



(RESEARCH ARTICLE)



## Greening the cup: Green marketing strategies of Milk Tea Shops in San Jose City, Nueva Ecija

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### Abstract

This study investigates the adoption of green marketing strategies by milk tea shops in San Jose City, Nueva Ecija, focusing on their motivations, benefits, strategies employed, and challenges faced. Utilizing a quantitative research design, data were collected through a structured questionnaire from local milk tea shop owners and managers. The findings reveal that the primary motivation for adopting green marketing is to fulfill corporate social responsibilities and gain a competitive advantage. Shops recognize substantial benefits, including increased consumer awareness, enhanced brand reputation, and potential cost savings. Key strategies employed include using biodegradable packaging, promoting reusable items, and implementing portion control measures. Despite these efforts, challenges such as high costs, consumer skepticism, and complex environmental certifications persist. The results indicate a strong commitment to sustainability but also highlight the need for improved consumer education and cost-effective solutions. Recommendations include investing in educational campaigns to enhance consumer understanding of green marketing benefits, exploring affordable, sustainable materials, and developing clear, structured green marketing plans. Addressing these challenges can enhance the effectiveness of green marketing strategies and support long-term sustainability in the milk tea sector.

**Keywords:** Competitive Advantage; Consumer Awareness; Green Marketing; Milk Tea Shops; Sustainability

### 1. Introduction

The rising trend of environmental consciousness has significantly influenced consumer behavior and, consequently, the strategies businesses employ to maintain their competitiveness in the market [1]. In industries that cater directly to consumers, such as the food and beverage sector, this shift has been particularly pronounced [2]. The milk tea industry has experienced rapid growth, establishing itself as a staple in many urban areas, including San Jose City, Nueva Ecija. This expansion, however, brings with it an increased responsibility to address environmental concerns. Milk tea shops in the region are increasingly recognizing the necessity of adopting green marketing strategies as integral to their operational frameworks. The shift towards sustainability is not merely a passing trend; it represents a vital evolution needed to align with consumer demands, regulatory pressures, and global sustainability goals. The research explores this transformation, examining the motivations, benefits, specific strategies, and challenges these businesses face in their pursuit of greener practices. This analysis highlights how the adoption of sustainable practices not only meets the expectations of environmentally conscious consumers but also positions these businesses competitively in a market that is becoming increasingly focused on sustainability.

This study was rooted in the growing importance of understanding the intersection between consumer expectations and business practices in the context of environmental sustainability [3]. For milk tea shops in San Jose City, adapting to this shift in consumer behavior is not just about staying relevant; it is essential for ensuring long-term viability in a market that is becoming more competitive and more discerning [4]. By examining the reasons behind the adoption of

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green marketing strategies, the study provides insights into how these businesses can better align with consumer values, thereby enhancing customer loyalty and satisfaction.

The benefits of adopting green marketing strategies are multifaceted, impacting not only the environmental footprint of the businesses but also their economic sustainability [5]. The research uncovers these benefits, showing how sustainable practices can lead to cost savings, improved brand reputation, and increased customer loyalty. For instance, by reducing waste and utilizing eco-friendly materials, milk tea shops have managed to lower their operating costs over time, which is particularly crucial in an industry characterized by tight profit margins. Additionally, the reputational benefits of being perceived as an environmentally responsible business have attracted a broader customer base, including those who prioritize sustainability in their purchasing decisions [6]. This aspect of the study is crucial for understanding the long-term economic advantages of green marketing, which extend beyond immediate financial gains to include enhanced market positioning and resilience against future environmental regulations.

The study identifies and analyzes the specific green marketing strategies employed by milk tea shops in San Jose City. These strategies encompass a variety of practices, including the use of sustainable packaging, sourcing organic ingredients, implementing energy-efficient store operations, and engaging with the community. By cataloging these approaches, the research offers a comprehensive overview of how local businesses are innovating to tackle the challenges of environmental sustainability. This is particularly significant in a region like Nueva Ecija, where it is essential to balance economic development with environmental preservation. The findings of this study could serve as a valuable model for other small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the region and beyond, demonstrating that green marketing can be effectively integrated into business operations without compromising profitability [7]. This approach not only enhances environmental responsibility but also positions these businesses favorably in an increasingly eco-conscious marketplace [8].

However, as the study critically examines, the implementation of green marketing strategies has its challenges [9]. Small businesses, such as milk tea shops, often need help with adopting sustainable practices, including higher upfront costs, supply chain limitations, and a lack of consumer awareness or demand for green products [10]. By understanding these challenges, the research offers recommendations on how to overcome them, providing practical solutions that can be applied not only within the milk tea industry but across other sectors as well. This aspect of the study is crucial for ensuring that the transition to green marketing is accessible to all businesses, regardless of their size or resources.

