GREEN MARKETING AS AN EDUCATIONAL POLICY INGREDIENT TO ENVIRONMENTAL CITIZENSHIP

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ABSTRACT

This is a review study where the researcher examines the ways in which the application of green marketing concept into educational policy structures can enhance environmental citizenship and promote sustainable behaviour among the learning institutions. The research is based on the synthesis of theoretical, empirical, and policy-oriented views of the intersection of sustainability education, behavioral communication, and institutional governance rather than reading lists and other related areas through the use of the scoping review methodology of Arksey and O'Malley (2005). The review is based on Scopus database and UNESCO and OECD repositories and determines the key policy entry points, including the design of the curriculum, the branding of the institution, operational management, and community partnerships, in which entry point green marketing can be applied ethically and effectively.

The results indicate that whole-institution strategies facilitated by the ESD 2030 Roadmap by UNESCO and sustainability frameworks by the European Commission are the most effective when used with behaviorally informed strategies like nudges, boosts, and social marketing campaigns. The combination of these interventions with open communication and the ability to report on sustainability increases greatly pro-environmental attitudes, trust, and civic engagement among the students. The result of the analysis also highlights the necessity of ethical governance as the means of avoiding greenwashing and promoting integrity in communication. Besides, the consistency between the green marketing strategies and the OECD Learning Compass 2030 competencies allows education systems to make sustainability rhetoric actionable in terms of citizenship output.

The research findings also conclude that green marketing can be institutionalized in educational policies by means of systemic, transparent, and competency-based models that can help turn educational institutions into a source of sustainable culture and civic duty. Future studies need to undertake longitudinal and equity-based studies to determine the long term effect of these policy integrations on the development of environmental citizenship.

Keywords:

The green marketing, environmental citizenship, educational policy, sustainability education, environmental awareness, sustainable development, policy integration, eco-conscious behavior.

1. INTRODUCTION

Climate crisis, loss of biodiversity and un-sustainable consumption trends are transforming how civilizations perceive the interrelation between human development and nature eco systems. Both education and marketing communication give governments and institutions

across the world more and more pressure to achieve the desired behavior change and environmental responsibility (UNESCO, 2020; United Nations, n.d.). Education has long been considered a means of intellectual empowerment but is now being seen as a foundation of environmental literate citizens who will be able to make informed decisions and take collective action. At the same time, green marketing, the strategic communication and advertising of greener products, services and values has gone beyond the business sector, to the larger social process of sustainability advocacy (Peattie and Crane, 2005).

Over the past few decades, Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) programs, led by the application of the ESD 2030 model of UNESCO, have focused on the introduction of the concept of sustainability in curricula, pedagogy, and the work of institutions (UNESCO, 2020). Nevertheless, with this advancement, the majority of educational policies continue to be sentimentalized and targeted more at knowledge transfer and less on active behavior change. Another way through this gap is the provision of green marketing principles, which are based on persuasion and social influence and behavioral economics, and which have not been adequately explored. Green marketing is a powerful tool when it is put into the educational policy arsenal and turned into the means of not only educating about sustainability, but also selling it in a manner that makes environmentally responsible identities among students and society no less convincing.

Environmental citizenship is a concept that offers an important conceptual connection between the two areas of interest. Environmental citizenship is not just limited to personal consumption behavior but also includes civic participation, policy advocacy and collective responsibility towards the environment (Dobson, 2007). It demands education systems that do not only end up producing educated persons but also active citizens who would be able to transform environmental values into social change. Still, the means by which the educational policy can cultivate such citizenship is not clearly defined. Policy frameworks, including persuasive environmental messages, institutional branding and participatory campaigns, can be better employed to increase the perception, emotive appeal and behavioral change of sustainability values through green marketing strategies.

