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Green Price and Purchase Intention of University Students in Plateau State, Nigeria

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Abstract

In today's volatile marketplace, there is a disconnect between the awareness of environmental issues and actual consumer behavior, particularly among young people like university students. Despite growing concerns about the environment, many continue to engage in unsustainable consumption practices. This is especially pronounced in Plateau State, Nigeria, where environmental challenges are significant. This study aims to understand why there's such a mismatch between green price and how students actually make purchasing decisions. It emphasizes the urgency of addressing this issue to promote more sustainable consumption habits among young people. Ultimately, the research seeks to investigate the effect of green price on purchase intention of university students in Plateau State, Nigeria. The study adopted a survey research design. The population size was 25,000 students from the two approved universities by NUC in Plateau State, Nigeria. The study utilized the Krejcie and Morgan table to determine the sample size of 417 students as respondents. Data was collected through a structured and validated questionnaire. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients of constructs ranged from 0.791 to 0.981 The response rate was 93.33%. Data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings revealed that green price has a significant effect on purchase intention ($R = 0.413$, $R^2 = 0.168$; $t = 8.949$, $\beta = 0.450 > 0.05$). The study concluded that green price has a significant effect on purchase intention of university students in Plateau State, Nigeria. It is therefore recommended that businesses should consider implementing competitive pricing strategies for their eco-friendly products. Offering discounts, promotions, or incentives for purchasing green products are encouraged. This could help stimulate purchase intentions and drive sales.

Keywords: *Green marketing mix strategies, Green product, Green price, Consumer behavior, Purchase intention*

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Background to the Study

In the dynamic landscape of contemporary business, the intersection of environmental consciousness and consumer behavior has given rise to a pivotal field known as green marketing. As global concerns about climate change, resource depletion, and environmental degradation intensify, businesses are increasingly compelled to adopt strategies that not only address ecological challenges but also resonate with the environmentally conscious consumer. Despite the urgency and need for sustainable behaviour, the young have not attuned to this through their actions. As the torchbearers of the future, university students play a pivotal role in shaping societal norms and preferences. Their attitudes and behaviors towards environmentally friendly products and sustainable practices not only reflect current trends but also have the potential to drive lasting change.

At a growth rate of 1.18% per year, the world population has estimated to have grown by 1 billion in the last 12 years taking the tally to 7.3 billion people (Mostafa, 2021). The current consumption and consumer behaviour pattern is unsustainable. It is anticipated that there will be 9 billion people on the planet by the year 2050, which would further increase demand and deplete resources. Ebbs (2019) reported how the last decade had produced some startling climate and environmental headlines. The most controversial was president Trump signaling the withdrawal that the Obama's administration made to formally enter the Paris climate agreement which aimed to drastically curb carbon pollution. The administration argues that the agreement relied too much on the U.S. and allowed countries like China to do even less though they release a large amount of greenhouse gases. This occurrence alongside other concerns led to an uproar which birthed Greta Thunberg, a 16- year-old Swede who has become an international icon. She started her campaign in North Carolina where she spoke against the recent policy "reversal" and implore all Americans to seek out ways they can contribute and make a difference to imbibe green behaviours. Both academics and professionals are quite interested in the evolving consumption pattern.

In India, sustainability has acquired increased significance (Bushra & Arafat ,2021) and the Indian government in the past has created awareness regarding the environmental issues with the help of initiatives such as Swach Bharat Abhiyan but has failed to put forward legislative approach for organisations to promote procurement and manufacturing of green products. The government has tried in the past to increase knowledge about green products with schemes such as The Indian Eco-Mark Scheme, Energy Efficiency Labelling Scheme in India, and National Programme for Organic Production (NPOP) but the results have not been very encouraging because of low involvement of industry stakeholders. India is still at the initial stage of green consumerism with more and more people now wanting products beneficial to the environment (Naman et al., 2018).

