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DETERMINING GREEN MARKETING PRACTICES AND SATISFACTION OF MEMBERS OF MARKETING COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES IN AWKA SOUTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, ANAMBRA STATE, NIGERIA

Grace Obiageli Nwafor[1] Emmanuel E. Umebali[2]
[1]Department of Cooperative Economics and Management; & [2]Department of Agricultural Economics, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria.
Emails: go.nwafor@unizik.edu.ng[1], ee.umebali@unizik.edu.ng[2]

***Correspondence**:* go.nwafor@unizik.edu.ng

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the relationship between green marketing practices and satisfaction of members of marketing cooperative societies in Awka South Local Government Area. Two research questions and two hypotheses tested at 0.05 level of significance guided the study. The survey design was adopted for the study and the population of the study was 100 members of marketing cooperative societies in Awka South LGA of Anambra State, Nigeria. Two validated instruments were used to collect data for the study. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to analyze the research questions and test the hypotheses in the study. The findings of the study revealed that eco-labeling and eco-branding practices have high positive relationship with satisfaction of members of marketing cooperative societies in Awka South Local Government Area. Based on the findings of the study, the researcher recommended that heads of cooperative societies should emphasise the use of eco-labels on products to inform members about the environmental benefits of their purchases. Furthermore, the researchers recommended that cooperative societies should develop strong eco-branding strategies that would show the cooperative's commitment to sustainability.

Key words: *Cooperative Societies, Eco-branding, Eco-labeling, Green Marketing, Satisfaction*

1. INTRODUCTION

The need to ensure environmental sustainability has been the central focus of public discourse globally. This is because consumers worldwide are increasingly concerned about environmental protection (Olufunmi, 2022). Environmental concern has increased the call for the adoption of sustainable practices like green marketing which fosters the development of eco-friendly products. Green marketing, often known as sustainable or environmental marketing, is a corporate strategy that promotes environmentally friendly or sustainable goods

or services. Ababio and Baiden (2018) opined that green marketing is a tool for recognising, addressing, and meeting customer wants and aspirations within the context of environmental stewardship. Green marketing involves all efforts such as research and development, product design, packaging, and advertising that are required to create and maintain customers' eco-friendly attitudes and behaviours while preserving the natural environment. Its goal is to meet the needs of environmentally concerned customers while simultaneously tackling larger environmental and socioeconomic challenges (Abanyam & Abanyam, 2021). Obafemi and Ihunwo (2022) defined green marketing practices as a series of organisational functions, such as the development of eco-friendly products and logistics, sustainable promotion and pricing, and green consumption. Additionally, these practices include eco-labelling, product return programmes, reverse logistics, pollution control, sponsorship of environmental initiatives, environmental management systems, reduction of raw materials in product design, and compliance with green procurement policies. Sadiku et al. (2018) revealed that green marketing practices positively influence a firm's performance by providing a competitive advantage. Additionally, Sadiku et al. (2018) stated that green marketing practices directly enhance firm performance.

Green marketing practices are strongly related to marketing performance. Businesses may improve their brand image and attract environmentally sensitive customers by adding eco-friendly goods and logistics, long-term advertising and pricing, and encouraging green consumption (Waqas et al., 2018). Implementing practices such as eco-labelling, product return programmes, reverse logistics, pollution control, sponsoring environmental initiatives, establishing environmental management systems, reducing raw material usage in product design (Abayehu & Nega, 2020), and following green procurement policies can increase customer loyalty and satisfaction. As a result, these green marketing activities may boost a market performance, increasing profitability and sustainability (Saeed et al., 2021). The present research operationalised green marketing practices in two dimensions of eco-labeling and eco- branding. However, these postulations have not been empirically proven with regards to cooperative societies.