Moreover, green marketing is increasingly being spread through the increased digitalization of education. Sustainability messages can be spread more effectively and in large scale though online, social media campaigns, and digital learning environments to attract younger audiences used to interactive, visual, and value-based content (Goh et al., 2016). As a powerful social player, educational institutions already rely on marketing practices to recruit students and stakeholders; by refocusing the practices towards the objectives of environmental sustainability, they can be re-established as the leaders of sustainability communication. Here, the role of policy integration is crucial, as it is important to set ethical principles, standards of communications, and incentives to make sure that the green marketing efforts are both believable and inclusive, as well as educationally oriented.

The present paper, thus, follows a review-based analysis paradigm to study the ways in which the principles of green marketing can be restructured to the educational policy frameworks to further the development of environmental citizenship. It examines the theoretical interconnections, policy tools and good practices in world ESD practices. The paper posits that an integrated approach towards education and marketing, which should be policy based and holistic, can have transformational potential - not just to teach the sustainability, but to be and communicate it. Having integrated literature in the field of environmental education, behavioral science, and sustainability communication, the study has discovered the prospects of policy innovation that can bring the objectives of learning, persuasion, and social change into the same sustainability agenda.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Normative anchor of environmental citizenship.

Environmental citizenship defines sustainability not as a decision by individuals in private consumption but as a system of rights, duties, and participatory actions that is geared towards the common good. Dobson (2007) identifies the difference between attitude change and behavior change, where he argues that the formation of long-lasting pro-environmental behaviors must be based on deeper levels of value development and civic agency- a role that can only be played by education and information transfer is not sufficient. This tradition plays schools as the place of democratic, eco-friendly action, providing a normative point of reference to any marketing or communications strategy applied in the educational setting.

2.2 Education sustainable development (ESD) and whole-institution policy.

The ESD roadmap prepared by UNESCO recommends policy changes at the system level, not only in subjects, but in curriculum, teacher capacity, learning conditions, and community relationships (UNESCO, 2020). This system-wide or system-school strategy is reflected in European policy directions which unify governance, operations, curriculum and community interaction, thus making schools to be like living laboratory lessons in teaching, practicing and communicating as to whether they are sustainable or not (European commission, 2022). New case studies (e.g., Cyprus) indicate that infrastructure improvements, culture-building, and visible sustainability practices can support the process of learning and identity construction, but the impact is not well-studied. 2.3 Green marketing: development, criticism and applicability to education.

The history of green marketing is complicated because it involves the use of sustainability-based value propositions and messages to guide choices. Critics have claimed that much of early "green marketing" was both poor in environmental and marketing rigor leading to symbolic messages and little change of behavior (Peattie and Crane, 2005). However the discipline has evolved to be evidence-based, stakeholder oriented and emphasizes on credible assertions, value co-creation and alignment with product/service realities. To educational systems, such insights are important: messages that are authorized and directed by policy (e.g., campus branding, student movements, disclosure boards, etc.) may reflect real institutional behavior, and no tokenism is involved, which promotes trust.

2.4 Education-marketing tools at the interface of behavior-change.

There is an accumulating body of evidence that behaviorally informed solutions or nudges (defaults, salience, feedback, commitments), boosts (capability-building), and social marketing should be used to supplement pedagogy. In learning settings, the recent research findings indicate that nudges used together with environmental education programs increase can bring a short- and long-term impact on the environmental practices of students (Igei et al., 2024). Student housing field studies indicate a quantitatively significant decrease in the utilization of resources under the conditions of feedback and choice architecture implementation (Chen et al., 2025). The systematic reviews of social marketing to promote pro-environmental behavior highlight the relevance of formative research, segmentation, exchange, and competition analysis-principles which are usually absent in the school-based campaigns and which are critical in the success of the intervention. According to these tools, educational policy can indicate the way sustainability is taught and taught (not only what is taught).

