

Strategic, Tactical, and Internal Green Marketing Orientations: The Role of Perceived Value in Building Sustainable Customer Loyalty

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Abstract. Green marketing has emerged as a vital strategy for businesses to align with the growing environmental consciousness of consumers. This study explores how three types of green marketing orientations—strategic, tactical, and internal—influence customer loyalty through the mediating role of perceived value. By integrating these orientations, companies can enhance their environmental credibility, increase consumer loyalty, and create lasting business value. Using data from 301 participants across various industries in China, this research employed regression analysis and structural equation modeling (SEM) to test the relationships between these orientations, perceived value, and customer loyalty. The findings demonstrate that all three orientations significantly impact customer loyalty, with perceived value playing a crucial mediating role. The study offers important implications for companies seeking to enhance their green marketing strategies to drive both sustainability and business objectives.

Keywords: Perceived Value; Customer Loyalty; Strategic Green Marketing; Tactical Green Marketing; Internal Green Marketing.

1. Introduction

In an era of increasing environmental consciousness, businesses face mounting pressure to integrate sustainable practices into their operations. Today's consumers are not only concerned with the traditional factors of product quality and price, but also with the environmental impact of the brands they choose to support. As a result, green marketing—the promotion of products and practices that emphasize environmental sustainability—has evolved from a niche approach to a mainstream strategy aimed at building customer loyalty and securing long-term competitive advantage (Papadas et al., 2017). Recent market research supports this trend, with global spending on sustainable products projected to surpass \$150 billion by 2025, demonstrating a clear shift in consumer behavior towards environmentally conscious purchasing decisions (Statista, 2021).

Green marketing encompasses a variety of strategies that reflect an organization's commitment to sustainability. These strategies are typically classified into three orientations: strategic, tactical, and internal. Each orientation plays a pivotal role in shaping consumer perceptions of a brand's environmental value, which can significantly influence customer loyalty (Mishra, Choudhury, & Rao, 2019). The strategic green marketing orientation (SGMO) involves long-term, organization-wide commitments to sustainability, embedding environmental goals within the company's core mission and values. On the other hand, the tactical green marketing orientation (TGMO) focuses on visible, short-term actions such as eco-friendly packaging and product labeling, which consumers can easily identify. Lastly, the internal green marketing orientation (IGMO) emphasizes sustainability within the company's internal operations, including efforts to reduce waste and promote eco-friendly practices among employees (Papadas et al., 2018).

The importance of understanding how these orientations affect customer loyalty cannot be overstated, particularly in today's competitive marketplace where differentiation often hinges not just on product quality, but also on a brand's commitment to environmental responsibility. Central to this dynamic is the concept of perceived value—the consumer's assessment of the benefits received from a product relative to its cost. Brands that effectively increase the perceived value of their green initiatives are more likely to foster stronger consumer loyalty.



Thus, this study seeks to address the following research questions: How do the three green marketing orientations (SGMO, TGMO, IGMO) individually and collectively influence customer loyalty? Additionally, does perceived value mediate the relationship between these green marketing orientations and customer loyalty? By examining these relationships, the study aims to provide insights into how companies can effectively integrate green marketing strategies to enhance both consumer loyalty and their sustainability goals.

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

2.1. Strategic Green Marketing Orientation and Customer Loyalty

Strategic Green Marketing Orientation (SGMO) refers to company-wide, long-term commitments to sustainability that go beyond short-term, superficial measures. These initiatives, such as investments in renewable energy or sustainable supply chains, signal genuine dedication to environmental causes and foster credibility among consumers (Chahal, Dangwal, & Raina, 2014). Research shows that when a company embeds sustainability within its core values, consumers who prioritize environmental responsibility are more likely to build stronger emotional connections and loyalty to the brand (Papadas et al., 2018). For example, IKEA's sustainable forestry practices demonstrate a long-term commitment to environmental stewardship, which enhances consumer trust and loyalty. Thus, it is hypothesized:

H1: Strategic Green Marketing Orientation (SGMO) positively influences customer loyalty.

