

GREEN BRAND AWARENESS AND CONSUMER PREFERENCE OF ORGANIC BODY CREAM BRANDS IN PORT HARCOURT.

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Abstract

This paper investigated the relationship between Green Brand Awareness and Consumer Preference of Organic Body Cream Brands in Port Harcourt. Specifically, the objectives of the paper were to examine how green messaging and green sourcing related with consumer trust, organic body cream brands in Port Harcourt. The research design adopted correlational research design. The population for this study comprised of all the customers of organic cream brands in Port Harcourt. A sample size of 384 customers were chosen using Krejcie and Morgan table for sample size determination from the infinite population. However, only 260 customers provided data for the study. Pearson product moment correlation was used to test null hypotheses. From results of the analysis, it was revealed that green messaging and green sourcing positively and significantly relate with consumer trust. Furthermore, findings revealed the relationship between green brand awareness and consumer preference of organic body cream brands in Port Harcourt. Based on these findings, it was concluded that green brand awareness through strategic green messaging and sustainable sourcing has a significant and positive green brand awareness and consumer preference of organic body cream brand in Port Harcourt has a positive and significant relationship. Therefore, it was recommended in this study amongst others that organic cream brands should invest in transparent, educational, and emotionally resonant green communication. Messaging should go beyond slogans to include verifiable claims about ingredients, eco-packaging, and environmental benefits to boost customer trust.

Keywords: green brand awareness, consumer preference, consumer messaging, green sourcing, consumer trust.

Introduction

In recent years, the global beauty and skincare industry has witnessed a significant paradigm shift toward sustainability and health consciousness, reflecting a growing consumer preference for green and organic cosmetic products. This trend is particularly visible in emerging markets like Nigeria, where the rising awareness of the harmful effects of synthetic ingredients has driven demand for more natural alternatives, such as organic body creams. Green brand awareness—the extent to which consumers recognize and value the environmental friendliness of a product or brand—has increasingly influenced consumer purchasing behavior in the skincare sector. This is evident in urban centers such as Port Harcourt, a major metropolitan city in South-South Nigeria known for its commercial vibrancy and youthful population. With this shift in consumer behavior, brands that project a strong green identity appear to gain greater acceptance, suggesting a critical relationship between brand positioning and consumer loyalty. As consumers become more informed, especially through social media and digital advertising, their inclination toward green-certified products is expected to influence not only brand choice but also brand advocacy and long-term loyalty. The concept of green brand awareness goes beyond mere recognition of a brand's name; it encompasses knowledge of its environmental values, production ethics, and sustainable practices. Anucha (2023) emphasizes that in South-South Nigeria, particularly in areas like Port Harcourt, awareness of benefits such as non-toxic ingredients, cruelty-free testing, and eco-friendly packaging significantly correlates with customer preference for organic body creams. Consumers increasingly factor in ethical sourcing and environmental impact when making skincare product decisions, particularly among health-conscious millennials and Generation Z. In response, local and

multinational skincare brands are adopting more transparent marketing strategies and environmental certifications to build trust and visibility. However, while green awareness campaigns seem to be on the rise, actual consumer comprehension and the depth of brand knowledge remain uneven, often influenced by educational level, exposure to media, and cultural perceptions of beauty and skincare.