In Nigeria, few consumers in recent years have become aware of the damage being inflicted on the environment by businesses in pursuit of goals. Government regulatory bodies and consumer pressure groups have aggressively lobbied for businesses to adopt green practices. Many companies in Nigeria have complained that their biggest challenges in going green are their inability to know where to start and how this can be achieved (Abanyam & Raymond,

2019). As businesses had to keep up with the constant evolution in technologies, some of their practices contributed to the degradation of the ecosystems due to toxic contaminations, deforestation, soil erosion and the loss of some species thereby raising key sustainability question on being eco-friendly for the generation thus pushing consumers to start engaging in actions to protect the environment (Alabo & Anyasor, 2021).

Extensive research has focused on the factors that influence consumers' purchase intentions of green products (Emekci ,2019; Katish et al., 2019; Shukla, 2019; Yarimoglu & Gunay, 2020). Most explained green consumption behaviour from the perspective of consumers themselves (Arli et al., 2018; Kamonthip et al., 2016;). However, green price, an extremely important factor in product sales, has been largely ignored in previous studies. Therefore, the study intends to study the effect of green price on purchase intention amongst university students in Plateau State, Nigeria.

To achieve the study objective, a hypothesis was formulated:

H_0: Green price has no significant effect on purchase intention of university students in Plateau State, Nigeria.

Conceptual Review

Green Price

According to Ramanathan and Gunasekaran (2018) green price is a pricing strategy that takes into account the environmental costs associated with the production and consumption of goods and services. Price is related to the value of a product. Green product pricing is a strategy that allows marketers to adjust the price structure in line with investment in green product development and company resilience in the future. Marketers in product pricing need to include environmental, waste, and other costs (Wahyuningtiyas & Novianto, 2023). In the words of Chen et al. (2019), green price is a pricing strategy that integrates environmental considerations into the pricing of products or services, with the goal of promoting sustainable consumption. Green pricing is viewed as setting prices for environmentally friendly items that may be more than those for conventional, non-green products due to the use of more expensive raw materials to maintain quality, the use of chemicals and other harmful substance alternatives, and increasing production costs as a result of tighter regulations. The higher the perceived value for green products due to strong marketing communications, the higher the customer 's willingness to pay premium prices (Madeira, 2019).

The price of products from companies that implement green marketing is relatively more expensive than products that do not apply the green concept. However, consumers are willing to pay more if the value of the green product has more value (Yohanes et al., 2023). Green pricing considers the three Ps—people, planet, and profit—as well as sustainability and human health (Yarimoglu & Gunnay, 2020). Since adopting a green lifestyle in terms of production, consumption, and disposal results in higher production costs than conventional non-green things, researchers frequently use the term "premium price" in regard to green products. The expense of implementing environmental regulatory measures also increases

industrial costs and retail prices. According to the majority of surveys, consumers are willing to pay more for products if they offer adequate benefits. Advantages in terms of design, taste, functional distinctiveness, and appearance, etc. Natural protection is a wonderful reward in and of itself, but customers will only pay more once they are aware of the advantages. Consequently, a producer must inform consumers of the benefits of sustainability (Anjali & Urvashi, 2020).

Purchase Intention

Purchase intention is the possible behaviour of a consumer willing to purchase a product. Similarly, purchase intention is a term that refers to an individual's plan or inclination to buy a specific product or service. It is the likelihood or probability that a consumer will make a purchase in the near future. There are various factors which influence the buying behaviour and the purchase intention of consumers like price or social norms. According to one of the studies, consumers are persuaded by the social norms and the approval from the society which shows positive relation between social norms and the purchase intention, but it varies from society to society as well (Tan & Chea, 2022). Furthermore, green purchase intention is the possibility and readiness of an individual to provide fondness to eco-friendly products over the conventional products in their purchase intention which are harmful.