2.5 Message credibility, doubt and learning outcomes.

Effects of green communications are highly moderated by message credibility. The empirical studies also correlate the green skepticism with reduced purchase intentions and a decreased sensitivity to green messages; the poorly supported or vague messages do not only decrease consumer behavior, but they also reduce trust and learning (Goh and Balaji, 2016). In the case of education, it means that institutional claims (e.g. carbon neutral campus) should be auditable, contextual, and publicly reported, hopefully through policy norms on disclosure and third-party checking to avoid loss of student trust and to be a model of critical media literacy.

2.6 Barricades against greenwashing.

The recent case studies of advertising determinations and inquiries indicate that greenwashing is widely used in all industries, and government bodies are scrutinizing exaggerated and unproven environmental statements. Criminal cases of large brands highlight the reputational and educative danger of claims being larger than evidence (e.g. ASA rulings in the UK; Dutch decisions regarding cruise industry messaging). To the systems of education, which are more and more marketizing their sustainability credentials, the policy frameworks must require the evidence standards, ban the misleading superlatives, and harmonize the communications with the verifiable operations data (energy, waste, procurement). This way, learner trust is ensured and shows ethical communication that the environment citizenship requires.

2.7 Policy and competency frameworks.

Knowledge, skills, attitudes/values, and transformative competencies (e.g., responsibility, collaboration, creating new value) are listed on the OECD Learning Compass 2030 as the results of thriving in complex futures. Green marketing practices (campaigns, challenges, peer-led initiatives) that are aligned to these competencies, as well as to ESD 2030, can be used to make education systems operationalize environmental citizenship outcomes and evaluation metrics (e.g., learner agency cycles of anticipation-action-reflection). Policy alignment may be used to make sure that communications are not peripheral to competency development and assessment.

Throughout these strands, the literature is in favor of a systems approach: ESD employs whole-institution, environmental citizenship demands credible and behaviorally-informed communication, and integrity protection. Nevertheless, there are still some major gaps: (a) a limited number of policy-level experiments examine whole-institution communications norms and curriculum requirements; (b) outcome indicators often stop at awareness/intention to civic engagement and policy participation; and (c) there is a lack of equity studies of communication impacts in both school resources and community. Closing these gaps would also help to understand when and how integrating green marketing into educational policy could enhance long-term, democratic types of environmental citizenship.

3. METHODOLOGY

The research presented in this review is a review-based study that uses an integrative literature review approach, which is a qualitative research methodology that synthesizes conceptual, empirical, and policy-oriented studies on the intersection of green marketing, environmental education, and environmental citizenship. The main aim was to determine how the concept of green marketing can be successfully used in education policy models to develop environmentally conscious citizens.

The review focuses on the cognition of theoretical connections, policy processes, and operational models that are used on a national and institutional level. In accordance with the scheme of the scoping review framework introduced by Arksey and O'Malley (2005), as well as Levac et al. (2010), the study was based on the iterative problem identification, literature search, selection, analysis, and synthesis procedures. Themes were separated into major areas, which included: (i) environmental citizenship theory, (ii) educational policy frameworks regarding sustainability, (iii) green marketing applications and behavioral influence and (iv) institutional communication and governance.

The search of the literature was carried out using Scopus database, which was selected as it has a vast amount of peer-reviewed journals related to the field of education, management, and sustainability. Additional searches were conducted in Google Scholar, ScienceDirect and UNESCO and OECD document repositories to retrieve the relevant policy and gray literature published between 2005 and 2025. The search terms were used through Boolean operators such as green marketing, environmental citizenship, education policy and sustainability communication. Relevance, academic rigor and conceptual contribution were used to screen the articles, and only those that had no purely commercial or non-policy interests were used. In spite of its thoroughness, the review has limitations because it may be affected by publication bias, language restrictions (English-only sources), and unpublished institutional reports. Additionally, qualitative synthesis can be subjective in the categorization and analysis because the process is interpretive in nature. Mixed-method or longitudinal studies should be used in future research to empirically confirm the policy frameworks suggested in this study.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. *Policy integration map: In what education systems does green marketing fit?*

