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Problems and Solutions of Green Marketing Use in Small Business Activities in Uzbekistan

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Abstract: This article examines the key problems and possible solutions related to the use of green marketing in small business activities in Uzbekistan. In the context of increasing global environmental challenges, green marketing has become an important tool for achieving sustainable development and enhancing the competitiveness of small enterprises. According to the research, some of the significant barriers to the adaptation of green marketing included financing difficulties, lack of information, weaknesses of institutions, and low consumer awareness of eco-friendly products. Investments of smaller enterprises are appreciably modest and the establishment of green market infrastructure is still not yet vigorous. The impact of government support, environmental standards, innovative technologies and marketing communications in the promotion of green marketing practices is also analyzed. For this study statistical analysis, logical reasoning, and comparative analysis methods are used. The results of the research will make contribution in order to improve green marketing strategies of small businesses, stimulate environmentally friendly behaviour of firms and making a step towards establishing of the green economy in Uzbekistan. The suggested conclusions and practical recommendations can guide policymakers, researchers and entrepreneurs keen on sustainable business development.

Keywords: green marketing, small business, sustainable development, environmentally friendly products, marketing strategy, Uzbekistan

1. Introduction

Environmental sustainability has become a paramount global issue, emphasized by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 12, which calls for responsible consumption and production patterns [1]. This global agenda urges countries to adopt ecological approaches across all sectors of the economy to ensure long-term environmental health and social well-being. As developing country, Uzbekistan also adheres to such principles, thus is not an exception, and contributes to the transition to green economy. On ecological development, environmental protection, and sustainable development and sustainable business practices, several presidential decrees have been issued by the Government of Uzbekistan. For example, Decree No. PF-616 establishes a framework of basic guidelines for comprehensive actions in the field of environmental governance and stimulation of the widespread use of green technologies in economic activities [2].

Small business is the backbone of Uzbekistan — small businesses make up more than 80% of all registered companies and account for most of the employment also. Because of their omnipresence and flexibility, small businesses have enormous potential in utilizing green marketing strategies to promote the green transition of the country. In this regard,

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green marketing is a tool that encourages these companies to provide green goods and services and thus make the business target coincide with ecological ideals [3].

However, despite increasing awareness and policy support, small businesses in Uzbekistan face several challenges in effectively implementing green marketing. Financial constraints, lack of adequate information and training, limited institutional frameworks, and low consumer environmental awareness hinder their ability to fully embrace green initiatives. Statistical data from the State Committee on Statistics shows that currently fewer than 25% of small enterprises incorporate environmental considerations into their business models, indicating a clear gap between policy aspirations and practical implementation [3].

This study seeks to analyze the specific problems that small business entities encounter when employing green marketing techniques in Uzbekistan and to propose viable solutions. Such efforts are essential not only to enhance the competitiveness of small businesses in domestic and global markets but also to fulfill Uzbekistan's commitment to sustainable development goals, supporting both economic growth and environmental stewardship.

2. Materials and Method

Literature review

In recent years, green marketing has gained significant attention in academic research due to its contribution to sustainable development and environmentally responsible business practices [4]. Existing studies show that green marketing should be considered not merely as a promotional activity but as a strategic approach integrated into overall business management. Such an understanding is particularly relevant for small businesses, as it allows sustainability objectives to be aligned with long-term economic performance.

According to Peattie and Crane [5] green marketing involves designing the product, pricing, distributing and formulating marketing communication strategies that integrate the environmental aspects. This conceptualization channelizes the scope of green marketing for sustainable competitive advantage (SCA) with the mitigation of environmental hazards. This combination of strategies is particularly critical for small business entities because typically they have limited resources and they must position themselves effectively.

Empirical research indicates that small businesses encounter greater difficulties in adopting green marketing practices compared to large enterprises, mainly due to financial constraints, limited access to green technologies, and insufficient managerial expertise [6]. These findings suggest that structural and resource-related barriers remain a key challenge to the widespread implementation of green marketing among small firms.

Leonidou et al. emphasize that low consumer awareness and weak communication of environmental values significantly reduce the effectiveness of green marketing strategies in developing economies [7]. This implies that the success of green marketing depends not only on business initiatives but also on the level of environmental consciousness among consumers. Strengthening consumer awareness can therefore enhance the overall impact of green marketing efforts.