Purchase intention is an important concept in marketing because it can be used to measure and predict consumer behavior (Anas et al., 2023). The ability to foresee future demand for a company's goods or services is one of purchasing intention's main benefits. Companies may create powerful marketing strategies to change consumer behavior and boost revenue by understanding the factors that affect buying intention. This may result in more profits and a competitive edge in the market. Additionally, purchase intention research enables companies to pinpoint the categories of potential customers most inclined to purchase their goods or services. This enables companies to customize their marketing messages and communication plans for certain target populations, leading to more successful advertising and sales promotion. Wu and Hueng (2023) suggest that after purchasing a good or receiving a service, consumers will generate a subjective perceived value based on their last shopping or service experience. They believed that after purchasing a good or receiving a service, consumers will develop a subjective perceived value based on their last experience, and they will form the intention to purchase again.

Empirical Review

Different scholars and researchers have carried out several studies on green price and purchase intention. Keni et al. (2020) studies with sample selected using convenience sampling method amounted to 150 respondents at Jakarta. Data was processed with structural equation modeling. The study indicates that green perceived risk is proven to be able to negatively influence green purchase intention. The second hypothesis after testing proves purchase intention increases if the perceived risk experienced by consumer decreases. Ziyuan et al. (2022) depicts the connection between moral judgment and green purchase intention, and the analysis proves that moral judgment had a significant positive impact on green purchase intention. More so, Ida et al. (2019) finds that attitude towards green product

has a positive effect on consumers' green purchase intention and environmental knowledge has a positive effect on consumers' green purchase intention. The analysis technique used is the quantitative analysis. The research respondents were students in state universities in Manado, Indonesia who have the intention to buy The Body Shop products.

Beibei et al. (2020) findings reveal that consumers' environmental responsibility significantly affects green consumption intention, that is, the consumer with stronger environmental responsibility will be more likely to buy environmentally friendly products. Additionally, environmental concern plays a partial mediating role in the effect of environmental responsibility on green consumption intention, indicating that green consumption intention can be realized by strengthening consumers' concern and attitude towards environmental issues. Meanwhile, price sensitivity plays a negative moderating role in the relationship between environmental concern and green consumption intention. Jassim and Abdulah (2020) results from quantitative analysis denoted that the electronic word of mouth (E-WOM) controlled the relationship of content marketing with green purchasing intentions.

Md. (2020) investigates which factors influence young, educated consumers' purchase decisions on green products in a developing nation, the researcher finds that environmental concern has a strong influence on young, educated consumers' green purchasing decisions in Bangladesh and green perceived benefits strongly significantly influenced young consumers' purchasing decisions regarding a green product. Furthermore, Rathnayaka (2020) through survey research revealed social influence, and environmental consciousness having a positive impact on green purchase intention and environmental responsibility and health consciousness were not positively impacted on green purchase intention. Conversely, Wairimu et al. (2017) revealed a statistically significant positive linear relationship between marketing practices and customer satisfaction. According to Arvin (2016), most consumers believe that green products are often priced averagely, despite the misconception that green items are frequently more expensive than conventional ones. The change in perception is caused by the fact that most consumers are now aware of green products and its advantages for the environment and their health; as a result, they do not perceive the pricing as being expensive but rather ordinary. Lastly, Balween et al. (2022) results from its survey show that green buying intentions are highly impacted by green items, green places, and green promotional techniques.

Triple Bottom Line Theory

The triple bottom line term was coined in the 1990s by business consultant John Elkington to describe economic, environmental, and social value of investment that may accrue outside a firm's financial bottom line (Elkington, 2004). Driven by sustainability, TBL provides a framework for measuring the performance of the business and the success of the organization using three lines: economic, social, and environmental (Goel, 2010). In essence, TBL expresses the expansion of the environmental agenda in a way that integrates the economic and social lines. In his definition of TBL, Elkington used the terms profit, people, and the planet as the three lines (Roberts & Cohen, 2002).

Methodology

The study adopted survey research design. The population of this study is25,000 stud ents comprising of the only two universities approve by the National Universities Commission (NUC) in Plateau State, Nigeria. The sample size of 417 students was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan table. Primary source of data collection was employed via adapted and validated questionnaire. Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficients for the constructs ranged from 0.726 to 0.763, Composite Reliability ranged from 0.760 to 0.802. The response rate was 93.33%. Data collected were analysed using descriptive and inferential (simple linear regression) statistics.