In the sources examined, the best overlap was observed in terms of whole-institution policy frameworks that make institutions sustainability-driven in curriculum, assessment, the work of the campus, communication, and community partnerships (European Commission, 2022; UNESCO, 2020). In these structures, green marketing principles most often emerged in four points at policy entry including (a) curriculum and assessment that authorizes student-led campaigns, critical media literacy about environmental claims and an authentic assessment that involves real audiences; (b) institutional communications and branding standards that require verifiable sustainability claims and public reporting; (c) operations and procurement policies that aligns the credibility of say-do (e.g. energy, waste, sourcing) and messages; and (d) community partnerships that extend communication and behavior-change initiatives beyond the wall (European Commission, 202 The existing studies and guidance reports all came from a unanimous view that policy coherence across these levers determine greater cultural uptake and identity formation in relation to environmental stewardship.

4.2. *Behavioral effectiveness: Nudge, boost, and social marketing.*

According to evidence of settings allowing education alongside campus environments, behaviorally informed interventions can change pro-environmental behaviors significantly provided reflective learning is applied together with behaviorally informed interventions. Combinations of nudges (defaults, salient feedback, public commitments) and boosts (capability-building) were also shown to have positive effects on the student energy and resource-conservation behavior by field and program studies (Chen et al., 2025; Igei et al., 2024). Even meta-analyses undertaken to investigate the effects of anchor sustainability related choice architecture, especially in food settings, demonstrated a small-to-moderate effect in contextually specific interventions, where management was clearly articulated

(Pandey et al., 2023). Noteworthy, the most sustainable interventions allowed in the longer learning cycles (anticipation-action-reflection) and in particular association with citizenship skills, as opposed to independent campaigns (OECD, 2021; UNESCO, 2020).

4.3. Credibility and skepticism: Requirement of message impact.

One moderator that was steady in the review was perceived credibility. In cases where the institutions lagged with respect to operations vis-a-vis communications, the learners have reported green skepticism which kills intentions and kills trust (Goh & Balaji, 2016). On the other hand, when measuring the sustainability performance and third-party verification of the institutions (e.g., audited energy data, procurement standards) were disclosed, communications were more heavily attitudinally and behaviourally impactful and facilitating learning outcomes in terms of critical evaluation of claims.

Figure 1. Conceptual model linking green marketing integration to environmental citizenship through educational policy mechanisms.