2.2. Tactical Green Marketing Orientation and Customer Loyalty

Tactical Green Marketing Orientation (TGMO) involves short-term, visible sustainability efforts such as eco-friendly packaging, green product labels, and environmental advertising campaigns (Mishra, Choudhury, & Rao, 2019). These immediate actions appeal to consumers' environmental concerns and help companies differentiate themselves in competitive markets. Studies have shown that short-term initiatives, such as the use of biodegradable packaging, resonate with eco-conscious consumers seeking tangible evidence of sustainability efforts (Szabo & Webster, 2021). Accordingly, the hypothesis is:

H2: Tactical Green Marketing Orientation (TGMO) positively influences customer loyalty.

2.3. Internal Green Marketing Orientation and Customer Loyalty

Internal Green Marketing Orientation (IGMO) refers to sustainability practices implemented within a company's internal operations, such as reducing waste and promoting eco-friendly employee behaviors (Papadas et al., 2018). Authenticity in these internal actions builds a reputation for transparency, increasing consumer trust. For instance, Patagonia's emphasis on sustainable behaviors within the company enhances its credibility, which strengthens customer loyalty (Martínez, 2015). Therefore, the hypothesis is:

H3: Internal Green Marketing Orientation (IGMO) positively influences customer loyalty.

2.4. The Mediating Role of Perceived Value

Perceived value is a critical factor in consumer decision-making, reflecting the evaluation of benefits relative to the costs of a product or service (Szabo & Webster, 2021). Green marketing orientations that successfully increase the perceived value of their sustainability efforts foster stronger customer loyalty. For example, companies like Patagonia and IKEA, which consistently communicate the environmental benefits of their green initiatives, amplify the perceived value of their products, leading to greater consumer loyalty (Polonsky & Rosenberger, 2001). Hence, the hypotheses are:

H4: Perceived value mediates the relationship between SGMO and customer loyalty.

H5: Perceived value mediates the relationship between TGMO and customer loyalty.

H6: Perceived value mediates the relationship between IGMO and customer loyalty.

2.5. The Moderating Role of Perceived Organizational Prestige

Perceived organizational prestige, or the extent to which a brand is respected and held in high regard, can strengthen the relationship between green marketing orientations and customer loyalty (Thornton & Rupp, 2015). Brands with high prestige are more likely to inspire customer loyalty as consumers align with the brand's values and mission, particularly when sustainability is a core element (Devi Juwaheer et al., 2012). Therefore, it is hypothesized:

H7: Perceived organizational prestige moderates the relationship between green marketing orientations and customer loyalty, such that the relationship is stronger when prestige is high.

Figure 1 illustrates a model where Strategic, Tactical, and Internal Green Marketing Orientations positively influence perceived value, which in turn drives customer loyalty. The model highlights the mediating role of perceived value in converting green marketing efforts into stronger customer loyalty. Each green marketing orientation contributes uniquely, showing that both long-term and short-term sustainability initiatives, as well as internal eco-friendly practices, are key to enhancing perceived value and fostering loyalty.