Descriptive and Inferential Analysis of the Study

Table 1: Descriptive Analysis on Green Price

	SA	**A**	**PA**	**PD**	**D**	**SD**	**Missing**	**Total**	
	%	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**	**Mean**	**Standard Deviation**
The organic benefits justify the price of green products.	26.02	32.91	32.91	6.38	.77	.51	.51	4.73	1.03
The price and quality of green products are proportionate.	19.39	41.84	30.61	4.85	2.04	.00	1.28	4.67	1.04
Green products have more excellent added value, and therefore I am willing to pay more.	21.68	33.42	34.18	6.38	2.04	.51	1.79	4.58	1.16
High price of green products sometimes gives me assurance for value.	22.96	33.42	33.42	6.12	1.28	1.28	1.53	4.61	1.17
The enhanced performance of green products justifies their price.	22.19	34.18	31.63	8.16	2.30	.77	.77	4.60	1.11
Average								**4.64**	**1.10**

Source: Researchers' Findings (2024).

Interpretation

Table 1 presents the results of descriptive statistics on green price. According to the results of the analysis, a total of 26.02% of the respondents strongly agree on the organic benefits justify the price of green products, 32.91% agree, 32.91% of the respondents indicated partially agree, while 6.38% partially disagree, 0.77% disagree and 0.51% strongly disagree. On average, the organic benefits justify the price of green products (mean = 4.73) with a standard deviation of 1.03 which showed convergence to the mean. In addition, the results showed on; price and quality of green products are proportionate, 19.39% of the respondents strongly

agreed, 41.84% agree and 30.64% partially agree, furthermore, 4.84% partially disagree, 2,04% disagree and 0.00 % strongly disagree. On average, the respondents agreed that the price and quality of green products are proportionate (mean = 4.67, STD = 1.04).

The result from the table above showed that with regards to; green products have more excellent added value, and therefore, I am willing to pay more. 21.68% of the respondents strongly agree, 33.42% agreed, 34.18% partially agree. On the other hand, 6.38% indicate partially disagree,1.28% disagree and 0.51 strongly disagree. On average, green products have more excellent added value, and therefore I am willing to pay more (Mean = 4.58), with standard deviation (1.16) showing convergence around the mean. On high price of green products sometimes gives me assurance for value, 22.96% of the respondents strongly agree, 33.42% agree, 33.42% indicate partially agree. While 6.12% partially disagree. 1.28% disagree and 1.53% strongly disagree. On average respondents agree that high price of green products sometimes gives me assurance for value (Mean = 4.61), with standard deviation 1.17 showing divergence in responses from the mean. The result of the descriptive analysis also revealed that with regards to the enhanced performance of green products justifies their price, 22.90% of the respondents strongly agree, 34.18% agree, 31.63% indicated partially agree, while 8.16%% partially disagree, 2.30% disagree and 0.77% strongly disagree. On average, the respondents rated agree to the enhanced performance of green products justifies their price (mean = 4.60), with the standard deviation showing divergence from the mean at 1.11. The average mean of the items on green price is 4.68 with a standard deviation of 1.10 which means that on average the respondents agree to green product of university students in Plateau State, Nigeria, and the responses converged around the mean.

Table 2: Descriptive Analysis on Purchase Intention

	SA	**A**	**PA**	**PD**	**D**	**SD**	**missing**	**Total**	
	%	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**	**Mean**	**Standard Deviation**
I prefer green products to non -green products in respective to their high cost.	34.44	35.20	22.45	6.63	.26	.26	.77	4.93	1.04
I will consider purchasing green products because they are less polluting.	24.23	34.44	36.22	4.34	.26	.26	.26	4.76	.92
The conservation of energy resources encourages my intention to purchase green products.	28.32	34.18	27.30	8.42	.51	.26	1.02	4.77	1.09
I like to be involved in environmental protection activities performed in my country.	24.74	35.20	29.85	8.93	.26	.51	.51	4.72	1.03
I will be more involved with green products in the coming months.	29.85	28.83	31.63	7.14	1.28	.51	.77	4.74	1.11
Mean								**4.78**	**1.04**

