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Submission date: 27-Sep-2025 03:43AM (UTC+0300)
Submission ID: 2763195772
File name: 411-Bistek_Similarity--.docx (1.55M)
Word count: 2084
Character count: 13616

GREEN MARKETING STRATEGIES AS A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE IN SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES: A Systematic Literature Review

ABSTRACT

This examine investigates green marketing strategies as a competitive advantage for small and medium enterprise (SMEs) of the 450 searched studies, 45 met the eligibility criteria for review by a systematic literature review of peer-reviewed articles, conference papers, and enterprise reports between 2010 and 2025 from databases like Scopus and Web of Science. Amid growing sustainability demands, SMEs adopt green practices such as sustainable product improvement, eco-labeling, green deliver chain management, green marketing, and corporate social responsibility to enhance market positioning. These techniques improve emblem image, consumer loyalty, operational performance, and profitability. However, barriers like limited monetary resources, lack of understanding, and inadequate authorities assist impede adoption. The review reported that the evaluate identifies a research gap in quantifying green marketing's direct effect on SMEs economic performance. Synthesizing present day expertise, this examine offers actionable insights for SMEs, policymakers, and researchers. It proposes a singular conceptual framework linking green marketing and marketing techniques to competitive benefit, supplying a basis for future empirical research in sustainable enterprise practices.

Keywords: *Green marketing; SMEs; Competitive advantage; Sustainability; Systematic literature review.*

INTRODUCTION

In current years, environmental sustainability has become a crucial challenge for businesses global. Increasing focus of climate exchange, useful resource depletion, and environmental degradation has led customers, governments, and different stakeholders to demand that agencies adopt more eco-friendly practices (Peattie & Crane, 2005; Leonidou et al., 2013).

This trend has created both challenges and possibilities, mainly for small and medium enterprise (SMEs), which can be frequently resource-restricted however play a tremendous role in country wide economies (OECD, 2019). SMEs are liable for a sizeable part of employment and financial output in many countries, making their adoption of green techniques important for sustainable improvement (European Commission, 2017).

Green marketing refers back to the procedure of selling services and products primarily based on their environmental blessings, which includes electricity performance, sustainable sourcing, recyclability, or reduced emissions (Peattie, 2001). Beyond mere compliance, green marketing has advanced right into a strategic device for attaining aggressive advantage. Companies that efficaciously put into effect green marketing can differentiate themselves within the market, enhance brand photo, foster purchaser loyalty, or even achieve cost savings through green resource use (Kotler & Keller, 2016; Chen, 2010). While multinational groups have extensively embraced green marketing, SMEs face unique challenges due to limited monetary, technical, and human assets.

Despite these constraints, there may be developing proof that green marketing and marketing strategies can yield good sized advantages for SMEs, inclusive of elevated marketplace share, stepped forward stakeholder relationships, and long-time period profitability (Testa et al., 2016; Yusof et al., 2021).

Several research have tested green marketing in medium enterprises; however, studies focusing specially on SMEs remains fragmented. The literature highlights a variety of green marketing techniques, along with sustainable product innovation, green deliver chain control, eco-labeling, and corporate social duty initiatives, but there is no comprehensive synthesis linking those strategies to aggressive benefit in SMEs (Rahman et al., 2018; Joshi & Rahman, 2015). Moreover, SMEs encounter boundaries together with lack of understanding, confined funding, susceptible governmental support, and client skepticism, which may additionally impede the hit implementation of green marketing practices (Lo et al., 2012).

To deal with those gaps, this review at adopts a scientific literature review (SLR) technique to critically look at the present body of know-how on green marketing techniques in SMEs and their position in growing competitive benefit. The objectives of this studies are:

- ✓ To perceive the maximum extensively followed green marketing strategies in SMEs.
- ✓ To examine the demanding situations and barriers SMEs face in enforcing those techniques.
- ✓ To assess the connection among green marketing practices and competitive advantage in SMEs.
- ✓ To suggest a conceptual framework for destiny empirical studies linking green marketing to SME performance.

By synthesizing findings from more than one research posted between 2010 and 2025, this study affords a complete evaluate of contemporary information and highlights areas where in addition investigation is required. The systematic approach ensures rigor, transparency, and reproducibility, that are crucial for advancing academic know-how and practical application in the context of SME sustainability (Tranfield et al., 2003; Kitchenham, 2004).

This observe contributes to the literature by offering an integrated attitude on green marketing in SMEs, emphasizing its strategic significance for reaching aggressive benefit. The insights derived from this overview can manual SME managers in designing powerful green marketing strategies, inform policymakers in developing supportive environments, and

encourage future researchers to behavior empirical research that fill present knowledge gaps.