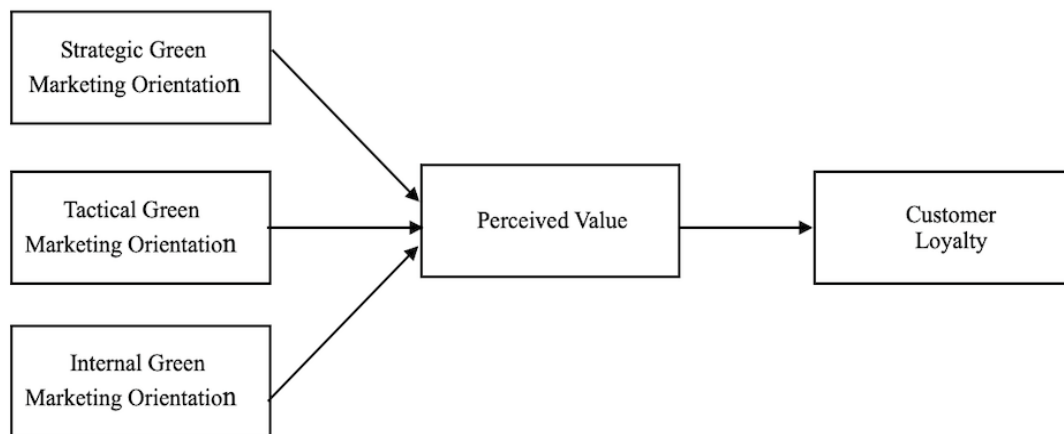


Figure 1. Green Marketing Orientations, Perceived Value, and Customer Loyalty Model

3. Methodology

3.1. Study Design and Sample Collection

The present study utilized a cross-sectional approach to explore how different types of green marketing orientations (strategic, tactical, and internal) impact customer loyalty through the mediating role of perceived value. The research collected data from 301 participants employed across various industries in China, including sectors such as manufacturing, retail, technology, and services. A total of 475 online surveys were distributed, and after the exclusion of incomplete or invalid responses, the final dataset comprised 301 valid entries. This yielded a response rate of 68.4%.

To ensure that the sample represented a diverse range of industries and demographics, participants were recruited from professional networks, industry-specific forums, and social media platforms. The sample had an almost equal gender distribution with 48.2% male and 51.8% female respondents. Age distribution revealed that 47.2% of participants were between 26 and 35 years old, 29.6% were aged 36 to 50, 15.9% were between 18 and 25 years old, and 7.3% were over 51. The participants' educational levels spanned from associate degrees (38.2%) to bachelor's degrees (55.8%), with 6% holding master's degrees or higher.

3.2. Recruitment and Ethical Considerations

Participants were recruited through several channels to ensure comprehensive sectoral coverage and to reach individuals in different regions of China. They were informed of the study's aims, assured confidentiality, and given the choice to withdraw from the study at any point. Ethical guidelines were followed throughout, and informed consent was obtained from all participants before their engagement with the survey.

3.3. Survey Instrument and Constructs

The survey instrument was carefully designed using validated scales from previous studies to capture the core variables: strategic, tactical, and internal green marketing orientations, perceived value, and customer loyalty. All items were measured using a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 represented "strongly disagree" and 5 indicated "strongly agree."

Strategic Green Marketing Orientation (SGMO): This construct was measured through a 9-item scale with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.943, assessing participants' views on their company's long-term sustainability commitments. An example item is: "This company invests in sustainable, low-carbon technologies."

Tactical Green Marketing Orientation (TGMO): A 5-item scale (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.899$) evaluated short-term marketing efforts focusing on visible, eco-friendly actions like packaging and product promotion. A sample item includes: "This company promotes its products/services through environmentally friendly methods."

Internal Green Marketing Orientation (IGMO): Internal sustainability initiatives were measured using a 7-item scale (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.926$), which examined the company's eco-friendly practices within its operations, including employee involvement. An example item is: "This company rewards eco-conscious behavior among employees."

Perceived Value: This construct was evaluated through a 4-item scale (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.874$) that assessed consumers' perception of the balance between the benefits of a company's sustainability efforts and the costs. An example item is: "I believe the company's green initiatives add value to my purchase experience."

Customer Loyalty: A 6-item scale (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.899$) measured customer loyalty, including intentions to repurchase and recommend the company's products. Example items include: "I would recommend this company to others" and "I will continue doing business with this company."

3.4. Control Variables

Several control variables were included in the analysis to control for demographic influences on customer loyalty and perceptions of green marketing:

Gender: Since previous studies suggest that men and women may differ in their responses to sustainability initiatives, gender was controlled as a binary variable (male = 0, female = 1).

Age: Respondents were divided into four categories (18–25, 26–35, 36–50, 51+) to account for potential age-related differences in attitudes toward green marketing.

Educational Background: Participants were categorized based on their highest level of education (associate degree or lower, bachelor's degree, and master's degree or higher) to control for varying levels of environmental awareness.

