). Such promotional messages always contain claims of greenness. That is in such promotional messages, a reference is always made to the environmental aspects of the production, packaging, distribution, use and consumption, or disposal of the said product. Green promotion in the publishing industry entails promoting books and publications with a strong emphasis on their environmental benefits. Publishers can use marketing campaigns to highlight their sustainable practices, such as the use of recycled materials, carbon offsetting, or reduced energy consumption in production. Digital advertising and social media campaigns can also be employed to reach eco-conscious readers with green messages.

2.2 Sales Growth

Sales growth is a fundamental concept in business that measures the increase in a company's revenue over a specific period of time. It is a key performance indicator that reflects a company's ability to expand and succeed in its market (Eneizan, Wahab & Bustaman, 2015). In a nutshell, sales growth is a key metric that reflects a company's ability to increase its revenue, and it plays a significant role in assessing a company's overall performance and potential for success in the market (Tomasin, Pereira, Borchardt & Sellitto, 2013). Measuring sales growth in the publishing industry involves various metrics and indicators that provide insights into a publisher's performance and market dynamics. Some key measures of sales growth in the publishing industry include revenue growth, book sales growth, market

share, title performance, format growth and customer segment growth.

2.3 Green Marketing and Sales Growth

Across the globe, there are studies examining the link between green marketing strategies and sales growth. Bruno, Mendoza, Tadeo and Vitobina (2023) analysed the effect of MSEs' green marketing practices in production, packaging, advertising, distribution and operation in Cavite, Philippines and the findings were that green production, green packaging, green advertising and green operation are highly effective on the performance of MSEs while green distribution is less effective. In Enugu, Nigeria, Chinda and Umeh (2023) evaluated how green marketing could influence consumer purchase intention which a significant factor of sales growth. The empirical result revealed that green advertisement, green packaging and green price have positive and significant influence on consumers' purchase intention in selected shopping malls in Enugu Nigeria. Also, in Jordan, Eneizan, Wahab, and Bustaman (2015) provided empirical evidence on the effects of green price strategy on sales growth of green vehicles in Jordan among car dealerships.

Majeed, Aslam, Murtaza, Attila and Molnár (2022) assessed the effect of green marketing on customer's purchase intention in a study which showed that green marketing methods such as green packaging, green branding green products and green pricing significantly and positively affect customers' intentions to make environmentally friendly purchases in Pakistan. Likewise in China, Li and Lee (2022) looked at the impact of a green marketing strategy on the increase of green automobile sales in China. The findings showed that green product, green promotion, and green process have positive significant impact on sales growth. However, Li and Lee (2022) found a negative impact of green price, green physical evidence, green people, and green distribution on sales growth. The relationship between green marketing and sales growth was later re-examined in Jordan by Eneizan, Wahab, Zainon and Obaid (2016). Findings confirmed that adoption of green marketing strategies (green product, green promotion and green process) may significantly increase sales volume.

Atuo (2023) examined the relationship between green marketing practices and customer purchase behaviour of beverage firms in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. Findings of the study revealed that there is a positive and strong relationship between green product, green price, green promotion, green place and personal and psychological factors. Another study in Nigeria by Giwa-Amu (2022) explored the effect of green marketing on customer satisfaction and the result was that green product, green promotion, green distribution and green price has effect on customer satisfaction in the Lagos region of Nigeria.

A study in South Africa by Maziriri (2020) assessed green packaging and green advertising as precursors of competitive

advantage and business performance among manufacturing small and medium enterprises. The tests carried out unequivocally showed that green packaging and green advertising had a positive influence on competitive advantage and business performance. Similar findings were established in India via a study by Kaur, Gangwar, and Dash, (2022) which indicated that green products, green place, and green promotional strategies significantly impact green buying intentions. However, the finding in the Malaysian context was otherwise as Rajendran, Wahab and Singh (2019) found that few consumers preferred to purchase products that were packed sustainably and could be easily recycled or composted. Thus, in view of the above, this study proposed the following null hypotheses:

- H0₁:** *Green product has no significant effect on sales growth of publishing firms in Makurdi Benue State.*
- H0₂:** *Green packaging has no significant effect on sales growth of publishing firms in Makurdi Benue State*
- H0₃:** *Green price has no significant effect on sales growth of publishing firms in Makurdi Benue State*
- H0₄:** *Green promotion has no significant effect on sales growth of publishing firms in Makurdi Benue State*

2.4 Stakeholders Theory

The study was anchored on the stakeholders' theory as propounded by Freeman in 1984. This addresses morals and values in managing an organization. It was originally detailed by Ian Mitroff in his book "Stakeholders of the Organizational Mind", in 1983 in San Francisco. The theory believes that ethical treatment of stakeholders will benefit the firm because trust relationships are built with stakeholders. In defining stakeholder theory, Muhammed (2017) stated that the firm is a system of stakeholders operating within the larger system of the host society that provides the necessary legal and market infrastructure for the firm's activities.