METHODOLOGY

This taken a look at adopts a systematic literature review (SLR) technique to pick out, examine, and synthesize studies on inexperienced advertising and marketing strategies as an aggressive gain in SMEs. SLR is a rigorous and obvious technique for reviewing literature, making sure comprehensive insurance, reproducibility, and minimization of bias (Tranfield et al., 2003; Kitchenham, 2004). The technique involves multiple ranges, as outlined beneath.

Identifying the Research Question

This review had the following research questions:

- ✓ What green marketing strategies are normally followed via SMEs?
- ✓ What demanding situations and boundaries do SMEs face in enforcing green marketing strategies?
- ✓ How do green marketing strategies contribute to aggressive gain in SMEs?
- ✓ What gaps exist inside the current literature for future studies?

Identifying Relevant Studies

This review comprehensively identified relevant studies by searching published literature databases. The investigators used Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, and ScienceDirect. We used the following s in combination and terms to search vant studies from the electronic s: "Green marketing AND SMEs", able marketing AND small ", "Eco-friendly techniques AND aggressive benefit", "Green business practices AND SMEs".

The seek turned into confined to publications between 2010 and 2025, in English, and targeted on peer-reviewed journals, conference papers, and enterprise reviews.

Selecting the Studies and Appraising the Quality

Eligibility Criteria

This review included studies that fulfilled the following inclusion criteria:

- ✓ Studies focusing on SMEs.
- ✓ Studies discussing green marketing strategies.
- ✓ Empirical and theoretical studies published in reliable journals.
- ✓ Studies published in the English language

Methods include research design, population and sample, development of research instruments, data collection techniques, and data analysis techniques, described briefly.

PRISMA Flow Diagram Summary

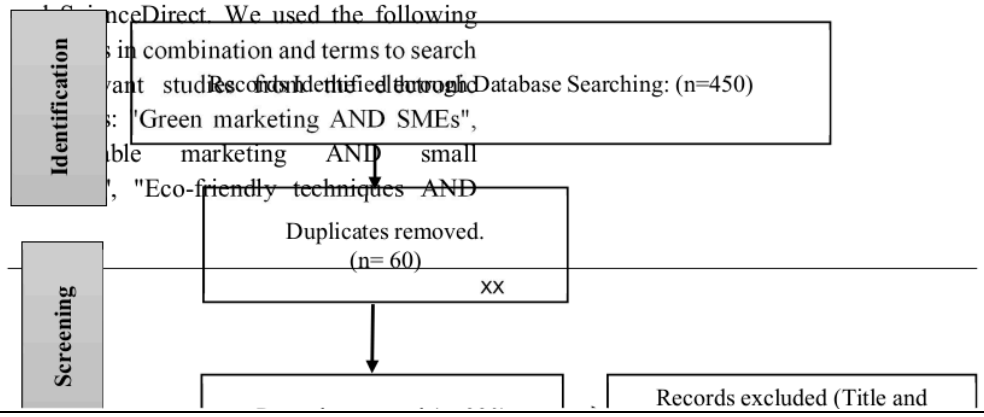


Figure1:
Prisma Diagram for Selection Studies

The PRISMA diagram is a flowchart intended to make it easier to perform systematic reviews in a planned manner. Identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion are the four main phases of this process. A search strategy is developed and implemented in the identification phase to find pertinent research.

The research is evaluated for relevance during the screening stage using predetermined criteria. Studies are assessed for eligibility in the eligibility stage based on their value and applicability. Studies are added to the systematic review during the inclusion stage.

Green Marketing Cloud in the World of Significant factor Source





RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The screening process involved an initial identification of 450 articles. After removing duplicates, titles and abstracts were screened, followed by a full-text review. Finally, 45 studies were included in the study. The steps used to select studies for the review are provided in the PRISMA flow diagram (Figure 1).

Green Marketing Strategies Adopted by SMEs

The systematic review found out that SMEs put in force numerous green marketing strategies to enhance their competitive gain. The maximum generally adopted strategies encompass:

Sustainable Product Development

SMEs consciousness on designing green merchandise that use renewable or recycled materials, reduce waste, and reduce environmental impact (Chen, 2010; Testa et al., 2016). Product innovation is frequently the access factor for SMEs into green marketing, as it immediately influences consumer belief and emblem differentiation.

Eco-Labeling and Certification

Displaying eco-labels or certifications communicates environmental duty to customers, growing consider and logo loyalty (Joshi & Rahman, 2015). Certifications which including ISO-14001 or neighborhood eco-labels serve as proof of dedication to sustainability, in particular in aggressive markets.

Green Supply Chain Management (GSCM)

SMEs an increasing number of adopt inexperienced procurement, energy-efficient operations, and waste discount practices along the deliver chain (Yusof et al., 2021). By integrating environmental considerations into logistics and manufacturing, SMEs can reduce costs whilst promoting sustainability.