Co-operatives are autonomous associations of individuals who voluntarily unite to meet their economic, social, and cultural needs through jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprises. Ubana (2019) described them as groups of people who come together voluntarily, agreeing to work collectively, sharing risks and resources to improve their common socio-

economic interests, which they cannot achieve individually. Ezeokafor et al. (2019) supported this definition, describing a co-operative society as an incorporated association where individuals join freely to obtain economic services that would be too difficult or costly to achieve alone. Various types of co-operative societies exist, including agricultural, thrift and credit, consumer, housing, marketing, transport, insurance, and multipurpose co-operatives. Marketing cooperative is the focus of the study. Marketing cooperatives play a vital role in eliminating middlemen and reducing unnecessary product wastage. Nwankwo et al (2016) stated that through their pooled resources, cooperatives, acting as producer merchants, can effectively explore and utilize various avenues for efficient and profitable marketing of products, both domestically and internationally. Nwankwo et al. (2016) stated that cooperatives, by pooling their resources, can act as producer merchants to effectively explore and utilise various avenues for efficient and profitable marketing of products both domestically and internationally. This approach can be linked to green marketing practices as it emphasises sustainable and eco-friendly methods to enhance satisfaction among consumers and stakeholders. However, this has not been empirically proven in Awka South Local Government Area. This study therefore investigated the relationship between green marketing practices and satisfaction of members of marketing cooperative societies in Awka South LGA.

1.1 Objectives

The main objective of the study was to investigate the relationship between green marketing practices and satisfaction of members of marketing cooperative societies in Awka South local government area (LGA) in Anambra State. Specifically, the study:

1. investigates the relationship between eco-labeling and satisfaction of members of marketing cooperative societies in Awka South LGA.
2. determines the relationship between eco-branding and satisfaction of members of marketing cooperative societies in Awka South LGA.

1.2 Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the relationship between eco-labeling and satisfaction of members of marketing cooperative societies in Awka South LGA?

2. What is the relationship between eco-branding and satisfaction of members of marketing cooperative societies in Awka South LGA?

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1.3 Hypotheses

This was presented in the null hypothesis form only:

1. H_o: Eco-labeling practices do not have a significant relationship with satisfaction of members of marketing cooperative societies in Awka South LGA.
2. H_o: Eco-branding practices do not have a significant relationship with satisfaction of members of marketing cooperative societies in Awka South LGA.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework gives an overview of the interaction between the independent variable (green marketing practices) and dependent variable (satisfaction of members of marketing cooperative societies).

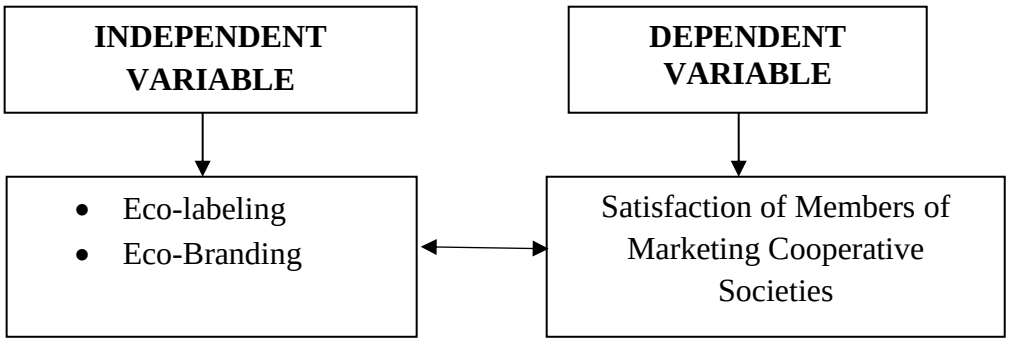


Figure 1: Schematic representation of the influence of green marketing practices on satisfaction of members of marketing cooperative societies

Source: authors' concept, 2024.

2.1.1 Green Marketing Practices

Green marketing refers to any efforts that strive to meet human needs and desires while having a minimum detrimental effect on the environment (Joshia & Rahman, 2015). Demessie and Shukla (2023) defined green marketing as a process that involves developing high-quality goods that suit customer requirements and desires while prioritising quality, performance, affordability, and convenience in an environmentally sustainable way. Nwankwo & Kanyagale (2023) stated that green marketing strategy fulfils the present demands of consumers and enterprises while protecting or improving future generations' capacity to satisfy their own needs. Alabo and Anyasor (2020) described green marketing practices as a collection of efforts targeted at mitigating negative environmental degradation or pollution.