Tenure with Company: Participants' length of time with the company was included as a control variable, divided into five groups: 0–5 years, 6–10 years, 11–15 years, 16–25 years, and 26+ years.

3.5. Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using SPSS software to ensure the reliability and validity of the measurement scales. A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to validate the measurement model. Fit indices such as the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), and Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) were employed to evaluate the model fit. All factor loadings were found to be statistically significant, confirming the constructs' reliability and validity.

To test the study's hypotheses, multiple regression analyses were conducted. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was also employed to examine the mediating role of perceived value in the relationship between green marketing orientations and customer loyalty. Bootstrapping techniques were used, with 5,000 resamples, to generate confidence intervals for the indirect effects. The SEM framework allowed for a comprehensive understanding of both direct and indirect relationships among the constructs.

4. Results

4.1. Descriptive Statistics and Intercorrelations

Table 1 provides the descriptive statistics and intercorrelations for the key study variables, including gender, age, education, work years, strategic green marketing orientation (SGMO), tactical green marketing orientation (TGMO), internal green marketing orientation (IGMO), perceived value (M), and customer loyalty (Y). The mean and standard deviation (SD) are reported for each variable, along with Cronbach's alpha to assess internal consistency.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics and Intercorrelations of Variables

| Variables | Mean | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
|--------------------------------------|-------|-------|--------|----------|--------|--------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-------|
| (1) Gender | 1.518 | 0.500 | - | | | | | | | | |
| (2) Age | 2.282 | 0.819 | 0.048 | - | | | | | | | |
| (3) Education | 1.678 | 0.582 | 0.083 | 0.024 | - | | | | | | |
| (4) Work Years | 1.874 | 1.041 | 0.062 | 0.816*** | 0.032 | - | | | | | |
| (5) Strategic green marketing (SGMO) | 3.336 | 1.016 | 0.010 | 0.020 | 0.023 | 0.116* | 0.943 | | | | |
| (6) Tactical green marketing (TGMO) | 3.357 | 1.018 | 0.011 | 0.055 | 0.101 | 0.130* | 0.480*** | 0.899 | | | |
| (7) Internal green marketing (IGMO) | 3.350 | 0.997 | -0.026 | -0.002 | 0.071 | 0.042 | 0.528*** | 0.487*** | 0.926 | | |
| (8) Perceived value (M) | 3.316 | 1.003 | 0.011 | -0.062 | -0.030 | 0.013 | 0.452*** | 0.437*** | 0.435*** | 0.874 | |
| (9) Customer loyalty (Y) | 3.391 | 0.970 | 0.044 | -0.042 | 0.054 | -0.048 | 0.409*** | 0.410*** | 0.411*** | 0.452*** | 0.899 |

n = 301. Internal consistency coefficients are reported in bold on the diagonal. Gender was recorded as male = 0 and female = 1. *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01.

The intercorrelation matrix reveals significant positive relationships between SGMO, TGMO, IGMO, perceived value, and customer loyalty. This indicates that organizations with higher levels of green marketing orientation, regardless of whether it is strategic, tactical, or internal, tend to report greater perceived value among consumers and stronger customer loyalty.

4.2. Direct Effects

Table 2 presents the results of the regression analysis examining the direct effects of SGMO, TGMO, and IGMO on both perceived value (M) and customer loyalty (Y). The analysis reveals significant positive effects of all three green marketing orientations on both outcomes, supporting hypotheses H1, H2, and H3.

Among the three, TGMO exhibited the strongest direct effect on customer loyalty ($\beta = 0.230$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that short-term visible sustainability actions such as eco-friendly packaging and green advertising campaigns have a substantial impact on consumer loyalty. This suggests that consumers may respond more immediately to tangible and visible sustainability efforts, especially in industries where environmental considerations play a critical role in consumer decision-making.