Conceptual/Operational Framework

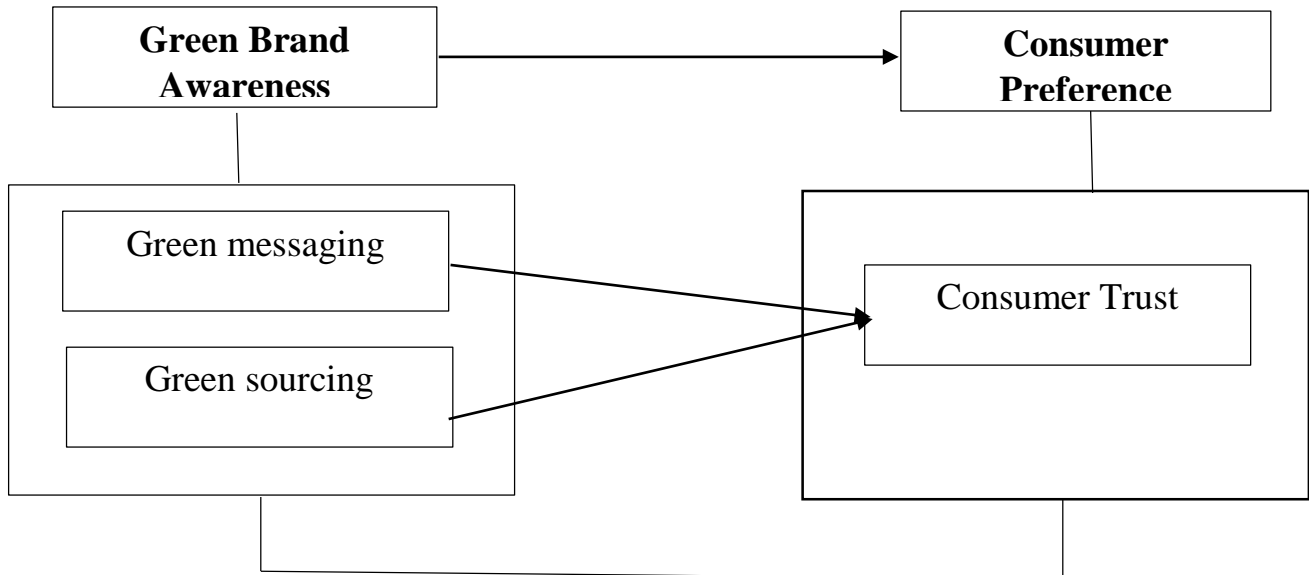


Figure 1.1: A Conceptual Framework of the relationship between green brand awareness and consumer preference of organic body cream brands in Port Harcourt.

Source: Anucha, (2023); Adepoju & Salami, (2022); Okonkwo & Igwe, (2021)

Research questions

The following research question guide the conduct of the study:

1. What is the relationship between green messaging and consumer trust of organic body cream brands in Port Harcourt?
2. What is the relationship between green sourcing and consumer trust of organic body cream brands in Port Harcourt?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested using 0.05 level of significance and as follows;

H₀₁: there is no significant relationship between green messaging and consumer trust of organic body cream brands in Port Harcourt.

H₀₂: there is no significant relationship between green sourcing and consumer trust of organic body cream brands in Port Harcourt.

Concept of Green Brand Awareness

Green brand awareness refers to the degree to which consumers are familiar with and can recall or recognize environmentally sustainable brands. In the Nigerian context, where eco-conscious consumption is still emerging, green brand awareness plays a pivotal role in shaping consumer perceptions and decision-making. It involves understanding a brand's commitment to environmental sustainability, such as the use of natural ingredients, eco-friendly packaging, and ethical sourcing. Abdulsalam and Tajudeen (2024) highlight that awareness of a product's green attributes among

Gen Z consumers in Nigeria positively correlates with interest in skincare brands, suggesting that green awareness can be a powerful differentiation tool in a competitive cosmetics market. However, green brand awareness in Nigeria remains inconsistent due to gaps in environmental education and mistrust in unregulated green claims. Many consumers may encounter the term “organic” or “natural” without understanding its full implications, leading to superficial awareness. Taiwo (2025) notes, for green brand awareness to lead to meaningful consumer engagement, it must be supported by transparency and verification of environmental claims. Brands need to actively communicate their green practices and build educational campaigns to ensure that consumer awareness extends beyond name recognition to include deep, value-based brand affinity.