Green marketing involves strategic decisions for managing green-based goods and services, logistics, promotions, pricing, consumption, and relationships. It also considers environmental issues in exchange transactions. Green marketing aims to enhance sustainable practices in production and consumption of goods and services, as well as related marketing activities in various environmental contexts (Khandaker & Rahman, 2020). Shabir et al. (2020) averred that green marketing practices include a variety of organisational activities, such as the production of environmentally friendly goods and logistics, sustainable advertising and pricing, and green consumption These practices also include eco-labeling, product return programmes, reverse logistics, pollution control, environmental initiative sponsorship, environmental management systems, raw material reduction in product design, and adherence to green procurement standards (Sima et al., 2019). This study focused on eco-labeling of products and green pricing.

2.1.2 Eco-labeling

Eco-labeling is an important green marketing strategy that distinguishes ecologically friendly items from non-green ones. Labels, certificates, or other visual indications are used to convey to customers about a product's eco-friendliness. This method is gaining popularity as people expect more sustainable and ecologically responsible goods. Eco-labeling is an important part of green marketing since it gives customers precise information about a product's environmental features (Muhammad, 2022). Certifications and standards, such as the USDA Organic label, Energy Star, Fair Trade, and Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification, assist customers in making educated purchasing decisions by showing that a product has satisfied certain environmental requirements (Muraleedharan & Maheswari, 2024). These marks often require items to satisfy certain requirements for resource consumption, emissions, and sustainable sourcing. Eco-labeling not only helps customers identify environmentally friendly items, but it also provides a competitive edge to firms who implement sustainable practices (Ilias et al., 2020). However, it is critical to maintain the authenticity and openness of eco-labeling systems to prevent greenwashing—misleading people into thinking a product is more ecologically friendly (Muhammad, 2022).

2.1.3 Eco-Branding

An “eco-brand,” also known as environmental branding or green branding, includes names, terms, signs, and symbols used to communicate a firm's environmental performance. Eco-brands are designed to meet people's environmental needs, unlike eco-labels, which are

specific labelling systems for food and consumer products. A brand is defined as a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of these elements, intended to identify the products and services of one seller or group of sellers and to distinguish them from competitors. Similarly, an eco-brand differentiates a brand based on its environmental benefits. It helps make a product stand out from others, making it more recognizable among the many available products. An eco-brand allows for clear differentiation between green and non-green products. Eco-branding features offer a way for firms to differentiate themselves from their non-green competitors. A green brand provides significant eco-benefits compared to traditional brands, appealing to customers who prioritise environmental sustainability (Abid et al., 2022). Increasingly, branding strategies targeting both business-to-consumer (B2C) and business-to-business (B2B) markets are relying on establishing themselves as distinctly green brands (Schmidt et al., 2017). Therefore, marketing practitioners and researchers must understand the extent to which brands influence consumer purchasing decisions. A green brand identity is defined by certain brand characteristics and advantages connected to environmental protection (Lin et al. 2017). A well-implemented green brand identity should benefit environmentally aware consumers. As a result, brand equity refers to the overall impact of brands on customer purchase choices. Environmental labels have a huge impact on how consumers perceive businesses' sustainability performance.

2.1.4 Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is defined as an overall assessment based on the entire purchase and consumption experience with the product or service over time (Johnson & Karlay, 2018). There are two different conceptualizations of customer satisfaction: transaction-specific satisfaction, which is based on a specific purchase occasion, and cumulative satisfaction, which is an overall evaluation of multiple purchases and experiences with a service over a prolonged period. Customer satisfaction is determined by the general perception of products or services that provide the highest level of satisfaction for customers (Johnson & Karlay, 2018). It can be regarded as contentment, pleasure, or ambivalence, depending on the type of service provided at a specific purchase occasion. Customer satisfaction can also be influenced by price, service features, product perceptions, and service quality. Customer satisfaction is defined as an overall evaluation based on the total purchase and consumption experience with the product or service over time (Khadka & Maharjan, 2017). Customer satisfaction is influenced by specific product or service features and perceptions of quality. It is also affected by customers' emotional responses, their attributions, and their perception of fairness.