This study is both timely and necessary for understanding how milk tea shops in San Jose City, Nueva Ecija, have responded to the growing demand for environmentally responsible business practices. By examining the reasons for adopting green marketing strategies, the benefits these strategies bring, the specific practices employed, and the challenges faced, the research offers a comprehensive view of the current state of sustainability in the local milk tea industry. The insights gained from this study are invaluable for businesses seeking to enhance their sustainability efforts and for policymakers aiming to support such initiatives in the region. Furthermore, this research contributes to the broader discourse on sustainable business practices, providing a case study that can inform similar efforts in other regions and industries.

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## 2. Material and methods

The study employed a descriptive-quantitative research design, which is particularly well-suited for examining the current state of green marketing strategies among milk tea shops in San Jose City, Nueva Ecija. This design was chosen to provide a systematic and empirical approach to understanding the extent to which these businesses have adopted environmentally sustainable practices and to quantify the perceptions and experiences of the respondents.

The respondents of the study consisted of 15 owners and managers from selected milk tea shops in San Jose City, Nueva Ecija. This specific demographic was chosen because these individuals are directly involved in the decision-making processes related to marketing strategies and sustainability initiatives within their businesses. Their insights and experiences are crucial in understanding how green marketing is implemented and perceived at the managerial level. Given the relatively small population of milk tea shops in the area, the sample size was sufficient to provide meaningful data while ensuring the study's feasibility.

The study utilized a survey questionnaire as the primary instrument to gather data. The questionnaire was carefully designed and composed of items measured on a 5-point Likert scale. This scaling method was selected to capture the degree of agreement or disagreement with various statements related to green marketing practices, benefits, challenges, and motivations. The use of a Likert scale allowed for the quantification of subjective perceptions, making it

easier to analyze and interpret the data statistically. The questionnaire was structured to cover all key areas relevant to the study's objectives, ensuring comprehensive data collection.

The sampling technique employed was purposive sampling, which is a non-probability sampling method where participants are selected based on specific characteristics or criteria. In this study, purposive sampling was particularly useful because it targeted individuals who are most knowledgeable about the subject matter—the owners and managers of milk tea shops who are responsible for the implementation of marketing strategies. Additionally, only those who agreed to participate were included in the sample, which is a common approach in studies where participant consent is crucial for ethical considerations. This method ensured that the data collected was both relevant and reliable, as it came directly from the individuals most involved in green marketing practices within the milk tea industry.

**Table 1** Verbal Description

Ranges	Reasons for Using Green Marketing, Benefits, and Challenges	Green Marketing Strategies
4.21-5.00	Strongly Agree	Always
3.41-4.20	Agree	Often
2.61-3.40	Moderately Agree	Sometimes
1.81-2.60	Disagree	Seldom
1.00-1.80	Strongly Disagree	Never

### 3. Results and discussion

This section delves into the reasons milk tea shops in San Jose City, Nueva Ecija, adopt green marketing strategies, exploring the motivations driving their commitment to sustainability. It also examines the benefits they experience, the specific strategies they employ, and the challenges they face in implementing these eco-friendly practices, providing a comprehensive view of their green marketing efforts.

**Table 2** Reasons for Adopting Green Marketing Strategies

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Description
To capitalize on opportunities that provide a competitive advantage in the market.	4.20	Agree
To fulfill corporate social responsibilities by contributing to environmental sustainability.	4.34	Strongly Agree
To comply with governmental regulations and pressures related to environmental protection.	3.86	Agree
To respond to competitive pressures and industry trends towards sustainability.	3.86	Agree
To address cost efficiency and profit concerns by adopting sustainable practices.	3.55	Agree
Grand Mean	3.96	Agree

The results from Table 2 highlight the primary motivations behind the adoption of green marketing strategies by milk tea shops in San Jose City, Nueva Ecija. The data reveals that the most significant reason for these businesses to implement green marketing practices is to fulfill corporate social responsibilities by contributing to environmental sustainability, with a weighted mean of 4.34, indicating a strong agreement among respondents. This finding underscores the importance of aligning business operations with broader societal goals, reflecting a commitment to environmental stewardship as a core value [11]. Such corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives are increasingly recognized as essential for building a positive brand image and enhancing customer loyalty.