Green Messaging

Green messaging involves the use of marketing communication strategies that emphasize a brand’s environmental values, sustainability commitments, and eco-friendly practices. This includes claims such as biodegradability, cruelty-free testing, carbon neutrality, and organic formulations. In the Nigerian cosmetics industry, green messaging is increasingly used to appeal to environmentally conscious consumers. According to Nguyen and Mogaji (2022), such messaging when is authentic can positively influence consumer trust, especially in emerging markets like Nigeria where consumers are becoming more aware of global sustainability trends.

Nonetheless, green messaging in Nigeria faces the challenge of skepticism, particularly when it is not backed by verifiable actions. Baloch (2024) cautions that inconsistent or deceptive messaging can lead to consumer backlash and erode brand credibility. Therefore, green messaging must be supported by certifications, transparent sourcing, and demonstrable environmental impact. When properly implemented, green messaging becomes a strategic asset for cosmetic brands, creating emotional engagement and reinforcing brand loyalty through aligned consumer values.

Green Sourcing

Green sourcing refers to the procurement of raw materials and components in ways that minimize environmental impact, support biodiversity, and encourage ethical labor practices. In the organic body cream segment of the Nigerian cosmetics industry, green sourcing includes the use of natural shea butter, aloe vera, coconut oil, and other sustainably harvested local resources. Okeke et al. (2024) argue that effective green sourcing not only supports environmental goals but also strengthens local economies by encouraging indigenous production.

Green sourcing also has implications for brand image and product positioning. Consumers increasingly expect transparency about ingredient origins and the sustainability of the supply chain. Zubairu and Shah (2024) suggest that when green sourcing is communicated as part of the product story, it enhances the credibility of green claims and can serve as a source of competitive advantage. However, the lack of robust regulation in Nigeria means that some firms may falsely claim ethical sourcing without accountability, underscoring the importance of third-party verification.

Consumer Preference

Consumer preference refers to the subjective tastes and priorities that influence individuals’ choices among competing products or brands. In the realm of green cosmetics, these preferences are increasingly shaped by awareness of health, sustainability, and ethical consumption. According to Suleman et al. (2025), Nigerian consumers—especially in urban areas—show a growing preference for organic body creams that are perceived to be safe, natural, and eco-friendly. Preferences are influenced by a mix of personal health concerns, environmental consciousness, and social status. Nevertheless, in emerging markets like Nigeria, price sensitivity and accessibility often mediate consumer preference, creating a gap between awareness and actual purchasing behavior. Okafor et al. (2024) report that although many consumers express interest in green products, only a fraction regularly purchase them due to affordability constraints or distrust in labeling claims. Therefore,

understanding consumer preference in this space requires a nuanced view that considers socio-economic and cultural factors in addition to environmental values.

Consumer Trust

Consumer trust refers to the confidence customers place in a brand's ability to consistently deliver on its promises, particularly in areas such as product quality, safety, transparency, and ethical behavior. In the realm of green marketing, trust becomes particularly critical as consumers must rely on brands to truthfully represent their sustainability claims—whether it pertains to organic sourcing, biodegradability, or cruelty-free testing. In Nigeria, where regulatory mechanisms for verifying environmental claims are weak, consumer trust becomes a decisive factor in the purchase of green cosmetic products. Okeke, Chukwunonso, and Eze (2024) observed that in the Southeast Nigerian cosmetics market, green trust mediates the relationship between perceived sustainability and brand equity, indicating that even when green attributes are acknowledged, trust determines whether consumers follow through with a purchase.

Moreover, trust in green brands tends to develop over time through consistent experiences, word-of-mouth validation, and visible brand accountability. Nigerian consumers, especially urban Millennials and Gen Z, are becoming more discerning and are more likely to seek transparency and third-party certifications before placing trust in green claims (Zubairu & Shah, 2024). If trust is eroded through false advertising or product failure consumers often disengage quickly, affecting not just loyalty but broader brand reputation. Therefore, in green marketing strategy, cultivating trust is not a peripheral activity but a core pillar that can either reinforce or undermine consumer engagement and long-term business performance.