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2.2 Empirical Review

Hussain (2023) investigated the effects of green marketing strategies and corporate social responsibility (CSR) practices on organizational performance and competitive advantage. The study adopted a positivist ideology as well as deductive technique. The population of the study was 121 participants. The result of the study revealed that the implementation of green marketing strategies and CSR policies helps to improve the performance and competitive advantage of lubricant companies. The finding further revealed that customers as well as business experts support companies that produce ecologically friendly products.

Mkik and Mkik (2020) investigated the effects of green marketing on customer satisfaction in Morocco using a correlational research design. The sample consisted of 100 students from Morocco. Researchers applied a green marketing instrument and a customer satisfaction scale. Pearson product-moment correlation and regression analysis were used to analyse the data. The results indicated a significant positive relationship between green marketing and customer satisfaction. Additionally, the findings showed that all aspects of green marketing, except distribution, were significant predictors of customer satisfaction.

Macharia et al. (2017) determined the impact of green marketing practices on customer satisfaction in the soft drink industry in Kenya, specifically in Nairobi. It used a descriptive cross-sectional research design to assess how green marketing practices influence customer satisfaction among soft drink companies in Nairobi County. The research targeted a sample of 180 trade customers and 162 soft drink firms, successfully gathering data from 130 trade customers and 102 firms. The study utilised Cronbach's Alpha to measure internal consistency. Both descriptive statistics (mean scores and measures of dispersion) and inferential statistics (correlation, analysis of variance, and regression analysis) were employed to explore the relationship between green marketing practices and customer satisfaction. The findings indicated a statistically significant positive linear relationship between green marketing practices and customer satisfaction. The regression analysis further demonstrated that green marketing practices explained 22.3 percent of the variability in customer satisfaction within the soft drink industry in Nairobi.

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3. MATERIALS AND METHOD

The survey research design was adopted for the study. The main objective of a descriptive survey design is to provide an accurate representation of the population being studied. The design allows the researcher to collect data from a large sample size, which enables them to make generalizations about the population. The study was conducted in Awka South LGA of Anambra State. The population of the study comprised members of marketing cooperative societies that are registered with the Anambra Ministry of Commerce and Industry in Anambra State. The researcher purposively sample 100 members of marketing cooperative societies in Anambra State. The instruments for data collection are two structured questionnaires developed by the researcher. The first instrument is titled "Green Marketing Practices Scale (GMPS)." The instrument has two clusters; 1 and 2. Cluster 1 contains 10 items on the eco-labeling practices while cluster 2 contains 8 items on eco-branding practices. The instrument was structured on a four point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The second instrument was titled "Customer Satisfaction Scale (CSS)." The instrument contains 12 items. The instrument was structured on a four point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The instrument was subjected to face and construct validation using three experts two experts in the Department of Co-operative Economics and Management, one in the Department of Marketing all in the Faculty of Management Sciences, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State.

The purpose of the study, research questions, hypotheses and the questionnaire were given to the experts. These experts were requested to validate the instrument relative to the appropriateness and coverage of the items, wordings and item construct as well as clarity of the instructions. On the other hand, construct validation was carried out with the help of Principle Component Analysis approach with Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) as a measure of sampling adequacy to construct the Principle Component Analysis. The coefficient value of .782 was obtained. A pilot test was conducted on 20 members of marketing cooperative societies in Awka North LGA of Anambra State. The application of Cronbach Alpha Reliability Co-efficient on the data from the pilot test yielded reliability co-efficient values of 0.80 for GMPS and 0.78 for CSS. The instrument was administered by the researcher with the help of three research assistants. The research assistants were briefed on the mode of the instrument administration. The instrument was administered to the respondents at their weekly meetings. The instrument was administered on the spot and the respondents were

