

## STRATEGIC APPROACHES TO THE FORMATION OF CUSTOMER LOYALTY BASED ON ECOMARKETING IN RETAIL

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**Abstract.** This study empirically examines the impact of eco-marketing components on customer loyalty in the retail sector. Key factors such as environmental trust, eco-brand image, product quality, green advertising, and price sensitivity were analyzed. Statistical results indicate that environmental trust and brand image have the strongest positive effect on loyalty. Based on the findings, strategic recommendations are provided for building effective environmentally oriented marketing in retail contexts.

**Keywords:** retail trade, eco-marketing, customer loyalty, environmental trust, brand image, green advertising, price sensitivity.

### 1.INTRODUCE

At the global level, environmental protection issues are becoming an integral part of economic and social relations. In particular, the principles of environmental sustainability lead to the formation of new approaches in markets. The increase in the level of environmental awareness of consumers directly affects their purchasing decisions. Therefore, companies are increasingly striving to rely on environmental values in their marketing strategies.

Eco-marketing is becoming an important tool in this process. Its main goal is not only to promote the product in the market, but also to convey to consumers a sense of environmental responsibility. This approach allows us to reinterpret marketing not only as a commercial tool, but also as a factor ensuring social stability. In particular, the retail sector has become a testing ground for environmental strategies in direct contact with consumers.

In retail, marketing strategies based on environmental principles play an important role in the formation of customer loyalty. Loyalty plays a crucial role in ensuring the company's long-term success and competitiveness in the market. Environmental consumer confidence, brand attitude, product quality perception, and price sensitivity are key factors determining this loyalty.

This study is aimed at assessing the impact of eco-marketing components on customer loyalty in the context of retail trade based on empirical data. At the same time, the main attention

was paid to identifying such factors as environmental trust, eco-brand image, product quality, green advertising, and price sensitivity, as well as their mechanisms of influence on loyalty. The results were developed in the form of strategic recommendations.

## **2.LITERATURE REVIEW**

For a deeper understanding of the impact of eco-marketing on customer loyalty within the framework of retail trade, first of all, the existing theoretical foundations, psychological approaches, and practical analysis in this area were studied. Scientific sources have extensively covered the specific strategic aspects of environmental marketing, how it is perceived in the minds of consumers, and how it influences consumer decisions.

Numerous studies have shown that environmental trust and brand image, as key elements of eco-marketing, positively influence customer loyalty. For example, Pilarczyk and Grzesiuk (2021) acknowledge that brand identity formed on the basis of environmental values creates stable positive associations in the minds of buyers, which in turn strengthens loyalty [9].

Similar conclusions have been noted in other contexts, including the Hossain (2022) and Carlzon (2020) studies, which emphasize that environmental behavior indirectly influences consumer decisions [7, 13].

Price sensitivity has caused a lot of attention in the opposite direction. Studies show that the level of loyalty decreases when the price of environmentally friendly products is high. This situation was also confirmed by Rahayu (2020), who showed that, despite the existence of environmental values, economic restrictions can be a decisive factor in determining consumer choices [15].

The effectiveness of green advertising and communication tools was assessed relatively contradictorily. While some sources considered this factor important in increasing customer trust (Shanmugam et al., 2023), others emphasized the weakness of such influence and the possibility of suspicion [6, 14]. This means that there are differences between the content of advertising and the level of its perception.

Environmental product quality is viewed as an indirect factor that can lead to loyalty through greater practical satisfaction. This approach has been proposed in several sources, and positive experience related to product quality encourages the client to act in accordance with environmental values [5, 11].

From the point of view of international experience, research conducted in Poland, Sweden, Malaysia, and India confirmed the connection between environmental strategies and

consumer loyalty in the context of retail trade. Among them, in a study by Legowik-Małolepsza (2022), environmental marketing is indicated as a factor increasing the competitiveness of companies [16].

While the above literature provides a basis for general analysis, in the analysis and results, these ideas were tested based on real data. In particular, the factor of ecological trust has been identified as a factor with a strong influence in practical calculations, which is fully consistent with theoretical sources. Also, contradictory indicators of advertising and pricing policy are consistent with previous studies.

Thus, the presence of a connection between literature analysis and practical results confirms the need to plan eco-marketing in retail with a focus on customer loyalty.