Table 2. Regression Analysis of Direct Effects

| Direct Effect | Beta Coefficient | Standard Error |
|----------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Direct effect of SGMO on Y | 0.215** | 0.059 |
| Direct effect of TGMO on Y | 0.230*** | 0.058 |
| Direct effect of IGMO on Y | 0.195** | 0.060 |
| Direct effect of SGMO on M | 0.232*** | 0.060 |
| Direct effect of TGMO on M | 0.236*** | 0.058 |
| Direct effect of IGMO on M | 0.202* | 0.061 |

4.3. Mediating Effects

Table 3 displays the mediating effects of perceived value (M) on the relationship between SGMO, TGMO, IGMO, and customer loyalty (Y). The findings confirm that perceived value plays a significant mediating role, enhancing the effects of all three orientations on customer loyalty, thus supporting hypotheses H4, H5, and H6.

The results show that perceived value amplifies the impact of green marketing efforts on customer loyalty. For example, TGMO's influence on loyalty becomes even stronger when mediated by perceived value ($\beta = 0.274$, $p < 0.001$), highlighting the importance of how consumers perceive the benefits of green marketing initiatives in fostering loyalty.

Table 3. Regression Analysis of Mediating Effects

| Mediating Effect | Beta Coefficient | Standard Error |
|------------------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Indirect effect of SGMO on Y via M | 0.272*** | 0.054 |
| Indirect effect of TGMO on Y via M | 0.274*** | 0.054 |
| Indirect effect of IGMO on Y via M | 0.266*** | 0.054 |

5. Discussion

5.1. The Impact of Green Marketing Orientations on Customer Loyalty

The findings of this study confirm that strategic, tactical, and internal green marketing orientations significantly influence customer loyalty, supporting hypotheses H1, H2, and H3. This result underscores the importance of adopting a multi-dimensional approach to green marketing, where each orientation uniquely contributes to enhancing consumer loyalty.

Strategic Green Marketing Orientation (SGMO) builds long-term trust and credibility with consumers. Companies that commit to long-term sustainability initiatives—such as ethical sourcing, renewable energy investments, or carbon-neutral goals—are perceived as more authentic and reliable. Consumers increasingly value brands that demonstrate genuine environmental stewardship, leading to stronger emotional connections and enhanced loyalty (H1). The commitment to these long-term goals aligns with consumers' growing expectations that companies should be responsible corporate citizens, driving sustained customer loyalty as the brand consistently fulfills its environmental promises over time.

Tactical Green Marketing Orientation (TGMO), which emphasizes short-term, visible actions like eco-friendly packaging or green advertising, also significantly influences customer loyalty (H2). The immediacy and tangibility of these actions allow consumers to witness the brand's sustainability efforts firsthand. TGMO appeals directly to consumers' desire for quick, demonstrable change and aligns with the growing trend of eco-conscious purchasing behavior. For many consumers, visible green efforts provide immediate evidence of a company's environmental commitment, reinforcing trust and encouraging repeat purchases. This suggests that while long-term sustainability is important, short-term, action-oriented green marketing tactics are essential for quickly engaging and retaining environmentally conscious consumers.

Internal Green Marketing Orientation (IGMO) also positively affects customer loyalty (H3), but its influence goes beyond the external consumer-facing benefits of green marketing. IGMO focuses on embedding sustainability into internal operations, such as reducing waste, energy consumption, or promoting eco-friendly employee behaviors. Consumers, especially those who are highly environmentally conscious, are sensitive to signs of greenwashing—superficial or misleading green claims. IGMO reassures these consumers by signaling that the company's green marketing efforts are rooted in genuine, organization-wide practices, rather than just being used as a promotional tool. This internal commitment to sustainability provides an additional layer of authenticity that differentiates brands from competitors. When consumers perceive that sustainability is ingrained in the company's culture and values, not just in its outward messaging, they are more likely to trust the brand and remain loyal. The internal alignment between what the company practices internally and promotes externally reduces the risk of consumer skepticism and enhances brand credibility.

Thus, the impact of IGMO on customer loyalty can be attributed to its ability to convey a holistic commitment to sustainability that resonates with increasingly savvy consumers who demand transparency and authenticity in corporate practices. IGMO suggests that companies not only talk about sustainability but also live it, which builds long-term trust and, consequently, loyalty.

