

BUILDING ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY CONSUMER TRUST: “THE ROLE OF GREEN KNOWLEDGE AND GREEN MARKETING” (STUDY ON LE MINERAL CONSUMERS IN MALANG)

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Abstract. This study aims to examine the role of green marketing as a mediator in the relationship between green knowledge and green trust. This study analyzes the relationship between three main variables, namely green trust, green knowledge, and green marketing. To test the proposed hypothesis, an empirical survey method was used involving 119 respondents from East Java, Indonesia. Data analysis was conducted using a structural equation modeling (SEM-PLS) approach to evaluate the relationships between variables in the research model. The results showed that all direct relationships between variables were positive and significant. However, the mediating effect of green marketing in the relationship between green knowledge and green trust was not found to be significant. These findings indicate that green marketing has the potential to be an effective strategy in building consumer trust in environmentally friendly initiatives. This study also confirms that the application of green marketing can support companies in strengthening consumer green trust. The main focus of this study is to explore how green knowledge influences green trust by considering the role of green marketing, while highlighting the importance of transparent and effective green marketing strategies. This study provides relevant managerial contributions to the development of sustainable marketing practices.

Keyword: green knowledge, green marketing dan green trust

1. Introduction

Global awareness of the importance of protecting the environment has driven changes in consumer behavior, particularly in choosing products that not only meet functional needs but also contribute to nature conservation. Amidst the growing threats of climate change, ecosystem damage, and the plastic waste crisis, consumers have begun to pay attention to sustainability values in their consumption processes (Nguyen et al., 2020). This has encouraged companies to adopt green marketing strategies that emphasize the environmental friendliness of their products and business practices.

However, the success of green marketing strategies is highly dependent on consumers' level of green knowledge. Consumers with a high level of knowledge tend to be more selective in assessing the environmental claims made by companies, and will only place their trust (green trust) in brands that are consistent and transparent in their commitment to the environment (Zhou et al., 2021). Therefore, building consumer trust requires more than just using the “eco-friendly” label; it also requires education, honest communication, and sustainable business practices.

In the Indonesian context, one brand that has attempted to integrate green marketing strategies into its bottled water products is Le Minerale, produced by PT Tirta Fresindo Jaya (Mayora Group). Le Minerale emphasizes innovations in environmentally friendly packaging, such as the use of recyclable PET bottles, as well as educational campaigns related to recycling and reuse of bottles. This strategy not only aims to attract consumers' attention but also to shape the company's image as one that cares about the environment. However, it remains questionable to what extent this strategy can increase consumers' green knowledge and ultimately build green trust in the brand.

This article aims to analyze the relationship between green knowledge and green marketing strategies in building environmentally friendly consumer trust in Le Minerale. This study is expected to contribute to the green marketing literature in Indonesia and serve as a practical reference for companies in designing effective sustainable marketing strategies.

2. Literature Review

Green Knowledge

Green knowledge is an individual's knowledge of environmental issues, environmentally friendly products, and the impact of consumption on environmental sustainability. Consumers who have good green knowledge tend to trust brands that consistently demonstrate environmental responsibility (Wulandari & Rahayu, 2022).

Green Marketing

Green marketing is a marketing approach that emphasizes sustainable business practices and communicating environmental values to consumers. This strategy includes environmentally friendly aspects of products, pricing, promotion, and distribution (Nguyen et al., 2020).

Green Trust

Green trust is a form of consumer trust in a brand or product based on the perception that the company has integrity and commitment to the environment. This trust is an important factor in loyalty and repeat purchase decisions (Astuti & Wijayanto, 2023).

The Influence of Green Knowledge on Green Trust

Green knowledge refers to the extent to which consumers understand environmental issues, environmentally friendly products, and the impact of consumption on nature. This knowledge creates a basis for consumers to assess the validity and credibility of green claims made by companies. Consumers with high green knowledge are more likely to place their trust in brands that demonstrate consistency between their values, practices, and communications (Nguyen et al., 2020).

Nguyen et al. (2020) found that environmental knowledge significantly increases consumers' tendency to believe in and purchase green products, as they can distinguish between authentic green marketing and greenwashing.

The Influence of Green Knowledge on Green Marketing

Green knowledge is the knowledge possessed by individuals or organizations regarding environmental issues, environmentally friendly practices, and the impact of human activities on the environment. Meanwhile, green marketing is a marketing strategy that highlights the environmentally friendly aspects of products, services, or business processes.