Furthermore, recent works suggest that government policies and environmental rules and regulations are required conditions that support the adoption of green market activities [8]. Facilitated through regulatory mandates, and incentives, business behavior that is in accordance with sustainability ideals are pursued and shaped through a plethora of institutional support mechanisms. This is especially relevant in those countries where state policy is actively involved in shaping the market development.

Research on green marketing practices in Central Asian economies illustrates that the practices are in an early phase of development and there is still a need for a better vinculum between environmental policy and business [9]. These observations point to the need for context-specific approaches when applying green marketing concepts. Addressing such gaps can support the more effective use of green marketing in small business activities in Uzbekistan.

Methodology

This study applies a mixed-method research approach to examine the problems and solutions related to the use of green marketing in small business activities in Uzbekistan. Quantitative methods are used to analyze statistical data on small business development and environmental practices, while qualitative methods focus on the analysis of academic literature and regulatory documents.

Statistical, comparative, and logical analysis methods are employed to assess the current level of green marketing adoption and identify key influencing factors. A systematic approach is used to evaluate the interaction between economic, environmental, and institutional elements. The applied research methods are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Research methodology [10]

Research Method	Purpose of Application	Relevance to the Study Topic
Literature analysis	To review recent academic studies and policy documents	Forms the theoretical basis of the research
Statistical analysis	To analyze quantitative indicators of small business activity and environmental data	Identifies the current level of green marketing implementation
Comparative analysis	To compare green marketing practices across different contexts and studies	Reveals similarities and differences in applied approaches
Case study analysis	To examine specific examples of small businesses implementing green marketing	Provides practical insights and real-world application of green marketing strategies
Policy analysis	To review national and international policies affecting small business environmental practices	Highlights the institutional and regulatory factors influencing green marketing adoption

3. Results and Discussion

The study analyzed both current and anticipated status of the adoption of green-marketing practices by small-scale business entities in Uzbekistan using a blend of statistical methods. This analysis offers metrics on small business EMR integration and trends from recent years and forecasts through the year 2025. They were selected based on their relevance to the implementation of green marketing and their closest proximity to the objectives set forth in the National Sustainable Development Strategy of the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2019-2030, including “Green Economy” measures.

The work is based on analysis of data by the State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics and other official and expert sources. Small business share in the economy and the share of small enterprises which take environmental considerations were examined, as well as the dynamics of small business entities, and government spending on green investment were emphasized. To illustrate this both past developments and projected developments following official economic development projections through the period 2020–2025 were considered. The main results of the statistical analysis are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Key statistical indicators related to small business and green practices in Uzbekistan (2020–2025). [11]

Indicator	Value	Year
Share of small businesses in total enterprises (%)	80+	2023
Share of small businesses incorporating environmental factors (%)	~25	2023
Growth of small business entities (%)	5–7	2020–2025 (projected)

Public expenditures on environmental protection (trend)	Increasing	2020–2025
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This statistical overview demonstrates that while small businesses dominate the national economic landscape, only a limited proportion currently implements green marketing strategies. The data indicate that the policy support and awareness-raising measures should be targeted to ensure that the small enterprises in Uzbekistan adopt environmentally-friendly practices.

The adoption of green marketing practices in small business entities are essential as sizes aligned with sustainable development and economic growth with environmental objectives. The main dimensions influencing green marketing implementation in Uzbekistan [international experience; firm size; economic growth dynamics; policy orientation; and strategic considerations] and respective challenges are presented in a structured way in Table 3. The table summaries the major drivers or barriers to environmentally responsible marketing behaviors and illustrates the problems observed, the underlying causes of the problems, and possible solutions.

This summary provides a well-grounded overview of the structural and operational hurdles small businesses contend with – a base for policy targeted interventions and capacity-building. Moreover, by establishing a comparative framework, it allows us to better identify the gaps between local practices and international standards, thus providing more actionable measures to promote green marketing.