Additionally, the results show that milk tea shops are motivated to capitalize on opportunities that offer a competitive advantage in the market, with a weighted mean of 4.20. This suggests that businesses perceive green marketing as a strategic tool to differentiate themselves from competitors and attract environmentally conscious consumers [12]. Compliance with governmental regulations and industry trends also plays a role, as indicated by the mean scores of 3.86, which reflect an agreement among owners and managers on the necessity to adapt to external pressures and regulatory requirements related to environmental protection.

Addressing cost efficiency and profit concerns through sustainable practices, with a weighted mean of 3.55, highlights that while economic considerations are a factor, they are not the primary driver for adopting green marketing strategies. The grand mean of 3.96 further supports the overall agreement on these motivations, suggesting that while there are multiple reasons for adopting green marketing, the commitment to environmental sustainability and competitive advantage are particularly influential [13]. This overview of the motivations reveals a nuanced approach where strategic benefits, regulatory compliance, and corporate values intersect in shaping the green marketing efforts of milk tea shops.

**Table 3** Benefits of Green Marketing

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Description
Green marketing initiatives can significantly increase consumer awareness about the environmental benefits of green products.	4.33	Strongly Agree
By adopting green marketing, restaurants can enhance their reputation and brand image, attracting a broader and more diverse customer base.	4.27	Strongly Agree
Establishing strong environmental credentials through green practices can provide a competitive advantage in securing contracts and partnerships.	4.34	Strongly Agree
Green marketing not only garners public approval but also offers cost-saving opportunities by implementing sustainable practices.	4.25	Strongly Agree
Adopting green marketing strategies can lead to a sustained competitive advantage in the marketplace.	4.53	Strongly Agree
Effectively advertising green initiatives can lead to an increased market share by appealing to eco-conscious consumers.	4.41	Strongly Agree
Integrating green marketing practices into the overall corporate messaging can help attract new customers who prioritize sustainability.	4.34	Strongly Agree
Promoting an environmentally friendly business image through advertising and sales promotions can help maintain loyalty among key stakeholder groups.	4.48	Strongly Agree
Utilizing green marketing for positive brand positioning can enhance the company's image as a socially responsible entity.	4.32	Strongly Agree
Grand Mean	4.36	Strongly Agree

The results from Table 3 reveal that green marketing offers substantial benefits for milk tea shops in San Jose City, Nueva Ecija, with a grand mean of 4.36, indicating strong agreement on the advantages of these practices. A particularly notable benefit is the significant increase in consumer awareness regarding the environmental benefits of green products, which has a weighted mean of 4.33. This finding underscores the effectiveness of green marketing initiatives in educating consumers about the environmental impact of their purchasing decisions, thereby enhancing the overall market appeal of eco-friendly products [14]. The ability to inform consumers not only fosters a more environmentally conscious consumer base but also aligns with the growing trend of responsible consumption.

Another key benefit identified is the enhancement of reputation and brand image through green marketing, with a weighted mean of 4.27. Milk tea shops that adopt sustainable practices are perceived more positively, attracting a broader and more diverse customer base. Businesses visibly committed to environmental sustainability often experience increased brand loyalty and customer engagement [15]. In a competitive market where consumers prioritize corporate responsibility, the ability to cultivate a strong environmental reputation is essential for long-term success.

The study further indicates that establishing robust environmental credentials through green marketing can provide a competitive edge, reflected in a weighted mean of 4.34. This advantage extends beyond public relations, facilitating strategic business opportunities such as securing contracts and partnerships. Companies that integrate sustainability into their core strategies are better positioned to leverage these relationships, enhancing their market presence [16].

Moreover, green marketing offers cost-saving opportunities by reducing waste and optimizing resource use, with a weighted mean of 4.25. This finding reinforces the notion that sustainable practices can yield financial benefits alongside reputational gains. By adopting eco-friendly materials and processes, milk tea shops can lower their operating costs over time, which is particularly crucial in an industry characterized by tight profit margins.

Finally, the results demonstrate that integrating green marketing into overall corporate messaging and promoting an environmentally friendly business image enhances customer attraction and stakeholder loyalty, with weighted means ranging from 4.32 to 4.48. These findings emphasize the critical role of green marketing in building a positive brand image and sustaining competitive advantage by appealing to eco-conscious consumers and maintaining strong relationships with key stakeholder groups [17]. This comprehensive view of the benefits highlights the multifaceted value of green marketing strategies in driving both consumer engagement and operational efficiency, ultimately contributing to the long-term sustainability of milk tea shops in the region.