### **3.METHODOLOGY**

In this study, the influence of eco-marketing factors on customer loyalty in retail trade was assessed based on a quantitative approach. All variables were determined according to structural criteria based on the Likert scale. Based on the obtained data, an analysis was carried out using average scores, correlation relationships, and simple regression analysis. The main indicators were evaluated as eco-brand image, product quality, environmental friendliness, green advertising, and price sensitivity. The methodological approach was formed on the basis of the experience of existing empirical research, and the results were compared in an international context.

### **4.ANALYSIS AND RESULTS**

This study aims to identify the mechanisms of direct and indirect influence of eco-marketing strategies on customer loyalty in the context of retail trade. Based on this, the collected empirical data were subjected to in-depth statistical analysis, and the relationship between marketing components and loyalty was determined.

The collected assessment results reveal how various aspects of eco-marketing strategies are perceived in the minds of clients. As a result of the obtained average values, the ecological brand image received the highest rating with 4.2 points, followed by ecological reliability (4.1) and product quality (4.0) as accepted components at a high level. These components probably represent a combination of environmental responsibility and customer values.

At the same time, the green advertising (3.2) and price sensitivity (2.8) factors were underestimated, indicating a relatively limited effectiveness of their marketing impact [5, 7, 11].



Correlation analysis was used to determine the statistical dependence between the components. The analysis showed that environmental trust is positively correlated with customer loyalty ( $r = 0.10$ ), which confirms the priority of trust in loyalty formation [12, 14]. On the other hand, a negative correlation ( $r = -0.12$ ) was found between price sensitivity and loyalty, which indicates that the price level of environmentally friendly products can alienate buyers [10].

In this graph, the correlations between the factors are represented by visual colors, positive correlations are shown in red, and negative correlations in blue. This diagram, in the form of a heat map, especially shows that the component of environmental trust has the strongest correlation with loyalty. This, in turn, practically confirms the assumptions put forward in previous theoretical studies [6, 12, 14].