Source: Researchers' Findings (2024)

Interpretation

Table 2 presents the results of descriptive statistics on purchase intention. According to the results of the analysis, a total of 34.44% of the respondents strongly agree on, I prefer green products to non-green products in respective to their high cost, 35.20% agree, 22.45% of the respondents indicated partially agree, while 6.63% partially disagree, 0.26% disagree and 0.77% strongly disagree. On average, I prefer green products to non-green products in respective to their high cost (mean = 4.93) with a standard deviation of 1.04 which showed convergence to the mean. In addition, the results showed that, I will consider purchasing green products because they are less polluting, 24.23% of the respondents strongly agreed, 34.44% agree and 36.22% partially agree, furthermore, 4.34% partially disagree, 0.26% disagree and 0.26 % strongly disagree. On average, the results showed that, I will consider purchasing green products because they are less polluting (mean = 4.76 STD = 0.92).

The result from the table above showed that with regards to, the conservation of energy resources encourages my intention to purchase green products, 28.32% of the respondents strongly agree, 34.18% agreed, 27.30% partially agree. On the other hand, 8.42% indicate partially disagree, 0.51% disagree and 0.26% Strongly disagree. On average, the conservation of energy resources encourages my intention to purchase green products (Mean = 4.77), with standard deviation (1.09) showing convergence around the mean. On, I like to be involved in environmental protection activities performed in my country, 24.74% of the respondents strongly agree, 35.20% agree, 39.85% indicate partially agree. While 8.93% partially disagree. 0.26% disagree and 0.51% strongly disagree. On average respondents agree that I like to be involved in environmental protection activities performed in my country, (Mean = 4.72) with standard deviation 1.03 showing divergence in responses from the mean. The result of the descriptive analysis also revealed that with regards to, I will be more involved with green products in the coming months. 29.85% strongly agree, 28.83% agree, 31.63% indicated partially agree, while 7.14% partially disagree, 1.28% disagree and 0.51% strongly disagree. On average, I will be more involved with green products in the coming months (mean = 4.74), with the standard deviation showing divergence from the mean at 1.11.

The average mean of the items on purchase intention is 4.78 with a standard deviation of 1.04 which means that on average the respondents agree to purchase intention of university students in Plateau State, Nigeria, and the responses were convergence around the mean.

Restatement of Hypothesis

H_0: Green price has no significant effect on purchase intention of university students in Plateau State, Nigeria.

Table 3: Summary of a simple linear regression between green price and purchase intention of university students in Plateau State, Nigeria.

N	Model	B	Sig.	T	ANOVA (Sig.)	R	R^2	F (1,392)
392	(Constant)	2.435	.000	10.167				
	Green Price	.456	.000	8.949	0.000[b]	0.413[a]	0.168	80.078
	Predictor: (Constant), Green Price							
	Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention							

Source: Authors' computation, (2024) underlying data from Field Survey.

Interpretation

Table 3 shows the regression analysis results for green price on purchase intention of university students in Plateau State, Nigeria. The results showed that green price ($\beta = 0.456$, $t = 8.94$, $p<0.05$) has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention of university students in Plateau State, Nigeria. This implies that, green price is a very important factor in purchase intention. In addition, the R value of 0.413 supports this result and it indicates that green price has a moderate positive relationship with purchase intention of university students in Plateau State, Nigeria. The coefficient of determination $R^2 = 0.168$ indicates that about 18.8% variation that occurs in the purchase intention of university students in Plateau State, Nigeria can be accounted for by the green price while the remaining 82.2% changes that occurs is accounted for by other variables not captured in the model. The predictive and prescriptive regression models are thus expressed:

$$\mathbf{PI = 2.435 + 0.456GPI + U_i} \text{ ---------- } \mathbf{Eqn(i)\ (Predictive\ Model)}$$

$$\mathbf{PI = 2.345 + 0.456\ GPI + U_i} \text{ ---------- } \mathbf{Eqn(ii)\ (Prescriptive\ Model)}$$