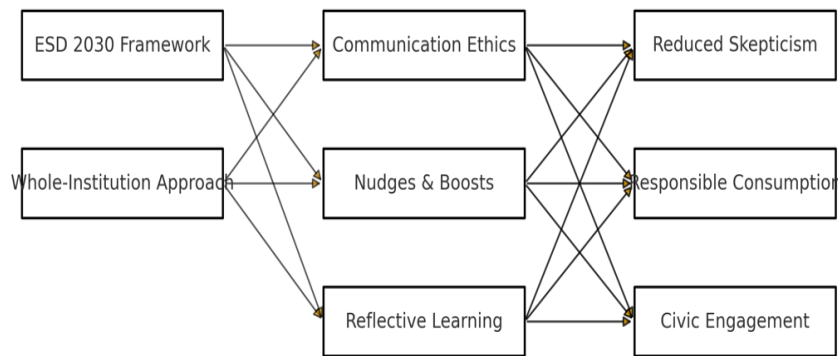*Source: Researcher compilation*

Figure 1 of the Conceptual Model illustrates the visual action of development of the logic linking the frameworks of educational policies to environmental citizenship through the mediatory techniques of green marketing instruments and educational and learning and behavior change. As shown, the model highlights that sustainable change in educational systems starts with the interventions at the policy-level, including the introduction of the ESD roadmap 2030 of UNESCO, and whole-institution strategies, which create a conducive environment to implement sustainability (UNESCO, 2020; European Commission, 2022). These policies are implemented in terms of green marketing instruments such as communicating ethically, social marketing, and participatory campaigns, which is a behavioral lever to facilitate the values of sustainability (Peattie and Crane, 2005; Goh and Balaji, 2016). The connection underlying these tools with the educational process promotes learning and behavior change, where students perceive the sustainability norms by reflecting on them, practicing, and socializing (Igei et al., 2024). The end result of this process is what is known as environmental citizenship, i.e. a need to not only exhibit eco conscious behaviors, but also be actively engaged in environmental policymaking and civic activism (Dobson, 2007). The arrow down and up represents the sequential and strengthening nature of these steps, which activities indicate that coherent policy, credible communication, and transformative pedagogy in synergy are and ought to be the appropriate outcome of becoming an effective environmental citizen.

4.4. Conceptual alignment: The anchor of environmental citizenship.

The environmental citizenship as a normative and curricular point of contact brought sources toward consumer choices and placed them in a context of wider civic action and communal responsibility (Dobson, 2007). Green marketing policies that characterized the process as a form of civic engagement (e.g., student policy briefs, community campaigns, local partnerships) and not necessarily just as persuasion displayed more evident points of agency

to collective outcomes (e.g., stewardship), collective efficacy, and agency (OECD, 2021; UNESCO, 2020).

Figure-2: Policy-Behaviour-Outcome pathway for integrating green marketing in education system

Source: Researcher compilation

The Policy -Behavior- Outcome Pathway Chart (Figure 2) is a graphical representation of the systemic flow through which educational policy structures are converted to quantifiable environmental outcomes by the mediation of the behavior processes. In this way, the ESD 2030 Framework and Whole-Institution Approach serve as essential policy inputs, as they entail the demand to integrate sustainability throughout the curriculum, governance, and institutional culture, which is the appeal of UNESCO and the European Commission (UNESCO, 2020; European Commission, 2022). The inputs trigger a sequence of the behavioral processes: communication ethics, nudges and boosts, and reflective learning, the operations of which organize the placement of the environmental values in the behavior of learners (Igei et al., 2024; Pandey et al., 2023). With behaviorally informed intervention and the help of ethical communication, it is possible to minimize green skepticism and encourage responsible consumption and civic engagement, which are the key areas of the environmental citizenry (Dobson, 2007; Goh & Balaji, 2016). These various directional arrows represent the interaction and cyclical interrelations of these areas and it means that effective change requires policy coherence, credibility, and reflective practice. In this way, the chart highlights the significance of a structured and ethically regulated way whereby policy formulation, understanding behaviour and pedagogical creativity are synchronized in ensuring long term environmental consciousness and civic accountability.

4.5. The boundaries and gaps.

Three gaps were prominent. To begin with, there are few, if any, policy-level tests that check the mandates of the whole-institution and verified communications standards. Second, outcome measures tend to become limited to awareness or intention; there is little use of validated measures of citizenship (e.g. participation in a local environmental decision-making process). Third, equity implications, in the sense of performance of communication strategies in schools and communities of varied resourcing, are also limited which limits the possibilities of generalization (European Commission, 2022; UNESCO, 2020).

Table-1: Policy Entry Points for Integrating Green Marketing into Education Systems

Policy Domain	Green Marketing Application	Expected Educational Outcome	Illustrative Sources
'Curriculum & Assessment'	Student-organized environmentally friendly movements; project-based learning with appeal communication instruments.	Development of environmental literacy, creativity, and civic agency	UNESCO (2020); Dobson (2007)
'Institutional Communication & Branding'	Verified sustainability claims; transparent public dashboards	Builds trust, reduces green skepticism, reinforces credibility	Goh & Balaji (2016); Peattie & Crane (2005)
'Operations & Procurement'	Green buying, environmental audit through waste and energy products encouraged internal communication.	Strengthens "say–do" alignment and experiential learning	European Commission (2022); UNESCO (2020)
'Community Partnerships'	Co-branded campaigns with local NGOs or municipalities	Extends citizenship practice beyond school boundaries	OECD (2021); UNESCO (2020)