The study illustrates that the adoption of green marketing strategies not only meets consumer demand for environmentally responsible practices but also enhances the overall business viability of milk tea shops in San Jose City. The insights gained from this research can serve as a valuable framework for other businesses aiming to incorporate sustainability into their operations, thereby fostering a more environmentally conscious marketplace.

**Table 4** Green Marketing Strategies Used by Milk Tea Shops

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Description
Using biodegradable paper cups and packaging for take-out orders.	3.44	Often
Providing napkins made from recycled paper (brown tissue) to emphasize sustainability.	3.61	Sometimes
Utilizing reusable serving utensils for dine-in customers to reduce single-use plastic waste.	4.08	Often
Offering promotional items like reusable straws or eco-friendly stickers to raise awareness about environmental conservation.	3.46	Often
Implementing portion control measures to minimize ingredient waste, ensuring the right amount of tea and toppings are used.	4.21	Often
Enforcing a non-smoking policy within the shop premises to maintain a clean and healthy indoor environment.	3.88	Often
Incorporating green, live plants within the shop to enhance indoor air quality and create a welcoming ambiance.	3.88	Often
Using digital receipts instead of printed ones to reduce paper waste.	3.92	Often
Placing recycling bins prominently within the shop for customer use.	3.78	Often
Grand Mean	3.80	Often

The results from Table 4 illustrate the range of green marketing strategies employed by milk tea shops in San Jose City, Nueva Ecija, with a grand mean of 3.80, indicating that these strategies are often implemented. Among the various approaches, utilizing reusable serving utensils for dine-in customers stands out as a frequently adopted practice, with a weighted mean of 4.08. This strategy effectively addresses the issue of single-use plastic waste, demonstrating a significant commitment to reducing environmental impact in daily operations [18]. By focusing on reusable options, these shops contribute to a more sustainable dining experience, aligning with broader industry trends towards eco-friendly practices.

The use of biodegradable paper cups and packaging for take-out orders, with a weighted mean of 3.44, is another commonly implemented strategy. However, it scores slightly lower compared to other practices. This suggests that while there is an effort to replace traditional plastics with more sustainable materials, the adoption is less widespread than some of the other green initiatives. Similarly, providing napkins made from recycled paper has a mean score of 3.61, indicating that while this practice is recognized as valuable, it is not universally applied across all milk tea shops. These findings highlight the variability in the implementation of certain strategies, potentially due to cost considerations or differing levels of consumer demand.

Strategies like implementing portion control measures and using digital receipts show a strong commitment to sustainability, with weighted means of 4.21 and 3.92, respectively. Portion control measures help minimize ingredient waste, which not only benefits the environment but also enhances operational efficiency by ensuring that resources are used effectively [19]. Digital receipts further reduce paper waste, reflecting a modern approach to environmental responsibility that aligns with current technological advancements. These practices demonstrate how operational adjustments can support sustainability goals while also addressing practical business needs.

The incorporation of green, live plants within the shop and the enforcement of a non-smoking policy both have a mean of 3.88, indicating a consistent application of these strategies to improve indoor environmental quality. Green plants enhance air quality and create a more inviting atmosphere, which can positively impact customer experience and shop ambiance [20]. A non-smoking policy ensures a healthier indoor environment, which is crucial for maintaining a clean and pleasant space for both customers and staff. These measures reflect a holistic approach to creating a sustainable and customer-friendly environment.

Lastly, offering promotional items like reusable straws and placing recycling bins prominently within the shop both score around 3.78 and 3.46, respectively. While these strategies are employed to encourage eco-friendly behavior and recycling, their slightly lower mean scores suggest they are less frequently implemented or perhaps less prioritized compared to other practices. Nevertheless, these efforts contribute to a broader sustainability framework by raising environmental awareness and facilitating recycling. The results reveal a diverse range of green marketing strategies, with varying levels of implementation reflecting both the opportunities and challenges faced by milk tea shops in their sustainability efforts.

**Table 5** Challenges Faced by the Milk Tea Shops Owners/Managers in Implementing Green Marketing

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Description
A significant portion of the customer base lacks awareness about the advantages and importance of green marketing practices.	4.32	Strongly Agree
Utilizing recyclable and renewable materials for product packaging often involves higher costs, which can be a financial burden for businesses.	4.32	Strongly Agree
There is a prevalent perception among customers that green marketing is merely a marketing gimmick rather than a genuine commitment to sustainability.	4.14	Agree
Environmental labels and certifications can be confusing or misinterpreted, leading to difficulties in communicating their true benefits to consumers.	4.28	Strongly Agree
Implementing green marketing strategies often relies heavily on advanced technology and substantial investments in research and development.	4.12	Agree
There is a lack of well-defined and structured green marketing plans, leading to inconsistent implementation and unclear objectives.	4.32	Strongly Agree
The increasing number of competitors adopting green marketing strategies intensifies market pressure and makes it challenging to stand out.	4.08	Agree
Inconsistencies in the execution of green marketing strategies can undermine their effectiveness and reduce overall impact.	4.31	Strongly Agree
Grand Mean	4.23	Strongly Agree