Green knowledge plays an important role in green marketing, as it forms the basis for companies and consumers to understand, support, and engage in environmentally friendly activities. Environmental knowledge strengthens the effectiveness of green advertising in driving interest in purchasing green products. Li, D. (2025).

The Influence of Green Marketing on Green Trust

Green marketing strategies play an important role as mediators between knowledge and green trust. Effective green marketing—that is, marketing that conveys environmentally friendly messages in an honest, transparent manner that is consistent with the company's actual practices—can strengthen the influence of green knowledge on green trust.

Astuti & Wijayanto (2023) show that green marketing bridges the gap between consumer values and brand image, ultimately significantly increasing green trust.

Furthermore, green marketing not only functions as a means of communication but also as an educational tool that expands green knowledge and enhances green trust. In other words, the

right marketing strategy can strengthen consumers' environmental understanding and awareness while fostering emotional connections and trust in the brand (Wulandari & Rahayu, 2022).

Green knowledge towards green trust through green marketing

Green knowledge is an important foundation for building green trust; environmentally conscious consumers will be more selective and more likely to trust marketing that is honest and transparent. Green marketing acts as a mediator or channel to translate this knowledge into trust: through education, evidence, and credible communication. Without good marketing, knowledge alone is insufficient; and without knowledge, green marketing may be questioned or dismissed as mere “greenwashing.”

Green marketing strategies act as reinforcers or mediators that connect consumer knowledge and awareness to their trust in environmentally friendly brands. Companies that are able to combine consumer education, transparent communication, and sustainable practices in their green marketing strategies tend to be more successful in building long-term trust in their brands.

3. Method

This study uses a quantitative approach with a survey method targeting Le Minerale consumers in the city of Malang. The sampling technique used is purposive sampling, with the criteria for respondents being consumers aged 17–40 years who have basic knowledge about environmental issues.

Analysis Technique

The data was analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM-PLS) to test the direct and indirect effects between variables. In an era where consumers are increasingly concerned about sustainability issues, green trust has become an important factor in building brand loyalty. However, this trust does not develop automatically. Green knowledge plays a key role in influencing green marketing. Green knowledge can influence green trust directly, as well as indirectly through green marketing strategies as a mediating variable.

Type of Research

This study uses a quantitative method, which is a method that tests theories objectively by looking at the relationship between variables measured using instruments and analyzed statistically (Creswell, J. W., 2014). This study aims to test and explain the causal relationship between variables through hypothesis testing. This study explains the factors that influence green trust, namely green knowledge and green marketing. The unit analyzed in this study is consumers. The data used in this study is primary data, obtained from distributing questionnaires via Google Forms. The questionnaire in this study uses a Likert scale from 1 to 5, with ratings ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

Sample Determination and Size

The population in this study includes all Le Mineral consumers in East Java, specifically in the Malang area. Because the exact population size is unknown, the sample was determined using a non-probability sampling technique, namely purposive sampling. This technique was used to ensure that the data obtained met the criteria set by the researcher, namely respondents who consume Le Mineral at least three times a week. According to Sekaran (2017), a sample is a portion of the population selected based on certain criteria. The sample size is adjusted according to the statistical analysis method used, namely Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), which requires a minimum sample size of 5 to 10 times the number of indicators (Hair et al., 2013). This study has 16 indicators, so the minimum sample size is 80 respondents and the maximum is 160 respondents. Therefore, the researcher distributed questionnaires to 160 respondents, but only 119 returned them and could be used in the analysis.

Data Analysis Methods

The data analysis method used is SEM Partial Least Square (PLS), which has the advantage of not relying on many statistical assumptions. The data used does not need to follow a multivariate normal distribution, and the model can include indicators with various types of scales, such as categorical, ordinal, interval, and ratio. In addition, PLS also allows analysis with sample sizes that do not have to be large, making it a robust and flexible method in various research conditions (Ghozali & Latan, 2015).

4. Result and Discussion

Before conducting this study, the researcher used validity and reliability tests to test the instruments on 30 respondents. The results of these tests showed that all variable indicators were valid and reliable. The researcher then conducted an analysis using SEM PLS (Partial Least Square) with the statistical tool Warp PLS 4.0. The sample in this study consisted of 119 respondents who were loyal customers of Le Mineral mineral water products.

Descriptive Statistical Analysis

The statistical analysis in this study used the average answers from all respondents for each indicator with a score range of 1-5. The respondents were women, and the remaining 45 respondents were men. In this study, the respondents' occupations were dominated by 34 students. Next, there were 24 respondents who were private employees, 22 respondents who were civil servants, 14 respondents who were lecturers, 13 respondents who were unemployed, and finally 12 respondents who were entrepreneurs.