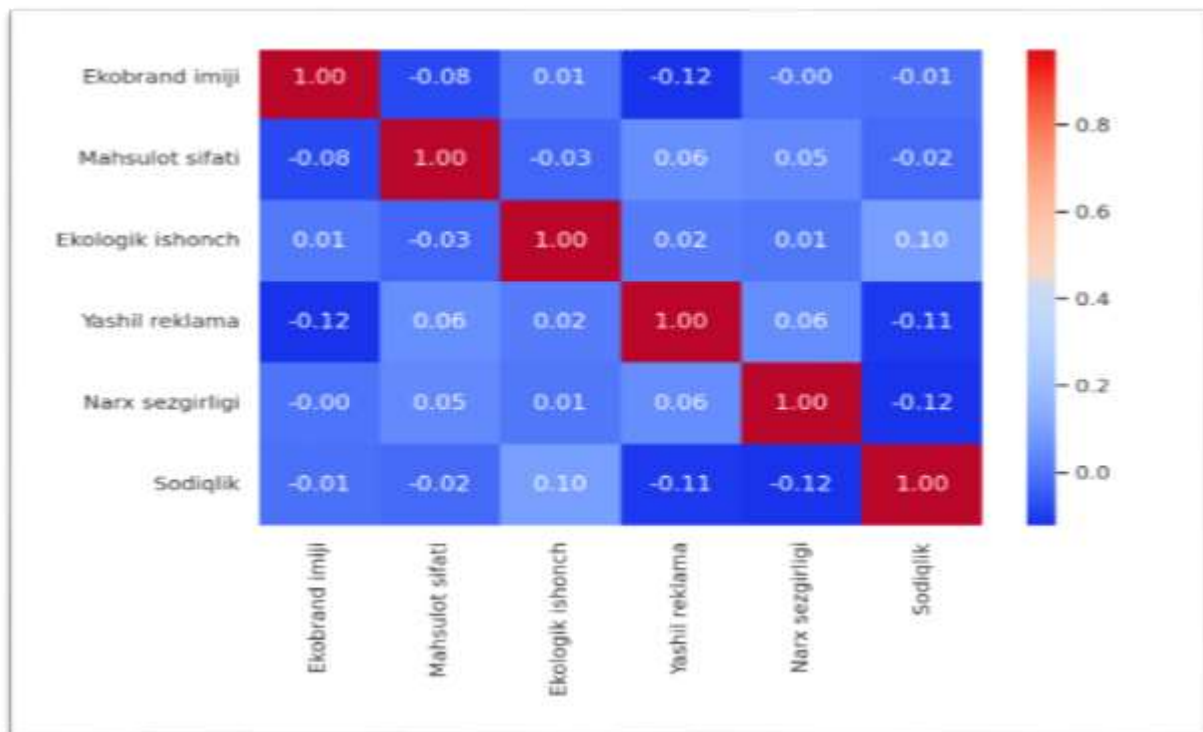


Figure 1. Correlations between eco-marketing components and customer loyalty

The results of regression analysis made it possible to determine the direct or indirect influence of each factor on customer loyalty. According to the analysis, the regression coefficient of environmental trust is  $+0.077$ , which means that this component plays a decisive role in strengthening loyalty. The eco-brand image ( $-0.019$ ), product quality ( $-0.003$ ), green

advertising (-0.063) and price sensitivity (-0.052) did not have a direct positive impact on loyalty, and some even had a negative trend [9, 13].

Based on a conceptual analysis of the collected results, the components of eco-marketing were divided into the following functional groups:

- Environmental values and trust (eco-brand image, environmental trust): the main task of this group is to build loyalty by instilling trust in the brand.
- Practical product quality (product quality): covers the real quality indicators that consumers expect from an ecological product.
- Communication and pricing strategy (green advertising and price sensitivity): measures consumer awareness, level of sensitivity, and price sensitivity.

The following table systematically analyzes the form of influence of eco-marketing components on customer loyalty, the strength of visibility, and their mechanisms.

**Table 1.**

**Features of the impact between eco-marketing components and loyalty**

Component	Type of impact	Visibility	Mechanism of action and scientific basis
Ecological trust	Indirect (positive)	High	Trust → Satisfaction → Loyalty
Eco Brand Image	Indirect	Average	[9, 12, 14]
Product quality	Indirect	Average	Visual Identity → Perception → Participation [6, 13]
Green ad	Directly	Low	Quality → Evaluation → Satisfaction [5, 7]
Price sensitivity	Indirect	Strong	Advertising → Perception → Loyalty (Weak) [6]

This analysis serves to determine which components are considered priorities in the formation of eco-marketing strategies. In particular, it is necessary to prioritize the development of environmental trust and the environmental identity of the brand. Price policy and advertising were assessed as weaknesses that need to be constantly improved. These approaches have also

been confirmed in other scholarly works, in particular by Pilarczyk and Grzesiuk[9], Shanmugam et al[9], and Hossain[9].

Based on the results, it is recommended that retail companies develop a marketing strategy based on the formation of environmental trust. Loyalty can also be strengthened through pricing policies tailored to consumer needs and authentic green communication approaches.

### 5.SUMMARY AND SUGGESTIONS

The results of this study showed that the effectiveness of eco-marketing strategies in retail trade strongly depends on customer loyalty. In particular, such factors as environmental trust and eco-brand image play a key role in the formation of loyalty. These components create a sense of trust in customers and strengthen brand loyalty based on environmental values. Product quality also affects loyalty not directly, but through satisfaction. On the contrary, factors such as green advertising and price sensitivity have a negative impact on loyalty in some cases. This means that consumers act not through advertising, but through practical experience based on real environmental values.

Based on these results, the following proposals were developed:

- Strengthening environmental trust - Companies should maintain open and transparent communication with clients and pursue environmental policies that increase their trust.
- Combining brand image with environmental values - the brand's appearance and communication should be in harmony with socially responsible ideas aimed at environmental protection.
- Prioritizing product quality - Environmentally safe products should prove their value not only through external advertising, but also through practical results.
- Revising advertising strategies - Green advertising should be based not only on external slogans, but also on real and reliable facts.
- Price policy balancing - A price policy should be formed that is appropriate for environmentally friendly products, but not too high. This helps to reduce the price sensitivity of consumers.

In conclusion, eco-marketing is a strategic system formed not only on the basis of advertising or appearance, but also on the basis of internal beliefs and practical values. For retail businesses, this approach not only ensures stability but also strengthens customer loyalty.

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