Green Advertising and Communication

SMEs hire advertising and marketing campaigns that highlight environmental advantages, social duty, and sustainable practices (Rahman et al., 2018). Effective communique complements brand image, attracts environmentally aware clients, and differentiates SMEs from competitors.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Initiatives

CSR sports, including community-based environmental packages or donations to green reasons, are leveraged by using SMEs to construct goodwill, growth visibility, and fortify stakeholder relationships (Lo et al., 2012).

Challenges and Barriers

Despite the benefits, SMEs face numerous demanding situations in adopting green marketing techniques:

Limited Financial Resources

Investment in green technology, certifications, and green materials may be highly-priced, constraining SMEs' capacity to put into effect comprehensive techniques (Joshi & Rahman, 2015).

Lack of Knowledge and Expertise

SMEs frequently lack focus or technical knowledge approximately green practices and regulatory compliance, limiting effective method implementation (Lo et al., 2012).

Weak Government Support

Inconsistent rules, insufficient incentives, and absence of steering prevent SMEs' adoption of sustainable practices (Rahman et al., 2018).

Consumer Skepticism

Customers might also query the authenticity of inexperienced claims, specifically from smaller agencies without hooked up emblem agree with (Chen, 2010).

Green Marketing as a Competitive Advantage

The literature continually shows that inexperienced advertising and marketing can beautify SMEs' competitive gain via multiple mechanisms:

Brand Differentiation: Eco-friendly practices create a completely unique selling proposition that distinguishes SMEs from competitors (Peattie & Crane, 2005).

Customer Loyalty: Environmentally aware purchasers are more likely to remain dependable to brands that reveal sustainability dedication (Leonidou et al., 2013).

Operational Efficiency: Green deliver chain practices and useful resource optimization reduce charges and improve lengthy-term profitability (Testa et al., 2016).

Market Opportunities: SMEs adopting green and marketing can get right of entry to area of interest markets and new consumer segments targeted on sustainable merchandise.

However, the connection among green advertising and monetary overall performance stays underexplored. Few studies quantify the direct effect on income,

profitability, or marketplace share, representing a great gap inside the modern-day literature (Yusof et al., 2021).

CONCLUSION

This studies a look at systematically reviewed the literature on green marketing techniques as a aggressive gain in SMEs, providing a comprehensive synthesis of contemporary knowledge and tendencies. The evaluation discovered that SMEs adopt a range of strategies, which include sustainable product improvement, eco-labeling and certification, green supply chain control, green marketing, and corporate social duty tasks. These techniques not only enhance brand photo, patron loyalty, and stakeholder relationships but additionally make a contribution to operational performance and long-time period profitability.

Despite the potential advantages, SMEs face numerous demanding situations in enforcing green marketing, consisting of constrained monetary sources, lack of information and technical knowledge, weak authorities support, and client skepticism. These barriers may additionally constrain the effectiveness of inexperienced marketing initiatives and highlight the need for targeted policies, schooling, and economic incentives to guide SMEs in adopting sustainable practices. This review also identified important gaps in the literature, specially the constrained empirical proof at the direct impact of green marketing on SMEs' economic performance and competitive benefit. Furthermore, local, cultural, and longitudinal dimensions stay underexplored, indicating opportunities for future research.

This systematic literature overview confirms that inexperienced marketing is a strategic tool capable of presenting SMEs with an aggressive facet, but successful implementation requires overcoming resource, information, and policy-related challenges.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and diagnosed gaps, the subsequent guidelines are proposed:

For SMEs, *(1)* Prioritize inexperienced techniques that align with middle commercial enterprise operations and patron expectations. *(2)* Invest in worker education and know-how-constructing packages focused on sustainability practices. *(3)* Leverage eco-certifications and obvious verbal exchange to build patron believe.

For Policymakers, *(1)* Introduce financial incentives, subsidies, and tax blessings for SMEs adopting green marketing practices. *(2)* Provide steering, workshops, and assets to support SMEs in overcoming knowledge and technical obstacles. *(3)* Develop standardized certification structures to boom credibility and patron self-belief.

For Future Research, *(1)* Conduct empirical research to measure the effect of specific green marketing techniques on SMEs' profitability and marketplace overall performance. *(2)* Investigate cultural and nearby elements affecting green marketing adoption in SMEs. *(3)* Explore longitudinal research to assess the lengthy-time period sustainability and competitive advantages of green advertising projects. *(4)* Examine the combination of digital advertising and technology in promoting eco-friendly merchandise in SMEs.

By addressing those suggestions, SMEs can higher harness green marketing as an aggressive gain, policymakers can create supportive environments, and researchers

can generate actionable insights to develop sustainable enterprise practices.

REFERENCES

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