Based on the criteria that respondents were aged 17 years and above, as this age is considered to be adulthood. For the criteria based on the respondents' education, the majority had a minimum of a bachelor's degree (106 people), and the rest had a high school diploma or equivalent (13 people).

Validity Test

For the validity test, this study used the Pearson Correlation method. This method compares the significance level (Sig) of the questionnaire data results with the degree of significance (α). Statements on the questionnaire are declared valid if the significance level is less than 0.05.

Tabel 1
Uji Validitas

Instrumen	<i>Green Knowledge</i>	<i>Green Marketing</i>	<i>Green Trust</i>
GK1	0.865	0.433	0.444
GK2	0.895	0.500	0.450
GK3	0.880	0.547	0.523
GK4	0.824	0.468	0.397
GM1	0.529	0.879	0.691
GM2	0.541	0.888	0.695
GM4	0.313	0.701	0.578
GT1	0.514	0.740	0.928
GT2	0.486	0.770	0.934
GT3	0.491	0.729	0.949
GT4	0.481	0.733	0.932

Based on Table 1, it can be seen that each question item in the green knowledge, green marketing, and green trust variable questionnaires has a significance level greater than the

significance level (α) of 0.05. Thus, from Table 1, it can be seen that each question item in the green knowledge, green marketing, and green trust variables can be declared valid.

Reliability Test

Reliability testing was conducted to examine the extent to which the questionnaire could be trusted to measure the object under study. The reliability testing method used in this study was Cronbach's Alpha. The questionnaire could be considered reliable if the Cronbach's Alpha value for each variable used was greater than or equal to 0.6 (α). Table 2 shows that all questions in the questionnaire were acceptable or reliable.

Tabel 2
Reliabilitas

	AVE	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability
Green Knowledge	0.750	0.889	0.923
Green marketing	0.684	0.763	0.865
Green Trust	0.876	0.953	0.966

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing in this study was conducted using PLS 4.0 by examining the estimate value and P value. This research model conducted mediation testing.

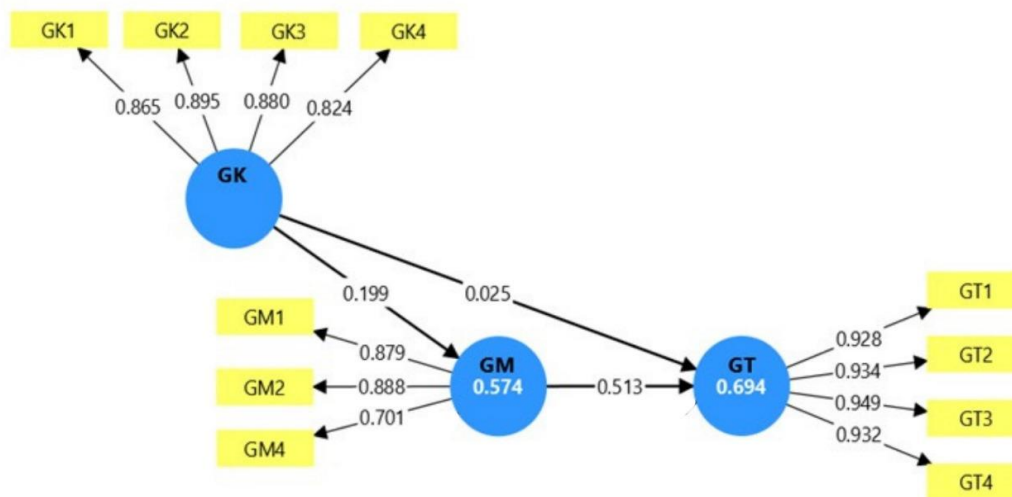


Figure 1
Hypothesis Test Results in Figures
Source: Processed Data

Hypothesis Test (Direct Effect)

Table 3. Summary of Hypothesis Test Direct Path Structural Model

Hubungan	Path Koefisien	t statistics	P values	Kesimpulan
<i>G. knowledge</i> → <i>G. Marketing</i>	0.199	2.107	0.036	Significant
<i>G. knowledge</i> → <i>G. Trust</i>	0.025	0.301	0.763	Not Significant
<i>Green Marketing</i> → <i>G. Trust</i>	0.513	5.944	0.000	Significant

Source: data processed by PLS 4.0

The statistical test results in Table 3 show that the relationship between green knowledge and green marketing has a positive and significant effect, as seen from the p-value of 0.036, which is less than 0.05, so H1 is accepted. Furthermore, the relationship between green knowledge and green trust has a positive but insignificant effect. Based on the statistical test results, the p-value of 0.763 is greater than 0.05, so H2 is rejected. Meanwhile, the relationship between green marketing and green trust is positive and significant, as indicated by a p-value of 0.000, which is less than 0.05. These results indicate that H3 is accepted.

