

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

The influence that the environmental movement has had on people's behaviours and perspectives has directly led to an increase in interest in environmentally friendly products (Kong et al., 2014). Not only is customer loyalty enhanced to certain products and brands, but also particular retail establishments and shopping experiences (Dabija et al., 2019). As a consequence of this, environmental issues have become a prevalent topic of discussion among purchasers, and an increasing number of consumers are becoming aware of how the products they buy have an impact on the environment (Dabija et al., 2018). Environmental activists try to persuade businesses to develop more environmentally friendly products that do less harm to the world (Martins, 2021). Companies have the choice of providing customers with just environmentally friendly goods or with a combination of green and conventional goods and services (Adella & Nurjanah, 2022). Implementing sustainable (green) consumption practices may strengthen sustainable performance, meet consumer needs, improve quality of life, increase resource efficiency, increase the use of renewable energy, minimise waste, and reduce carbon emissions (Chen et al., 2023).

Srivastava (2024) found that there has been a discernible shift in consumer behaviour worldwide. Over 70% of global consumers are willing to pay a higher price for products that demonstrate environmental responsibility. In the African context, where there is a growing emphasis on environmental sustainability, research indicates that a large majority of individuals, specifically 84% of Kenyans, prefer environmentally friendly alternatives if they are accessible (Sun et al., 2020). According to a recent study conducted in Ghana, a substantial proportion of consumers, 62% of respondents, demonstrate an awareness of environmental factors when making purchasing decisions. This tendency is notably evident in the context of environmentally FMCGs. These quantitative observations emphasise the prevalent global and regional patterns that favour sustainable consumption. This study seeks to

provide a comprehensive understanding of green consumer behaviour in the Ghanaian FMCG sector.

Sustainable consumption plays an increasingly essential role in the marketplace since it can help us achieve sustainable development goals (SDGs) (Sun et al., 2021). Now more than ever, consumers are concerned about the impact their purchasing decisions will have on the environment, and as a result, companies have come to appreciate the relevance of the concept of sustainable consumption. The rising interest of the market in environmentally responsible consumption creates an opening for eco-friendly product branding (Grankvist & Biel, 2007). This study primarily considers the point of view of eco-friendly Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCGs) manufactured locally in Ghana. Yook et al. (2018) posit that the link between environmentally responsible shopping and environmentally conscientious businesses has received less attention in previous studies. Although research on green branding exists, research on green brands, green trust and green purchase intentions in the context of green influencers is still at the inception stage.

In contrast to other studies that primarily focus on Western or global markets, the present research offers localised perspectives on environmentally conscious consumer behaviour (Nekmahmud & Fekete-Farkas, 2020). It recognises the growing impact of social media and online personalities in developing nations like Ghana. Additionally, this study introduces the novel concept of green brand association as a mediating factor and investigates the moderating effect of green trust, thereby contributing to a comprehensive understanding of consumer decision-making processes (Chairunnisa & Perdhana, 2020). Moreover, the incorporation of purchase intentions and actual purchases in the study provides a holistic perspective on the relationship between intention and action in the domain of environmentally responsible FMCGs (Rizomyliotis et al., 2024). This contribution significantly expands the existing knowledge base on green consumer behaviour and branding.

The study aims to investigate the mediating role of green brand perception (composed of green brand attitude and green brand association) on the impact of green

influencers and green trust, green purchase intentions and green purchases in the FMCG brands in Ghana. Thus, the study examines the impact of green consumer behaviour factors (green influencers, green trust, green brand attitude, green brand association, and green purchase intentions) on green purchases

Previous research has shown that the importance of sustainability and environmentalism has gained significant attention in Ghana (Sackey & Amankwah-Amoah, 2020). As a result, local FMCG brands are prioritizing sustainability and launching green marketing campaigns to appeal to environmentally-conscious consumers (Adzobu & Hinson, 2020). The study seeks to explore the mediating effects of green brand perception and how it impacts green purchase intentions and eventually green purchases. Furthermore, the role of green trust in influencing consumer behavior towards green brands and its impact on green purchases was also examined. To investigate these relationships, a survey research design will be used to collect data from consumers of local FMCG brands in Ghana. The data collected will be analyzed using structural equation modeling (SEM) (Yawson & Nti, 2021).