Theoretical Review

Theory of Planned Behavior

The theory of planned behavior (TPB), developed by Ajzen (1991), posits that individual behavior is driven by behavioral intentions, which are in turn influenced by three key components: attitude toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Attitude reflects an individual's positive or negative evaluation of performing the behavior; subjective norms refer to the perceived social pressure to perform or not perform the behavior; and perceived behavioral control relates to the perceived ease or difficulty of performing the behavior, which may also directly influence actual behavior. This theoretical framework has been widely applied in consumer behavior studies, particularly those involving ethical consumption, environmental concerns, and health-related products, as it captures both internal cognitive factors and external social influences that affect decision-making (Ajzen, 1991; Bamberg & Moser, 2007).

In the context of this study on green brand awareness and consumer preference for organic body creams in Port Harcourt, the TPB provides a robust explanatory model. Attitude is reflected in how consumers perceive the benefits and values associated with organic and eco-friendly products, such as health safety and environmental protection. Subjective norms come into play when social influence such as peer opinions, celebrity endorsements, or societal trends affects consumer interest in green brands. Finally, perceived behavioral control is relevant in terms of accessibility and affordability of organic body creams; consumers may have a favorable attitude and perceive societal approval, but still refrain from purchase due to high costs or limited availability. Thus, TPB helps explain the psychological mechanisms through which green brand awareness translates or fails to translate into actual consumer preference and behavior. Applying this theory enables researchers and marketers to identify specific cognitive or contextual barriers that hinder the conversion of awareness into sustained consumer loyalty for green skincare products in Port Harcourt.

Kori and Chong(2023) investigated the nexus between green innovation strategies and business success in Nigerian small and medium enterprises (SMEs) within the building and design industry. The study aimed to determine whether the integration of green marketing through sustainable design innovations contributed to improved business performance.

The researchers adopted a qualitative case study approach, interviewing 20 SME owners across Abuja and Lagos, who had implemented green Building Information Modelling (BIM) techniques. Thematic analysis of the data showed that green marketing through BIM-enhanced project presentations improved customer acquisition, client retention, and brand visibility. The study found that companies that emphasized environmental messaging in their proposals experienced greater trust from clients, especially international development organizations. The authors conclude that sustainability-led branding, when integrated with operational processes like BIM, can create both reputational and financial value. This supports the resource-based view (RBV) of the firm, which posits that internal capabilities such as green innovation can yield competitive advantage and long-term profitability.

Chinakwe and Asuquo (2025) explored macro-environmental influences on business education and entrepreneurial interest in a study titled "macro environmental factors and entrepreneurial interest of business education undergraduates in South-East Nigeria." Though focused on education, the empirical study indirectly captured the role of green marketing in fostering business development and innovation. Using a survey research design, the study engaged 312 final-year undergraduates across five universities using structured questionnaires.

Methodology

Population of the study

The population of the study comprised of 280 customers of organic body cream brands in Port Harcourt.

Research design

The research design adopted for this study correlational statistics, which was the Pearson product moment correlation (PPMC), and supplemented with the use of SPSS version 21.0.

Research instrument

The research instrument adopted for this was a well-structured questionnaire.

Method of data analysis

The hypotheses was tested statistically with the use of Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistics.

Testing of hypotheses

Research question one: What is the relationship between green messaging and consumer trust of organic body cream brands in Port Harcourt?

Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between green messaging and consumer trust of organic body cream brands in Port Harcourt.

Table 2: Computation of relationship between green messaging and consumer trust of organic body cream brands in Port Harcourt.