Furthermore, for the indirect relationship or the relationship that tests the mediating effect of green marketing. The indirect relationship between green knowledge and green trust through green marketing shows a p-value of 0.051, which is greater than 0.05. This result shows that H4 is not proven.

Hypothesis Test of Indirect Effect

Table 4
Indirect Effect

No	Relationship	T statis tics	P values	Conclusion	Mediation Status
1.	<i>Green knowledge → Green Marketing → Green Trust</i>	1.953	0.051	Not Significant	Partial mediation

The Influence of Green Knowledge on Green Marketing

This study shows that green knowledge has an influence on green marketing. The results of this study prove that a person's knowledge or understanding of environmental issues and environmentally friendly products will influence their positive attitude towards companies that manufacture these environmentally friendly products. This causes the person to be more concerned about the environmental impact caused by the negligence of companies in creating products and services that are not environmentally friendly. Thus, this phenomenon will encourage companies to create or design environmentally friendly products in accordance with the desires of consumers who care about the environment.

In this study, the majority of respondents were students (34%) who already had knowledge or understanding of environmental issues and environmentally friendly products. Therefore, when making purchases, they would choose companies that have implemented green marketing strategies, which emphasize the creation of environmentally friendly products.

In this study, the majority of respondents also knew that Le Mineral products are refillable, recyclable, and have eco labels. This proves to consumers that Le Mineral is a company that does not use excessive resources in its production process. Although the object is different, this study is in line with previous research, namely that of Chen and Chang (2012), which shows that green knowledge influences green trust, which contributes to the intention to purchase environmentally friendly products.

The results of this study are also in line with the research by Rahbar and Wahid (2011), which explains that the green knowledge factor can influence consumer behavior towards environmentally friendly products. Therefore, with the knowledge possessed by consumers, it will certainly increase the effectiveness of green marketing carried out by Le Mineral. Without a good understanding of green knowledge from consumers regarding environmental and energy-saving issues, the implementation of green marketing is less effective and efficient.

Meanwhile, research by Yadav and Pathak (2011) explains that environmental knowledge is an important factor in shaping consumer attitudes and purchase intentions towards green products. This explains that green knowledge is needed to increase purchase decisions or purchase intentions towards environmentally friendly products.

The Influence of Green Knowledge on Green Trust

The findings of this study indicate that green knowledge does not influence green trust. These results show that a person's understanding of environmental and eco-friendly issues does not necessarily increase their trust in green claims made by companies, in this case Le Mineral. This is in line with the findings of Suki, N.M (2016), which explain that green knowledge does not influence green trust or purchase intent, because perceptions of brands and attitudes play a greater role. As we know, the majority of respondents are students, so they are more critical and knowledgeable about products that are truly green. Therefore, they do not easily believe Le Mineral's green claims about its products.

Consumers remain skeptical due to the prevalence of greenwashing, lack of corporate transparency, and the fact that many companies use the “green” label solely for marketing strategies. These results are in line with research by Sara de Sio (2022), which found that greenwashing can increase skepticism towards environmentally friendly advertising, which in turn can hinder the intention to purchase environmentally friendly products. It is also in line with Minh-Tri Ha et.al., 2022, which explains that greenwashing will have a negative effect on green brand image, green satisfaction, and green trust.

Furthermore, it is explained that green trust will be more influenced by tangible evidence and direct experience with products, company reputation, and consumer testimonials or reviews, which show that the company is truly committed to environmental issues and manufactures environmentally friendly products that do not harm the environment. These company claims will be more trusted by consumers and the public if the company carries out concrete activities such as CSR that are intended for the community and consumers. These results support Amoako (2021) research, which found a positive and significant relationship between business ethics, CSR, green marketing, and business loyalty. Both CSR and green marketing mediate between perceptions of corporate ethics and brand loyalty.

The Effect of Green Marketing on Green Trust

The results of this study explain that green marketing has a significant effect on green trust. These results prove that green marketing carried out by companies will increase consumer confidence that the green claims made by the company are honest and trustworthy. Companies also contribute positively to the environment and the use of renewable energy and do not engage in greenwashing. The results of this study are in line with research by Nguyen (2022), which found that green brand image, green satisfaction, and green trust play a full mediating role in the relationship between greenwashing and green brand equity. This proves that greenwashing will have a negative effect on green brand image, green satisfaction, and green trust.