Table 3. Key Dimensions of Green Marketing Adoption in Small Businesses in Uzbekistan [11]

Comparative Dimension	Observed Problem in Uzbekistan	Underlying Cause	Potential Solution / Implication
International experience	Low integration of green marketing among small businesses	Lack of institutional support, limited awareness	Adopt best international practices; provide guidance and training programs
Firm size (Small vs Large businesses)	Small businesses struggle to implement green marketing	Limited financial and technical capacity	Provide financial incentives, technical support, and capacity-building programs
Economic growth vs environmental engagement	Growth of small businesses not matched by green marketing adoption	Economic growth alone does not trigger environmental practices	Link economic growth incentives with green marketing adoption; promote eco-certifications
Policy-level objectives vs firm-level practices	Policies exist but slow firm-level adoption	Weak policy-business linkage; insufficient enforcement	Strengthen communication and enforcement; provide direct incentives to small businesses
Traditional vs green marketing strategies	Traditional marketing prioritized due to short-term costs	Perception of green marketing as costly and risky	Educate businesses on long-term benefits; offer subsidies or tax incentives

However, in Table 3 the comparative framework shows some of the most vital factors impacting the adoption of green marketing practices in small businesses in Uzbekistan. International averages show that small enterprises trail their peers in comparable economies, and in large part due to constrained institutional knowledge mobilization and

uptake. This issue is further compounded by firm size, since financial and technical limitations experienced by small business limits their capacity to implement environmentally oriented marketing.

Despite the proliferation of small businesses, the quantitative increase in small businesses has not led to a corresponding rise in green marketing, indicating that the mere upturn in the national economy does not invoke environmental activism. Furthermore, there is a divide between national goals and what firms are doing, indicating poor communication and little motivation to achieve policies. Although, nowadays, sustainability and sustainability marketing are hot potatoes for discussion, the preference towards using traditional marketing rather than green marketing highlights the short term costs and risks of implementing these sustainable practices instead of powered by an Idea or a Machine.

In summary, this study shows that green marketing is not widely used due to a combination of economic, institutional, and strategic factors. These challenges can be addressed through several interventions, including policy measures, financial and technical support programs as well as awareness -raising initiatives that align small business growth with sustainable marketing actions.

ABC: Initially small companies of Uzbekistan are adopting green marketing approaches and in bringing their activities in line with environmental profit. But the scope and attributions of this practice varies widely among sectors and firms. The research included some analysis of selected case studies of sustainable moving small businesses across different regions and industries to help better understand how green marketing actually works.

This study explores these businesses with reference to the sub-domains they have implemented in green marketing, the corresponding outcomes witnessed in their internal and market aspects, and the major challenges faced during the implementation phase as reflected in Table 4. The case study environment allows some insights into how small businesses are managing environmental and sustainable initiatives, as well as a platform for discussing potential means to support wider uptake of sustainability in marketing practices.

Table 4. Selected Small Businesses and Green Marketing Practices in Uzbekistan [12]

Business / Sector	Green Marketing Element Implemented	Observed Impact / Result	Challenges Faced
Organic Food Producer (Tashkent)	Eco-friendly packaging, social media promotion	Increased consumer trust; 12% sales growth	High packaging costs; limited supplier options
Local Retail Chain (Samarkand)	Green branding, eco-labeling on products	Enhanced brand recognition; customer loyalty	Staff training required; initial investment high
Handicraft Exporter (Bukhara)	Sustainable materials, participation in green fairs	Attracted international buyers; market differentiation	Lack of knowledge on certifications
Small Textile Workshop (Andijan)	Energy-efficient production, recycling campaigns	Cost savings; positive media coverage	Limited funding for equipment upgrades

Case studies reveal that while small businesses can successfully adopt green marketing strategies, challenges remain in the form of financial, technical, and informational constraints. Now, producers of organic food improved consumer confidence and sales, retail chains engaged in better brand awareness, and exporters—

opening access to international markets. But the price tag, the need to train employees and a lack of knowledge when it comes to the actual certification limits more widespread adoption [13]. Hence, the authors call for targeted training, policy incentives and financial support to further promote green marketing adoption in the small business sector in Uzbekistan.