Several green products with varied qualities have hit the Ghanaian market in recent years. Green products, often known as "eco-friendly" or "environmentally desirable" items, are those that actively attempt to lessen their negative environmental effect (Sun et al., 2021; Tseng & Hung, 2013). This category contains a wide range of items, including hybrid and fully electric autos, biofuels (or "green power"), and environmentally friendly fabrics (Sun et al., 2021). Wide-ranging items have different uses and purchase frequencies, but they also vary in other ways, including the nature of the consuming process, the aims consumers have in mind while making purchases, and the expected outcomes (Di Giulio & Fuchs, 2014). Globally, environmentally conscious influencers (green influencers) advocate green goods such as green FMCGs, and Ghana is no exception (Tian & Kamran, 2022).

Ouvrein et al. (2021) postulate that influencers are well-known professionals in influencing any audience. They ensure you can relate to their information on a personal level, as opposed to one that is very professional (Kim & Read, 2022). Influencers urge

others to pursue the same goals they have set, and they are in the domains of cuisine, fashion, and life and have similar characteristics and these influencers are classified according to their focus (Wang & Chan-Olmsted, 2022). A green influencer is one such influencer who inspires others to live in a way that benefits the earth and its inhabitants (Wijekoon & Sabri, 2021). Influencers who prioritise social and environmental sustainability Make the world a better place for everyone through their actions (Wijekoon & Sabri, 2021). Green influencers use social media to disseminate the word about the benefits of being green and persuade customers that embracing these changes would not disrupt their daily life (Cooke et al., 2022).

Abbas and Sağsan (2019) define green products as those that have no negative influence on the natural environment. The phrase "green product" refers to items with little environmental effect throughout their entire life cycle (Abbas & Sağsan, 2019). The design of environmentally friendly goods aims to decrease waste, lower carbon emissions, and boost resource productivity. In addition, green brands are those that consistently outperform competitors in terms of environmental and social sustainability (Chin et al., 2018). Naturally, environmentally concerned shoppers are drawn to green items (Chin et al., 2018). Green branding strategies are positioned in this way to create a unique, long-lasting image in the minds of their target consumers to deliver on their green promises and capitalise on the expanding green market (Mehraj & Qureshi, 2022). A green brand strategy relies heavily on the distinctiveness of the brand and the establishment of green purchasing intentions since a rising number of customers are prepared to put a premium on greenness (Mehraj & Qureshi, 2022).

Brands provide consumers with a means of constructing and strengthening their identities, as well as sources of enjoyment (Adella & Nurjanah, 2022). With the help of green influencers, purchasers are more likely to have a favourable perception of the offered goods, so reinforcing the brand's image and increasing customer loyalty. When customers have a bad opinion of green influencers, they are likely to have a negative opinion of the company at hand (Adella & Nurjanah, 2022). Using green influencers, Nittala and Moturu (2021) believe it is possible to monitor the purchasing behaviour

of customers. Customers are more likely to make a purchase when they link a brand with positive emotions, such as joy leading to improved performance (Alshurideh et al., 2023). Favourable green influencers suggest that the higher a brand's ability to provide pleasure, the greater its potential to elicit a favourable emotional response from consumers as it is in the case of green trust the customer has in the firm's products. (Zhao et al., 2023).

Thus, green trust constitutes consumers' confidence in firms and goods seen to have a positive impact on the natural environment (Adella & Nurjanah, 2022). The authors further explored the function of green trust as a mediator of the relationship between green perceived risk and green perceived value and green purchase intentions. Afum et al. (2021) observed that trust has a positive effect on green purchase intentions leading to the performance of the firm's brand. Increases in consumer confidence are often followed by increases in purchase intentions. The influence of green trust on green purchase intention is determined using consumer assessments of long-term trust in environmentally friendly products due to their positive impact on the environment, resulting in a rise in buy intention. Consequently, higher levels of consumer faith in the environment correlate with greater levels of expected green purchases.

The role of green influencers in driving customers to purchase FMCGs that are environmentally friendly is facilitated by the customers' attitude towards green brands and green brand associations (Setiyarini et al., 2022). Besides, the customers' trust in FMCGs to meet their greening expectation positively affect their green purchase intentions. Consumers are less likely to base their decisions just on pricing when they have a strong association with the brand they are considering, which in turn improves their impressions of the product's quality as well as its benefits (Nguyen-Viet, 2022). Also, customers that have a favourable attitude toward environmentally friendly FMCGs are more likely to make purchases of such brands (Chen, T.-W. Chang, et al., 2020).