Stakeholder theory can play a significant role in anchoring green marketing strategies. Green marketing aims to promote environmentally friendly products or practices. Stakeholder theory helps in identifying and prioritizing stakeholders who have an interest in sustainability, such as customers, investors, environmental groups, and regulatory bodies. In essence, stakeholder theory provides a framework for publishing companies to align their green marketing initiatives with the interests and values of relevant stakeholders, which can

guarantee sale growth while sustaining a more effective and socially responsible environmental marketing strategies.

3. METHODOLOGY

The study used a survey design. The study targeted 123 marketing staff of 12 publishing companies in Makurdi metropolitan area in Benue State (Mindfield Publications, Aboki Publishers, Oracle Business Limited, Beafex Publishers, Wonder Digital and Classical Printing Press, Badens Publishers, Dreamcity Publishers Nigeria Limited, Graizhaus Publishers, The Return Press, Retinken Nigeria. Ltd, cPrint Publishers and Kin Publishers Ltd). Census sampling was adopted and the entire population was sampled. Questionnaire was used to gather primary data from the respondents. Upon retrieval, the researchers were able to get 111 valid questionnaires to analyze. To measure the dependent variable (sales growth), the modified version of sales growth instrument developed and used by Li and Lee (2022) was adapted with slight modifications. For the purpose of this study, three constructs were adapted to gather data on two measures of sales growth (revenue growth and book sales growth). The study used a 4-point Likert scale (1 =strongly disagree, 4 = strongly agree). To measure the independent variable of the study (green marketing), the instrument developed and used by Bruno, Mendoza, Tadeo and Vitobina (2023) was adopted. The 18-item scale represents the following four dimension of green marketing: green product, green packaging, green price and green promotion. To be in keeping with the other operationalized measures, the study again used a 4-point Likert scale. A pilot study was carried on 41 marketing staff from 3 other publishing firms in Makurdi aside from the 10 targeted firms and the Cronbach's alpha is for all the constructs were above 0.7. Multiple regression analysis was run on the data collected and the t- test and p values were used to test the hypotheses of the study.

4. ANALYSIS OF HYPOTHESES

4.1 Evaluation of Regression Model

Table 1 provided the required model fit for the measurement model. In addition, Table 2 produced the coefficients of the model used in explaining the effect green marketing dimensions on sales growth of publishing firms in Makurdi metropolitan area.

Table 1: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	R square adjusted	Std. error of the estimate	Sig. F Change
1	.898	.688	.674	.846	.000

- a. Predictors: (Constant), Green promotion, Green price, Green packaging, Green product
- b. Dependent Variable: Sales Growth

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 1 shows the result of regression model summary. The model fitted had an R Square = 0.688 which shows that green marketing (green product, green packaging, green price and green promotion) explained 68.8 % of the variation in sales growth of publishing firms in Makurdi Benue State. The remaining 32.2% was explained by other variables other than

the ones in the model. The result implies that green marketing variables are significant predictors of sales growth in the publishing industry in Makurdi Benue State. Also, the value of R= 0.898 indicates that there is a strong positive correlation between the variables of the study.

Table 2: Regression Coefficients

	Unstandardized coefficients (Beta)	Standardized coefficients (Beta)	T-statistics	P-Value
(Constant)	-0.215		-3.214	0.000
1 Green product	0.442	0.440	12.487	0.008
Green packaging	0.198	0.093	2.640	0.000
Green price	0.145	0.068	2.291	0.009
Green promotion	0.208	0.073	2.025	0.043

Source: SPSS Output, 2024.

Table 2 above, been the result of multiple regression analysis examining the extent of effect of green marketing variables on sales growth showed that green product ($\beta = 0.442$, p -value = 0.008), green packaging ($\beta = 0.198$, p -value = 0.00), green price ($\beta = 0.145$, p -value = 0.009) and green promotion. ($\beta = 0.208$, p -value = 0.043) were found be positively and significantly associated with sales growth of publishing firms in Makurdi Benue State. From Table 2, it was evident that 95 % confidence level, the variables produce statistically significant values for this study (high t-values, $p < 0.05$). A positive effect is reported for all the variables under study hence affecting sale growth in a positive manner. Therefore, hypotheses 1, 2, 3, and 4 were all rejected.