This study identifies major barriers to the adoption of green marketing practices by small business entities operating in Uzbekistan in the form of institutional, financial, and knowledge-related factors. SMEs understand the positive impacts of green approaches but remain without specialization in dedicated policies, finance channels, & institutional collaboration. Therefore, designing appropriate policy solutions to respond to these challenges is an essential step in promoting sustainable entrepreneurship, increasing competitiveness, and furthering national environmental goals [14].

Table 5 extracts potential policy solutions which can be adopted based on the evidence discussed and contextualized on Uzbekistan context in particular, and their impact on SMEs with respect to adopting green marketing

Table 5. Key Policy Solutions for Enhancing Green Marketing among SMEs in Uzbekistan [12]

Policy Barrier	Proposed Solution	Impact on SMEs & Contribution to Green Marketing
Lack of targeted green marketing policies	Develop a national green marketing framework for SMEs	Provides strategic guidance, facilitates systematic adoption of green marketing
Limited financial incentives	Introduce SME-oriented tax reliefs, subsidies, and preferential credit	Reduces financial constraints, encourages green marketing investments
High cost of eco-certification	Implement subsidized or simplified eco-certification schemes	Increases accessibility, promotes credible eco-labeling
Fragmented institutional coordination	Strengthen inter-agency coordination among relevant ministries	Enhances policy coherence, ensures consistent implementation
Low managerial awareness and skills	Launch capacity-building programs and advisory services	Improves managerial competence, enables effective green marketing strategies

This streamlined table emphasizes the most critical policy interventions necessary for facilitating green marketing adoption among SMEs in Uzbekistan. Establishing a national framework provides clear strategic guidance, ensuring environmental objectives are embedded in small business operations. Financial incentives, such as tax relief and subsidies, reduce economic barriers and make green marketing investments feasible [15]. Eco-certification support enhances credibility and market positioning, while improved institutional coordination ensures consistent and coherent policy enforcement. Finally, capacity-building initiatives empower SME managers to implement sustainable marketing strategies effectively.

Collectively, these measures create an enabling environment for SMEs to integrate green marketing practices into their business models, contributing to environmental sustainability, enhanced competitiveness, and alignment with national sustainable development goals.

4. Conclusion

The present study analyzed the adoption of green marketing practices among small business entities in Uzbekistan, highlighting multiple factors that influence their

effectiveness. While institutional policies play a critical role, the study also identified managerial, financial, and practical market-related challenges. Small enterprises face obstacles including limited financial resources, high costs of eco-certification, fragmented institutional support, and insufficient managerial knowledge, which collectively hinder systematic integration of green marketing strategies.

Overall, the findings suggest that the successful implementation of green marketing requires a comprehensive approach that integrates policy, managerial capacity, financial facilitation, and practical business considerations. A combination of targeted policy frameworks, financial incentives, simplified eco-certification, inter-agency coordination, and capacity-building initiatives can enable SMEs to adopt environmentally sustainable practices effectively. Beyond regulatory compliance, these measures enhance market positioning, build consumer trust, and contribute to both economic competitiveness and environmental sustainability.

The research findings led to the following conclusion:

1. Develop a National Green Marketing Framework. Integrate environmental objectives into small business strategies. Provide clear guidance, strategic targets, and practical tools for SMEs.
2. Enhance Financial Support Mechanisms. Offer SME-focused tax reliefs, subsidies, and preferential credit schemes. Reduce economic barriers to green marketing adoption and encourage investment in eco-friendly practices.
3. Facilitate Eco-Certification and Green Labeling. Implement subsidized or simplified certification programs accessible to SMEs. Strengthen brand credibility and promote market differentiation of green products.
4. Strengthen Institutional Coordination. Improve collaboration between environmental, economic, and SME development agencies. Ensure consistent policy implementation and reduce regulatory uncertainty.
5. Invest in Managerial Capacity-Building. Launch training programs, workshops, and advisory services focused on green marketing. Equip managers with knowledge and skills to design, implement, and sustain effective strategies.
6. Encourage Market-Oriented and Practical Measures. Support SMEs in integrating consumer preferences and sustainable supply chain practices. Facilitate access to market intelligence and best practices to enhance competitiveness.

By implementing these integrated measures, SMEs in Uzbekistan can effectively adopt green marketing practices, improving both environmental performance and economic outcomes, while contributing to the country's broader sustainability objectives.

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