1.2 Research Problem

Strategic decision-making is impacted in the billion-dollar influencer marketing industry, and the agency process must be modified for effective execution (Childers et al., 2019). According to Glucksman (2017), the marketing and public relations trends were dominated by influencers, particularly in the lifestyle and daily product categories. As a result, FMCG firms around the globe place a premium on strategy. This was viewed as a simple method for attracting customers by promoting relevant and interesting information. Third-party endorsers are customers who use their platforms (blogs, social media, etc.) to shape or influence the views and attitudes of other consumers in the marketplace (Glucksman, 2017). How social media and other digital techniques affect the productivity of an organisation is poorly understood (Guo & Saxton, 2014).

Customers (followers) view information more positively if they identify with the influencer and if the influencer seems to match the entity (e.g., product, brand, or service) that they are advertising (Ju & Lou, 2022). A persuasive communication strategy that is aimed to persuade consumers to accept a marketed brand or product as attractive and suitable for their consumption is likely to fail if either connection fails to elicit customers' fit views (Ju & Lou, 2022). Influencers may not only encourage their followers to adopt greener lifestyles but also encourage businesses to make living a greener lifestyle easier for consumers of their products and services (Breves & Liebers, 2022). A positive effect of green influencers indicates that a brand is more capable of eliciting a positive emotional response from customers, thereby increasing the likelihood that consumers will purchase the company's products or services (Khan et al., 2022).

The current research is motivated by several research gaps such as empirical, methodology and knowledge gaps identified from a review of previous studies. Thus, this research focuses on green influencers and the green purchase intentions of consumers of FMCG. A review of previous studies conducted in Ghana showed that there is a dearth of research on the relationship between green influencers, green trust,

green purchase intentions and green purchase. Also, there are no known studies on green influencers, green trust and green purchase intentions being facilitated by green brands (green brand attitude and green brand associations). Though sustainable consumption has been the subject of many studies in other jurisdictions (Adella & Nurjanah, 2022; Kong et al., 2014; Nguyen-Viet, 2022), no studies have analysed it in terms of green influencers, green trust and green branding in the local FMCGs sector of Ghana.

To fill these research gaps, this study develops an integrated framework for green purchase intentions and green purchases by examining the impact of green influencers and green trust on green purchase intentions and explores the mediation effect of green brand associations and green brand attitudes of local FMCGs in Ghana.

Due to the nexus between green purchase intentions and sustainable consumption, the emphasis of this research is on green purchase intentions being driven by environmentally conscious influencers using the quantitative research approach which the majority of previous studies failed to employ. This research adapts a methodology for environmentally conscious purchasing proposed by (Tanner & Wölfling Kast, 2003) by integrating green trust and green purchases and how they connect to green purchases.

The novelty of this study is supported by previous research that has identified a gap in the literature regarding the influence of green influencers and the mediating effects of green brand attitude and green brand associations on consumer behavior towards local FMCG brands in Ghana (Effah & Hinson, 2022; Majeed et al., 2022)(Adzobu & Hinson, 2020; Asare & Bawuah, 2021). While some studies have explored consumer behavior towards green products in Ghana, there is a lack of empirical evidence on the interplay between green influencers, green brand attitude, green brand associations, green trust, green purchase intentions, and green purchase in the context of local FMCG firms in Ghana (Tandon et al., 2023).

Moreover, the study seeks to examine the role of green trust in influencing consumer behavior towards green brands and its impact on overall green purchase,

which has not been previously explored in the context of local FMCG firms in Ghana. This is in line with previous research that highlights the importance of trust in shaping consumer behavior towards sustainable and green products (Osei-Frimpong et al., 2019). Therefore, study investigates the mediating role of green brand attitude and green brand associations on the impact of green influencers and green trust on green purchase intentions and green purchases of local FMCGs firms in Ghana. By exploring these relationships, the study aims to contribute to the limited research on green marketing and consumer behavior towards green products in Ghana and provide insights for local FMCG firms in designing effective green marketing campaigns (Amoako et al., 2022).

This research further provides a comprehensive methodology for analysing the impact of diverse green influencers on consumer intentions to make environmentally responsible purchases. In this day of increasing environmentalism, it is essential to maintain healthy consumption patterns by making environmentally conscious purchases. Using green influencers, green trust, green brand associations, and green brand attitudes as predictors, this study develops a research framework that promotes sustainable consumption by increasing ecologically friendly purchases.

The study endeavours to examine the following research questions:

1. What are green influencers, green brand attitude, green brand association, green trust, green purchase intentions and green purchases?
2. What is the relationship between green influencers and green purchase intentions among local FMCGs in Ghana?
3. How does green influencers influence the green purchases of local FMCGs in Ghana?
4. What is the impact of green purchase intentions on the green purchases of local FMCGs in Ghana?
5. To what extent does green brand association mediate the relationship between green influencers and the green brand attitude of local FMCGs in Ghana?