Where:
PI = Purchase Intention
GPI = Green Price

The simple regression model showed that when we hold green price to a constant zero, purchase intention would be 2.435 which is positive. In the predictive model it is seen that green price has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention of the university students in Plateau State, Nigeria and this should emphasis this variable (green price), hence it is included in the prescriptive model. The results of the simple regression analysis as seen in the prescriptive model indicate that when green price is improved by one-unit purchase intention would also increase by 0.456 and vice-versa. This implies that an increase in green price would lead to an increase in the rate of purchase intention of university students in Plateau State, Nigeria. Also, the F-statistics ($df = 1,392$) = 80.078 at $p = 0.000$ ($p<0.05$) indicated that the overall model is significant in predicting the effect of green price on purchase intention, which implies that green price is an important determinant in the

purchase intention of university students in Plateau State, Nigeria. The result suggests that universities organizations should pay more attention towards developing green price to increase purchase intention. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_0) which states that green price has no significant effect on purchase intention of university students in Plateau State, Nigeria was rejected.

Discussion of Findings

The explanations and clarifications of the study's terms provide a good conceptual perspective on the study from a conceptual standpoint. Conceptually, green price conjoined with purchase intention refers to the willingness of consumers to pay a premium for environmentally friendly products or services based on their desire to support sustainability initiatives (Chen et al., 2019; Wu & Heng, 2023). This concept embodies the idea that consumers are increasingly considering the environmental impact of their purchases and are willing to invest in products or services that align with their values. The integration of green pricing strategies with purchase intention elucidates the crucial link between consumer behavior and sustainability efforts within the marketplace. Understanding this relationship is essential for businesses aiming to capitalize on the growing demand for eco-friendly offerings while also contributing to the academic discourse on consumer behavior and sustainability.

Empirically, the finding from this study is in alignment with Qomariah and Prabawani (2020), whose study finds that perceived green price has an effect on purchase intention, which means that perceived green price can significantly affect purchase intention. Ramadhan and Muthohar (2019) also finds that customers' intention to acquire hypermarket private-label items was significantly Influenced by perceived price. Similarly, Satriawan (2020) findings indicated that Xiaomi smartphone purchase intention was favorably and strongly influenced by perceived quality and perceived price. Other similar findings that align with this study in context to green price and purchase intention are that of Ida et al. (2019), Ziyuan et al. (2022) and Zhongfu et al. (2021).

The findings suggesting a significant effect of green price on purchase intention among university students in Plateau State, Nigeria align closely with the principles of the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) theory. The TBL theory emphasizes the interconnectedness of economic, environmental, and social factors in decision-making processes (Elkington, 1997). In this context, the observed impact of green price on purchase intention reflects the economic dimension, as consumers are increasingly valuing environmentally friendly products and are willing to pay a premium for them. Furthermore, by prioritizing green products, consumers contribute to the environmental aspect of the TBL by supporting sustainable practices and reducing ecological footprint. Lastly, the preference for green products also reflects the social dimension of the TBL, as it signifies a growing awareness and concern for environmental issues among university students in Plateau State, Nigeria. Thus, the findings underscore the relevance of the TBL framework in understanding consumer behavior and its implications for sustainability in emerging economies like Nigeria.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Given the support found in conceptual, empirical and theoretical submissions in previous literature with this present study's result, green price had a significant effect on purchase intention of university students in Plateau State, Nigeria. The result ($R = 0.413$, $R^2 = 0.168$; $t = 8.949$, $\beta = 0.450 > 0.05$) indicated that the overall model is significant in predicting the effect of green price on purchase intention, which implies that green price is an important determinant in the purchase intention of university students in Plateau State, Nigeria. The study recommends that businesses should consider implementing competitive pricing strategies for their eco-friendly products. While green products may often be priced at a premium due to their sustainability features, companies should explore ways to make them more affordable and accessible to consumers, especially within the student demographic. Offering discounts, promotions, or incentives for purchasing green products could help stimulate purchase intentions and drive sales.

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