		Correlations	
		Green Messaging	Consumer Trust
Green Messaging	Pearson Correlation	1	.8775**
	Sig. (2 tailed)	.	.000
	N	280	280
Consumer Trust	Pearson Correlation	.775**	1
	Sig. (2 tailed)	.000	.
	N	280	280

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS output, 2026

The SPSS output in Table 2 indicates that a Pearson’s Correlation analysis was conducted to evaluate the relationship between green messaging and consumer trust of organic body cream brands in Port Harcourt, utilizing a sample of 280 users of organic body cream products. The resulting correlation coefficient (r-value) of 0.775 which shows a strong positive relationship between green messaging and consumer trust of organic body cream brands in Port Harcourt. Furthermore, the significance level, represented by a probability value of 0.000, is well below the 0.05 threshold, confirming that the relationship is statistically significant. Therefore, we can therefore conclude that there is a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship between green messaging and consumer trust of organic body cream brands in Port Harcourt.

Research Question Two: What is the relationship between green messaging and consumer trust of organic body cream brands in Port Harcourt?

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant relationship between green messaging and consumer trust of organic body cream brands in Port Harcourt.

Table 2: Computation of relationship between green messaging and consumer trust of organic body cream brands in Port Harcourt

		Correlations	
		Green Messaging	Consumer Trust
Green Messaging	Pearson Correlation	1	.821**
	Sig. (2 tailed)	.	.000
	N	280	280
Consumer Trust	Pearson Correlation	.821**	1
	Sig. (2 tailed)	.000	.
	N	280	280

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS output, 2026

The SPSS output presented in Table 2 reveals that a Pearson’s Correlation analysis was conducted to evaluate the relationship between green messaging and consumer trust of organic body cream brands in Port Harcourt, based on responses from a sample of 280 users of organic body creams. The correlation coefficient (r-value) of 0.821 also shows a very strong positive relationship between green messaging and consumer trust of organic body cream brands in Port Harcourt. Additionally, the significance of this relationship is shown by a probability value of 0.000, which is significantly lower than the 0.05 threshold, confirming that the relationship is statistically significant. Thus, we can for sure say that there is a very strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship between green messaging and consumer trust of organic body cream brands in Port Harcourt.

Discussion of Findings

The study reveals significant empirical insights, into how green brand awareness elements specifically green messaging, green sourcing have influence on consumer trust, for organic body cream brands in Port Harcourt. The findings underscore the growing importance of environmentally responsible branding in shaping consumer behavior in the cosmetics and personal care sector. The strong and positive relationship between green messaging and customer trust indicates that clear, consistent, and credible communication of environmental values enhances the trust consumers place in organic brands. The r-value of 0.775 confirms that nearly 60% of the variance in consumer trust can be attributed to green messaging. This aligns with the findings of Rahbar and Wahid (2011) who concluded that green product communication significantly boosts consumer trust

and purchase intention. Similarly, Leonidou et al. (2011) found that environmentally responsible promotional strategies positively influence consumer evaluations and trust levels.

The data show that green sourcing practices—such as ethical ingredient procurement and sustainable production—strongly influence consumer trust. With the r-value at 0.828, the trust impact of authentic, eco-friendly sourcing strategies is slightly stronger than that of green messaging. This aligns with findings by Nguyen et al. (2019), who reported that transparency in sustainable sourcing builds emotional trust in green brands. Likewise, Liobikiene and Bematoniene (2017) emphasized that environmentally conscious supply chains significantly raise perceived integrity and brand trust.

Conclusion

This study conclusively demonstrates that green brand awareness through strategic green messaging and sustainable sourcing has a significant and positive impact on consumer trust and loyalty toward organic body cream brands in Port Harcourt.

Recommendations

1. Organic cream brands should invest in transparent, educational, and emotionally resonant green communication. Messaging should go beyond slogans to include verifiable claims about ingredients, eco-packaging, and environmental benefits to boost customer trust.
2. Companies should ensure their ingredients are ethically and sustainably sourced, and make this information publicly available. Certifications from environmental agencies or partnerships with fair-trade suppliers can further enhance consumer trust.

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