6. Does green brand attitude mediate the relationship between green influencers and green purchase intentions among local FMCGs in Ghana?
7. How does green trust moderate the relationships between green influencers, green brand attitude, and green brand association in the context of local FMCGs in Ghana?

1.3 Research Objectives

The objective of this study is to investigate the interplay between green influencers, brand associations, trust, purchase intentions, and purchases within the context of local FMCGs in Ghana.

The study explores the following objectives:

1. To describe green influencers, green brand attitude, green brand association, green trust, green purchase intentions and green purchases.
2. To examine the relationship between green influencers and green purchase intentions of local FMCGs in Ghana.
3. To explore the relationship between green influencers and green purchases of local FMCGs in Ghana.
4. To examine the impact of green purchase intentions on the green purchases of local FMCGs in Ghana.
5. To investigate the mediating role of green brand association in the relationship between green influencers and the green brand attitude of local FMCGs in Ghana.
6. To assess the mediating effect of green brand attitude on the relationship between green influencers and green purchase intentions of local FMCGs in Ghana.
7. To analyze the moderating effect of green trust on the relationships between green influencers, green brand attitude, and green brand association in the context of local FMCGs in Ghana.

1.4 Significance of Research

The study has several practical applications. This study contributes to the extant body of industry research by providing valuable insights into consumer behaviour in the Ghanaian Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sector. This expertise confers advantages to organisations operating within this sector, as it facilitates a deeper comprehension of consumer perspectives on environmentally sustainable commodities and the wider market context. In addition, the research's emphasis on green influencers and their influence on the promotion of sustainable products has implications for businesses. In the modern era characterised by digital advancements, influencer marketing has become an integral component of consumer communication strategies. By understanding the optimal use of green influencers to establish relationships with environmentally conscious consumers, businesses can enhance their brand reputation and market impact.

Moreover, the study sheds light on other aspects, such as consumer sentiments, brand affiliations, and perceived dangers. These valuable insights are crucial for green businesses attempting to tailor their marketing strategies and improve their market position. The practical value of this research resides in its capacity to provide firms with valuable insights and aid them in making informed decisions within the dynamic domain of environmentally sustainable consumer products.

Furthore, the study is a significant contribution to the field of consumer behaviour and enhances policy-based understanding of the function of influencer marketing in consumer decision-making. Policymakers can use these findings to establish legislation and standards that encourage ethical and sustainable marketing practises. This will aid in ensuring that consumers are provided with accurate and transparent information about eco-friendly products.

Finally, the findings of this study have important implications for the social responsibility and sustainability efforts of organisations. This study can be utilised by policymakers to incentivize businesses to adopt ecologically sustainable practises and

interact with green influencers in an ethical manner. These policies have the potential to cultivate a market that is more environmentally conscious and sustainable.

1.5 Structure of Dissertation

The study was organised into five (5) interconnected chapters.

Chapter I

This constitutes the introductory chapter. It comprises the research background to the study where general information on the research topic is provided, the research problem, research objectives and the significance of the dissertation.

Chapter II

The literature review chapter of the dissertation dwells on the concepts pertinent to the proposed study. This section of the literature review covers concepts of influencers, green influencers, green brand attitude, green brand association, green trust, green brand purchase intentions, and green purchases. Besides, discussions on components of green purchases and green trust was explored. Furthermore, the theoretical framework of the dissertation was explored in detail in this chapter. The theories to be considered are Social Learning theory, Value-belief- norm theory, source credibility theory, theory of planned behaviour, brand association theory, trust transfer theory and Green marketing theory. Also, previous studies on the subject of discussion will be reviewed in line with the objectives of the study drawing on studies from different jurisdictions and finally focusing on available local literature. The research framework was also be examined to help situate the study in the proper context. From the research framework, hypotheses to be tested was developed to form the basis of the study model.

Chapter III

This chapter covers the strategies that was implemented to achieve the study objective. It describes the research methods that will be employed to achieve the objectives of the research. It includes the study design, participants and research sites, data collection, data analysis, and ethical consideration that must be addressed.

Chapter IV

Chapter IV of the study presents the analysis and discussions on the results of the study. The analysis was done in line with the objectives of the study. Thus, the analysis was grouped under five thematic sub-headings depicting each objective and hypothesis of the study.

Chapter V

Chapter V, summarises the study's key findings, draw a conclusion, make policy recommendations, and provide direction for future research.