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allowed enough time to fill out the questionnaire upon which the instrument was retrieved but in a situation where that was not possible, the researcher or assistant booked an appointment with the respondent for the date of retrieval of the instrument. This process lasted for two weeks. Out of the 100 copies of the questionnaire administered 96 copies were retrieved in good condition and used for the analysis of data. Data was subjected to inferential analysis, using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 20.0) using Pearson Correlational Statistics. The co-efficient "r" obtained was used to ascertain how each of the independent variables correlate the dependent variable. The research questions were interpreted as follows:

Correlation Coefficient	**Interpretations**
0.8 to 1.0 (negative or positive)	Very High
0.6 to 0.8 (negative or positive)	High
0.4 to 0.6 (negative or positive)	Average
0.2 to 0.4 (negative or positive)	Low
0.0 to 0.2 (negative or positive)	Very Low (no relationship)

In testing the null hypotheses, Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to tested hypotheses. In interpreting the values of the null hypotheses, when p-value is less than or equal to .05 ($p \leq .05$), the null hypothesis was rejected. On the other hand, when the p-value is greater than .05 ($p > .05$), the null hypothesis was not rejected.

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4. RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Research Questions Analysis

4.1.1 Research Question 1: What is the relationship between eco-labeling and satisfaction of members of marketing cooperative societies in Awka South LGA?

Table 1: Pearson Correlation Analysis

		Eco-labeling Practices	Satisfaction of Members of Marketing Cooperative Societies	Remark
Eco-labeling Practices	Pearson Correlation	1	.752**	High Positive relationship
	Sig, (2-tailed)		.000	
	N	96	96	
Satisfaction of Members of Marketing Cooperative Societies	Pearson Correlation	.752**	1	
	Sig, (2-tailed)	.000		
	N	96	96	

** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: Field Study, 2024

Data in Table 1 reveals that the Pearson's Correlation Coefficient is r = 0.75. This shows that eco-labeling practices have a high positive relationship with satisfaction of members of marketing cooperative societies in Awka South LGA. This implies that the adoption of eco-labeling practices would increase the satisfaction of members of marketing cooperative societies in Awka South LGA. Thus, eco-labeling practices have a high positive relationship with satisfaction of members of marketing cooperative societies in Awka South LGA.

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4.1.2 Research Question 2: What is the relationship between eco-branding and satisfaction of members of marketing cooperative societies in Awka South LGA?

Table 2: Pearson Correlation Analysis

		Eco-branding Practices	**Satisfaction of Members of Marketing Cooperative Societies**	**Remark**
Eco-branding Practices	Pearson Correlation	1	.716**	High Positive relationship
	Sig, (2-tailed)		.000	
	N	96	96	
Satisfaction of Members of Marketing Cooperative Societies	Pearson Correlation	.716**	1	
	Sig, (2-tailed)	.000		
	N	96	96	

** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: Field Study, 2024

Data in Table 2 reveals that the Pearson's Correlation Coefficient is r = 0.716. This shows that eco-branding practices have a high positive relationship with satisfaction of members of marketing cooperative societies in Awka South LGA. This implies that the adoption of eco-branding practices would increase the satisfaction of members of marketing cooperative societies in Awka South LGA. Thus, eco-branding practices have a high positive relationship with satisfaction of members of marketing cooperative societies in Awka South LGA.

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4.2 Test of Hypotheses

4.2.1 Hypothesis 1

H_o: Eco-labeling practices do not have a significant relationship with satisfaction of members of marketing cooperative societies in Awka South LGA.