By implementing green marketing, such as providing clear product information, demonstrating a commitment to the environment, and obtaining official green product certification, companies can enhance the validity of their green claims. Green marketing will have a positive impact on green trust when companies convey green messages honestly, offer products that are truly environmentally friendly, and provide tangible evidence such as labels, reports, and official certification tests. The results of this study are in line with research conducted by Delafröz, N., Taleghani, M., & Nouri, B. (2014), which explains that well-implemented green marketing is believed to increase consumer trust in green claims.

Similarly, research by Mahmoud, T. O. (2017) proves that green marketing carried out effectively will be able to increase trust if the strategy used is based on ethics and the real environment, not just advertising alone.

The Influence of Green Knowledge on Green Trust through Green Marketing

The results of this study prove that green marketing is unable to mediate the relationship between green knowledge and green trust. When consumers have knowledge about environmental issues and environmentally friendly products, this will increase positive responses to green marketing carried out by companies that make green claims on their products. This occurs because consumers are able to recognize the authenticity of green marketing and accept green marketing messages if they are relevant and credible. Without green knowledge, consumers will find it difficult to accept green marketing messages conveyed by companies. Furthermore, without effective green marketing, green knowledge may not necessarily lead to green trust.

This can also occur when companies implement green marketing that is not credible and inconsistent. Even if consumers understand environmental issues, they will still not trust the company. The green marketing carried out does not match the expectations built from the green knowledge understood by consumers. The results of this study are in line with the research by Do Paço & Reis (2012), which explains that environmentally conscious consumers actually show high skepticism towards green advertising, causing green marketing to be unable to mediate trust.

Furthermore, Aji & Sutikno (2015) explain that green knowledge does not automatically shape trust or purchase intent, because consumers need trust in brand value or the values embraced by the company. This study also found that consumers with high knowledge tend to form trust based on personal assessment, rather than advertising or green marketing strategies.

Furthermore, Yusof et al. (2016) explain that CSR influences green trust, but green marketing is only effective when consumers lack in-depth knowledge. These results explain that when consumers have extensive knowledge about environmental issues, environmentally friendly products, and renewable energy, they demand concrete evidence rather than just green marketing strategies. This is in line with Nguyen et al. (2020), who explain that green knowledge will cause skepticism, which in turn will reduce green trust when green claims are not supported by concrete evidence.

Mahendra & Nugraha (2021) also found that green marketing had no significant effect, and consumer knowledge failed to moderate the influence of green marketing on purchasing decisions. These results explain that consumers with high knowledge tend to be more selective and critical of superficial green strategies. Furthermore, Chen & Chang (2013) explain that green trust is not only shaped by knowledge but is more influenced by perceived value and perceived quality of green products. Consumers consider green marketing to be valid only if there is tangible evidence through CSR or certification (Parguel et al., 2011).

5. Conclusions

The results of this study provide a number of important contributions to the development of theory. First, the limited number of previous studies exploring the role of green marketing as a mediating variable makes the findings of this study a breakthrough in revealing more deeply the factors that influence green trust. This study confirms that green marketing plays a significant antecedent role in building consumer trust in environmentally friendly products.

Second, although green knowledge reflects a person's level of understanding of environmental issues and environmentally friendly products, this knowledge does not directly impact an increase in green trust. This is due to the tendency of individuals with high knowledge to be more critical of companies' environmental claims, requiring concrete evidence of their commitment.

Third, previous studies have generally focused on variables that influence green loyalty and green purchasing decisions. However, the findings in this study indicate that these variables not only affect loyalty but also contribute to the formation of green trust. In this context, green trust is identified as a key component that plays a role in driving loyalty to green products.

Fourth, this study also confirms that green knowledge alone is not sufficient to build green trust. The effectiveness of such knowledge is highly dependent on how green marketing strategies are communicated appropriately, consistently, and convincingly to consumers.

Recommendations

1. Going forward, companies are advised to consistently implement and develop marketing strategies that emphasize sustainability and environmental awareness.
2. For consumers who are highly knowledgeable about green issues and tend to be critical, companies need to include concrete evidence such as environmental certifications, sustainability reports, or data on the environmental impact of their products.
3. Marketing efforts should not only be directed at encouraging loyalty and purchases, but also at building long-term trust in the company's green commitment.
4. Companies should not only increase environmental education for consumers, but also ensure that green marketing strategies are packaged and communicated efficiently. Therefore, the synergy between knowledge enhancement and marketing communication needs to be carefully designed

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