5.2. Perceived Value as a Mediator

The study further demonstrates that perceived value plays a critical mediating role in the relationship between green marketing orientations and customer loyalty, supporting H4, H5, and H6. Perceived value is central to how consumers assess the benefits of a company's green initiatives relative to the costs of purchasing its products or services. When green marketing efforts are perceived as providing real environmental benefits, consumers are more likely to see their purchases as worthwhile, thereby increasing their loyalty.

For SGMO, perceived value enhances the trust and credibility that consumers place in the brand's long-term environmental efforts (H4). Consumers value brands that invest in sustainable practices for

the future, as these efforts signal a genuine commitment to positive environmental impact. The perceived long-term benefits of such initiatives foster stronger emotional ties with the brand, leading to higher loyalty.

TGMO creates immediate perceived value by providing visible and tangible benefits, such as eco-friendly products or packaging, that consumers can directly connect to environmental sustainability (H5). These short-term efforts resonate with consumers who seek quick and demonstrable contributions to environmental goals, reinforcing their belief in the brand's commitment and increasing their likelihood of staying loyal.

IGMO contributes to perceived value by solidifying the company's ethical reputation. Consumers who see that sustainability is integrated into the company's internal operations view the brand as more trustworthy and consistent in its green messaging (H6). This internal consistency reassures consumers that the brand's environmental claims are not just for marketing purposes, further enhancing their loyalty.

5.3. Integration and Implications

The results emphasize the importance of integrating all three green marketing orientations—strategic, tactical, and internal—to maximize customer loyalty, supporting H7, H8, and H9. Each orientation plays a distinct but complementary role in shaping perceived value and loyalty. Companies that combine long-term sustainability goals (SGMO), short-term visible actions (TGMO), and authentic internal practices (IGMO) create a comprehensive green marketing strategy that resonates with consumers on multiple levels.

This integrated approach ensures that green marketing is not viewed as superficial but as an authentic, core element of the company's brand identity. The holistic alignment of sustainability across strategic, tactical, and internal domains strengthens the perceived value of a company's green initiatives and aligns with consumer expectations for genuine environmental responsibility. This approach not only fosters customer loyalty but also positions the brand as a leader in sustainability, further enhancing its competitive advantage.

5.4. Practical Implications

For businesses, the findings offer several key takeaways:

Long-term Strategic Commitments: Companies should prioritize long-term sustainability goals to build trust and credibility over time. Consumers are more likely to remain loyal to brands that demonstrate consistent dedication to environmental stewardship.

Short-term Tactical Actions: Tactical green marketing initiatives, such as eco-friendly packaging or green promotions, are essential for engaging consumers quickly and providing immediate value. These efforts should be visible and easily communicated to consumers.

Internal Consistency and Authenticity: Internal green marketing practices must align with external communications to ensure authenticity. Companies that integrate sustainability into their internal operations are less likely to be perceived as engaging in greenwashing, which enhances consumer trust.

Clear Communication of Environmental Benefits: To enhance perceived value, companies should clearly communicate the specific environmental benefits of their green initiatives. Transparent and consistent messaging is key to ensuring that consumers understand how their purchases contribute to sustainability.

By integrating sustainability across all levels of the organization—from strategic planning to day-to-day operations—companies can build a cohesive and authentic brand image that resonates with environmentally conscious consumers and fosters long-term customer loyalty.

6. Conclusion

This study provides a nuanced understanding of the impact that strategic, tactical, and internal green marketing orientations have on customer loyalty, emphasizing the pivotal role of perceived value as a mediator. By adopting an integrated green marketing approach—one that balances long-term sustainability commitments with visible short-term actions and ingrained internal practices—companies can foster deeper connections with environmentally conscious consumers. The findings highlight the importance of perceived value in converting green marketing initiatives into sustained customer loyalty, offering a clear roadmap for businesses to harness sustainability not only as a moral imperative but also as a strategic competitive advantage. This comprehensive framework serves as a guide for organizations aiming to align their green marketing efforts with both consumer expectations and long-term business objectives.

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