Table 3: Pearson Correlation Analysis

Correlation

		Eco-labeling Practices	**Satisfaction of Members of Marketing Cooperative Societies**	**Remark**
Eco-labeling Practices	Pearson Correlation	1	.752**	Significant
	Sig, (2-tailed)		.000	
	N	96	96	
Satisfaction of Members of Marketing Cooperative Societies	Pearson Correlation	.752**	1	
	Sig, (2-tailed)	.000		
	N	96	96	

** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: Field Study, 2024

Data presented on Table 3 indicates the correlation coefficient (r) as .752 with a p-value = 0.000. Since the P value of 0.000 is less than .05 (P<.05), it means that effect of eco-labeling practices on satisfaction of members of marketing cooperative societies in Awka South LGA is statistically significant. This means that eco-labeling practices have a significant relationship with satisfaction of members of marketing cooperative societies in Awka South LGA. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected.

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4.2.2 Hypothesis 2

H_o: Eco-branding practices do not have a significant relationship with satisfaction of members of marketing cooperative societies in Awka South LGA.

Table 4: Pearson Correlation Analysis

Correlation

		Eco- branding Practices	**Satisfaction of Members of Marketing Cooperative Societies**	**Remark**
Eco-branding Practices	Pearson Correlation	1	.716**	Significant
	Sig, (2-tailed)		.000	
	N	96	96	
Satisfaction of Members of Marketing Cooperative Societies	Pearson Correlation	.716**	1	
	Sig, (2-tailed)	.000		
	N	96	96	

** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: Field Study, 2024

Data presented on Table 4 indicates the correlation coefficient (r) as .716 with a p-value = 0.000. Since the P value of 0.000 is less than .05 (P<.05), it means that effect of eco-branding practices on satisfaction of members of marketing cooperative societies in Awka South LGA is statistically significant. This means that eco-branding practices have a significant relationship with satisfaction of members of marketing cooperative societies in Awka South LGA. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected.

The finding of the study revealed that eco-labeling practices have a high positive relationship with satisfaction of members of marketing cooperative societies in Awka South LGA. This finding showed that the adoption of green marketing practices like eco-labeling have significant relationship with satisfaction of members of marketing cooperative societies in

Awka South LGA. This finding in agreement with Macharia et al. (2017) who reported that green marketing practices have a positive relationship with customer satisfaction. Similarly, Mkik and Mkik (2020) found that green marketing practices have a positive impact on customer satisfaction. This is validated by the finding of the research hypothesis which revealed that eco-labeling significantly influence satisfaction of members of marketing cooperative societies in Awka South LGA.

Furthermore, the finding of the study revealed that eco-branding practices have a high positive relationship with satisfaction of members of marketing cooperative societies in Awka South LGA. This finding showed that the adoption of green marketing practices like eco-branding would significantly correlate with the satisfaction of members of marketing cooperative societies in Awka South LGA. The finding is in consonance with Mkik and Mkik (2020) found that eco-branding have a positive impact on customer satisfaction. Mkik and Mkik further stated that the adoption of eco-branding practices significantly improves customers' satisfaction. Furthermore, Hussain (2023) stated that customers as well as business experts support companies that produce ecologically friendly products. Furthermore, finding of the study revealed that eco-branding have significant relationship with satisfaction of members of marketing cooperative societies in Awka South LGA.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The researchers conclude that green marketing practices have a high positive relationship with satisfaction of members of marketing cooperative societies in Awka South LGA. Eco-labeling and eco-branding practices have positive relationship with satisfaction of members of marketing cooperative societies in Awka South LGA. It is therefore imperative that measures are put in place to increase the adoption of green marketing practices among producers and marketers of products in Nigeria.

Based on the conclusion, the researchers make the following recommendations:

1. Heads of cooperative societies should emphasise on the use of eco-labels on products to inform members about the environmental benefits of their purchases. This transparency can boost member satisfaction by aligning with their environmental values.
2. Cooperative Societies should develop strong eco-branding strategies that would show the cooperative's commitment to sustainability. This could involve creating a distinct brand identity that reflects eco-friendly values, which can enhance member loyalty and

satisfaction. Hence, management of cooperatives should organize and sponsor educational programmes and workshops about the benefits of green marketing and how it positively impacts the environment. Through these programmes, members of the cooperative societies would appreciate and support eco-friendly initiatives.

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