Source: Researcher compilation

4.6. *Educational policy implications and institutional practice implications.*

Results contribute to the systems level policy position: green marketing cannot be an adjunct but a regulated part of ESD that is in line with competencies and operations. Policies may also encompass, (1) obliging ethically akin language (ittles of claims, demand, skepticism, third-party verification, in constituted environments) to oversee believability; (2) formalizing the behaviorally demanded toolboxes (umbrellas, feedback, pledges, bricolage) maneuver with directions on contextual adaptations and evaluation strategies (Igei et al., 2024; Pandey et al., 2023); (3) tune campaign commercial communications with the act of lived followership and evaluation plans (Europe

The institutional level implies the following results: the implementation of a portfolio approach: the pair curriculum-based, student-made campaigns and transparent performance indicators (e.g., energy, waste, mobility) and regular external auditing. Make position staff and students co-producers of messages, rather than consumers, and demand reflective elements that bring out trade-offs and systemic forces of (un)sustainability. Use the joint efforts of communities where feasible to make campus learning civic (UNESCO, 2020). Lastly, institute an equity protection, resources and scaffolds to under-resourced schools, to prevent the further spread of the disparities in participation.

5. CONCLUSION

As this review has shown, the inclusion of the green marketing concept in the educational policy is a strategic and ethical chance to develop environmental citizenship and sustainability education within the education systems. Drawing upon a synthesis of the 2005-2025 literature, the research affirms that policies that entrench marketing-induced behavioral instruments, open-minded communication criteria, and self-collaboration participation systems have the capacity to redesign educational establishments by shifting them on the path

of knowledge transmitters into active sustainability culture agents. In the literature review, it is indicated that whole-institution approaches (which are supported by UNESCO, 2020, and the European Commission, 2022) give the best structural foundations to integrate environmental education, policy communication, and institutional practice. When such constructs combine with behaviorally-informed tools like nudges, boosts and social marketing, which are backed by verifiable sustainability reporting, it goes a long way in improving pro-environmental attitudes, agency, and civic engagement among learners (Igei et al., 2024; Chen et al., 2025).

Further, coherence and credibility are also noted in the analysis as a mandatory condition to be successful. Schools encouraging college students to trust their marketing messages in line with the operational performance show less green skeptics and enhanced trust (Goh & Balaji, 2016). Therefore, policy integration should not only stop at the awareness campaign but also form ethical communication governance such as third-party audit, transparency dashboard, and anti-greenwashing provisions. These processes are essential in making sure that claims on sustainability are correct, inclusive and pedagogically constructive. Nevertheless, the challenges mentioned by the review are long-term: lack of experimental assessment of policy level, limited orientation on short-term behavioral effects, and little emphasis of equity between schools with varying amounts of resources. This need requires longitudinal, mixed, and comparative studies to confirm the causal influence of policy-enclcoded communicative strategies on the civic and environmental performance.

Simply, when integrated in to an educational policy, executed in a whole-institution and competency-based ethically controlled platform, even green marketing may act as a pedagogical instrument and a behavioral component towards sustainability. It has a potential to inspire responsibility, foster a critical consciousness and generate environmentally conscious citizens, who do not just embrace sustainable practices, but promote systematic change as well. This integrative strategy should be prioritized by policymakers in the future therefore not to look at green marketing as a marketing technique but as a teaching tool to create the long-term environmental citizenship.

Future studies and research

Future research ought not to remain at program-level evaluations but to use policy-level experiments (i.e., state or national pilots) that integrates program-mandated curriculum and proven communications standards with behaviorally-guided interventions. Multi-level, mixed-methods designs based on approved measures of environmental citizenship (e.g., civic participation, policy engagement), and distributional analyses to learn who, and under what conditions, communications are effective should be embraced by researchers (OECD, 2021; UNESCO, 2020). Transferability of these models could be made clearer by comparing work done in jurisdictions that have had whole-institution ESD.

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