The results from Table 5 underscore the significant challenges faced by milk tea shop owners and managers in implementing green marketing strategies, with a grand mean of 4.23 indicating strong agreement on the difficulties encountered. One major challenge identified is the need for more customer awareness regarding the benefits and importance of green marketing practices, which scored a weighted mean of 4.32. This lack of awareness can hinder the effectiveness of green marketing efforts, as customers who need help understanding the value of sustainable practices may not fully support or engage with these initiatives [21]. This challenge highlights the need for increased educational efforts to raise consumer awareness about the environmental and social benefits of green marketing.

The financial burden associated with using recyclable and renewable materials is another significant challenge, also scoring 4.32. This cost issue often arises because sustainable materials tend to be more expensive than their conventional counterparts, which can be a major obstacle for small and medium-sized businesses operating on tight budgets [22]. The higher costs of these materials can deter milk tea shops from fully adopting green practices despite their commitment to environmental sustainability. This underscores the need for more affordable and accessible green alternatives to support businesses in their sustainability efforts.

A prevalent challenge noted is the perception among customers that green marketing is a marketing gimmick rather than a genuine commitment to sustainability, with a mean score of 4.14. This skepticism can undermine the credibility of green marketing initiatives and reduce consumer trust in the authenticity of a business's environmental efforts. Additionally, environmental labels and certifications, which scored 4.28, are often confusing or misinterpreted, making it difficult for businesses to communicate the benefits of their green practices to consumers effectively. This confusion can further complicate the adoption of green marketing strategies and diminish their overall impact.

The reliance on advanced technology and substantial investments in research and development, with a mean score of 4.12, presents another challenge for implementing green marketing strategies. The need for technological innovation and ongoing research can be a significant barrier for businesses, especially those with limited resources [23]. Furthermore, the lack of well-defined and structured green marketing plans, also scoring 4.32, leads to inconsistent implementation and clear objectives. This inconsistency can undermine the effectiveness of green marketing strategies and hinder a business's ability to achieve its sustainability goals.

Lastly, the increasing competition in the market, with a mean score of 4.08, adds pressure to differentiate green marketing strategies from those of competitors. The proliferation of green initiatives can make it challenging for milk tea shops to stand out and effectively communicate their unique sustainability efforts. Inconsistencies in the execution of green marketing strategies, scoring 4.31, can further detract from their effectiveness, reducing their overall impact and effectiveness. Addressing these challenges is crucial for enhancing the successful implementation of green marketing and achieving meaningful sustainability outcomes.

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#### 4. Conclusion

The findings from the study on green marketing strategies among milk tea shops in San Jose City, Nueva Ecija, provide valuable insights into the motivations driving these businesses toward sustainability. The primary reasons for adopting green marketing include fulfilling corporate social responsibilities and leveraging sustainability for competitive advantage. The significant commitment to environmental stewardship reflects a growing awareness of the need for responsible business practices and aligns with broader trends in consumer expectations for eco-friendly operations. Additionally, the strategic pursuit of competitive advantage through green marketing highlights how businesses are using sustainability to differentiate themselves and attract a loyal customer base. The benefits of implementing green marketing strategies are evident in the increased consumer awareness, enhanced brand reputation, and potential for cost savings. Businesses that effectively communicate their environmental credentials and integrate sustainable practices into their operations experience a positive impact on their market position and customer engagement. The strategies employed, such as using biodegradable packaging and promoting reusable items, contribute to reducing environmental footprints while also supporting long-term business growth. However, the study also reveals that despite the benefits, challenges such as high costs and consumer skepticism remain obstacles to effective implementation. To address these challenges, it is recommended that milk tea shops invest in educational initiatives to increase consumer awareness about the true benefits of green marketing. This can help counteract skepticism and build trust in the authenticity of their sustainability efforts. Additionally, exploring cost-effective and scalable sustainable materials, alongside developing clear and structured green marketing plans, can alleviate financial burdens and improve implementation consistency. Leveraging technological advancements and simplifying communication about environmental benefits can further enhance the effectiveness of green marketing strategies and support the overall sustainability goals of milk tea shops.

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## Compliance with ethical standards

### *Disclosure of conflict of interest*

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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