4.2 Results of Hypotheses Testing and Discussion of Findings

The results of the four hypotheses were tested using regression analysis at 0.05 level of significance and results are discussed as follows:

H0₁: *Green product has no significant effect on sales growth of publishing firms in Makurdi Benue State.*

The multiple regression analysis as presented in Table 2 showed that green product significantly predicted sales growth of publishing firms in Makurdi Benue State ($\beta = 0.442$, $t = 12.487$, $P < 0.05$). This implies that there is statistical evidence to reject the null hypothesis (H0₁). Since the P – value (0.008) is less than 0.05 level of significance ($P < 0.05$). The null hypothesis (H0₁) is rejected and it is concluded that green product has significant effect on sales growth of publishing firms in Makurdi Benue State. This result confirms that of Eneizan, et al, (2016) which found that proper adoption of green product significantly increases sales volume. The finding ia also in

conformity with the study by Atuo (2023) which revealed that there is a positive and strong relationship between green product and psychological factors that leads to increased sales volume of green product.

H0₂: *Green packaging has no significant effect on sales growth of publishing firms in Makurdi Benue State*

The result from Table 2 also indicates that green packaging is a significant predictor of sales growth of publishing firms in Makurdi Benue State ($\beta = 0.198$, $t = 2.640$, $P < 0.05$). This suggests that there is statistical evidence to reject the null hypothesis (H0₂). Since the P-value (0.000) is less than 0.05 level of significance ($P < 0.05$), the researcher reject the null hypothesis (H0₂) and conclude that green packaging has a significant effect on sales growth of publishing firms in Makurdi Benue State. This result supports that of Chinda and Umeh (2023) which revealed that green packaging have positive and significant influence on consumers' purchase intention. The finding also agrees with Bruno, et al (2023) that green packaging is highly effective on organisational performance. However, this finding differs from that of Rajendran, et al (2019) which found that the effect of green packaging on sales growth is insignificant.

H0₃: *Green price has no significant effect on sales growth of publishing firms in Makurdi Benue State*

The result from Table 2 also revealed that green price is a significant predictor of sales growth of publishing firms in Makurdi Benue State ($\beta = 0.145$, $t = 2.291$, $P < 0.05$). This implies that there is statistical evidence to reject the null hypothesis (H0₃). Since the P – value (0.009) is less than 0.05 level of significance ($P < 0.05$), the researcher rejected the null hypothesis (H0₃) and concluded that green price significantly

affects sales growth of publishing firms in Makurdi Benue State. This finding disagrees with Eneizan, *et al.* (2015) who found that green price strategy has negative effect on sales growth of green vehicles in Jordan. However, the findings of Majeed, *et al.* (2022) and Li and Lee (2022) are in agreement with this finding as they both found that the impact of green pricing strategy on sales was significantly positive.

H0₄: Green promotion has no significant effect on sales growth of publishing firms in Makurdi Benue State

The result from Table 2 also revealed that green promotion is a significant predictor of sales growth of publishing firms in Makurdi Benue State ($\beta = 0.208$, $t = 2.025$, $P < 0.05$). This implies that there is statistical evidence to reject the null hypothesis (H0₄). Since the P – value (0.043) is less than 0.05 level of significance, the researcher rejected the null hypothesis (H0₄) and concluded that green promotion significantly affects sales growth of publishing firms in Makurdi Benue State. The findings of this study are in line with a previous study by Maziriri (2020) who discovered that green advertising had a positive influence on business performance and that of Kaur, *et al.* (2022) which indicated that green promotional strategies significantly impact green buying intentions.

5.CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper examined the effect of green marketing on sales growth of publishing firms in Makurdi Metropolis. 12 publishing firms operating in Makurdi hosted the study. The study included a theoretical part where the green marketing

strategies and sale growth in the publishing industry are examined. Green marketing in this study was treated as a combination of various components such as green product, green packaging, green price and green promotion. Sales growth was a combination of revenue growth and book sales growth. The quantitative analysis of data showed that the use of green product, green packaging, green price and green promotion all have positive effect on sales growth of publishing firms in Makurdi metropolis. The study therefore, reached the conclusion that adoption of green marketing strategies by the publishing firms has significant effect on their sales growth. This implies that effective sales growth can be achieved by implementing successful green marketing strategies.

Based on the research findings, the following recommendations are made;

In an attempt to embark on green marketing, publishing companies in Makurdi should ensure to produce green products that are of better quality than standard product and also avoid adulteration of green products. Government is enjoined to strengthen the tradition by using relevant environmental protection agencies at federal and state levels to ensure all publishing firms in Makurdi adopt green packaging. In order to aid publishing firms to have green prices that are consumer friendly, government intervention in regulating taxes imposed on packaging materials is proposed. Green products are not yet popular among consumers government and civil society organisations should join producers of green products in promoting the usage of green products.

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