

Investigating green marketing orientation effect on sustainable competitive advantage: case of consumer goods industry of Ghana

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Abstract

The study evaluates the effect of holistic green marketing orientation, precisely strategic green marketing orientation (SGMO) on sustainable competitive advantage (SCA) by defining the role of an antecedent corporate social responsibility (CSR) and a moderator internal green marketing orientation (IGMO) which is also an element of green marketing orientation. The analysis is based on 401 samples gathered from managers, departmental heads, and junior staff in the consumer goods industry. A structural equation model statistical tool was employed using SmartPLS 3.0. The study's results showed that CSR has a significant effect on SGMO. The results of this study show that SGMO and IGMO have a substantial and direct influence on sustainable competitive advantage (SCA). In addition, deploying IGMO as a moderator showed that integrating SGMO and IGMO plays the most significant role in increasing SCA. The research probes into the largely unexamined association between CSR, SGMO, IGMO, and SCA. The findings support contemporary evidence on green marketing, indicating a great synergy between SGMO and IGMO that promote competitive advantage. The outcome provides marketing managers and experts insight into an environmentally driven competitive advantage.

Index Terms: strategic green marketing orientation, internal green marketing orientation, competitive advantage, Corporate Social Responsibility.

I. INTRODUCTION

The interest in the conceptualization of competitive advantage has proliferated over the period among business practitioners and marketing scholars (Chowdhury & Dasani, 2021; Widayastuti et al., 2019). As such, there have been several theories, such as the Resource-Based View (RBV) (Barney, 1991) and VRIO resources (Barney, 2002), among others, that aid business in remaining competitive. Critical research in strategic management, marketing, and other domains of life sees competitive advantage as a context-specific principle because of the antecedents that may be aiding it at a particular point in time (Chang, 2011; Chung, 2020). Literature in marketing refers to competitive advantage as a company's superior performance that is evident in the industry and the marketplace (Rahmawati et al., 2014).

Both practitioners and academicians have stressed the relevance of business competitiveness (Chowdhury & Dasani, 2021; Giantari & Sukaatmadja, 2021). As such, academic studies in the marketing stream have revealed that competitive advantage plays a critical role in enhancing innovations (Chang, 2011), customer satisfaction & loyalty, brand awareness (Widayastuti et al., 2019), community support (Menguc et al., 2010), increased sales, increased market shares, and profitability (Habib et al., 2020; Saleem et al., 2020). Despite the increasing concern in promoting business competitiveness, investigating the antecedents is still at the infantile stage. Only a handful of researchers have begun to study predictors that are environmentally focused, such as green marketing mix (Rahmawati et al., 2014), environmental orientation (Giantari & Sukaatmadja, 2021), green innovation, and green marketing (Chowdhury & Dasani, 2021; Chung, 2020). Even though these research pieces highlight the antecedents of competitive advantage (Alsaqal et al., 2021; Leonidou et al., 2015), the potential for unraveling green marketing orientation influence on business competitiveness remains largely unexploited (Papadas et al., 2019a). Green marketing orientation is "the recognition of the importance of environmental issues faced by

the firms” (Chowdhury & Dasani, 2021). Previous studies have indicated that GMO can ensure and position businesses to cultivate peculiar and core capabilities needed to attain environmental goals (Ullah & Danish, 2020; Uma & Varsha, 2018; Vilkaite-Vaitone & Skackauskiene, 2019). The relevance of GMO in the context of making policies introduces the question, “what elements aid businesses to administer GMO? Can GMO enhance business competitiveness?” Current evidence shows that GMO and its function among companies have aided researchers in depicting the gaps that ought to be studied (Papadas et al., 2019).

Countless studies aimed their strength at uncovering the association between corporate social responsibility (CSR) and firms’ financial performance (Feng et al., 2022; Sameer, 2021) without empirically dwelling much on ecological strategies and sustainable competition. Other studies also focused on ascertaining the association between CSR and organizational outcomes such as OCB, company reputation, and performance (Feng et al., 2022; Sameer, 2021). The association between CSR and competitive advantage is complicated and requires deeper investigation and assessment. The present research would posit on unraveling how CSR assists in the administration of GMO and simultaneously ascertain how the latter affects a business's competitiveness.

Moreover, the actualization of environmental policies results in business competitiveness and, invariably, the profitability of companies in the long run which has been evaluated by a considerable number of studies (Chung, 2020; Garg & Sharma, 2017; Rahmawati et al., 2014) but rare studies exist on addressing the association between green marketing strategies and sustainable competitive advantage (Papadas et al., 2019). The focus on environmental or green marketing has been increasing at an increasing rate over the past years. It has now become an essential principle in the evidence of marketing and management (Rahmawati et al., 2014). Practical information indicates that a company’s value is augmented by environmental policies that should be infused into the overall corporate objective of sustainability (Hasan & Ali, 2015). In the same vein, many authors that would result in organizational outcomes have touted the essence of comprehensive ecological strategies and gains in the longer term. Including sustained business competitiveness (Chahal et al., 2014; Mishra et al., 2019). Despite several studies on environmental strategies, the empirical information on the association between the current green marketing strategies and companies’ competitiveness is still immature (Mishra et al., 2019). More so, a few pieces of research address the strategic and long-term objective of competition driven by green strategies. Because of this, a broad-based investigation is needed to evaluate competitive advantage under the umbrella of a strategic green marketing pattern (Mishra et al., 2019a; Papadas et al., 2019a), which determines a critical research gap and leeway for future researchers. The present research would advance insights by empirically establishing the duality of marketing orientation by demonstrating the direct effect of strategic green marketing orientation (SGMO) on sustainable competitive advantage and moderation of internal green marketing orientation (IGMO) on the association between the strategic green marketing orientation (SGMO) and sustainable competitive advantage (SCA).

Lastly, there is rare information on GMO in the context of consumer goods companies in Ghana, a developing nation. Studies have stressed that GMO is a fundamental and long-term approach for encouraging SCA in the complex and changing business environment (Papadas et al., 2019b). The GMO is a broad leeway that serves as the foundation for companies’ revival and ascertaining sustainable competitive advantage (Uma & Varsha, 2018). Additionally, immediate researches reveal the relevance of GMO on financial and market performance among sectors which stresses that additional studies are required for different sectors or industries to appreciate the various elements of the phenomenon absolutely (Saleem et al., 2020). Companies in developing economies like Ghana function differently than advanced countries, hence the essence of evaluating this phenomenon separately. As a growing nation, Ghana has several consumer goods companies spring up under the One-District-One-Factory (1D1F) initiative (John, 2019). Ghana legislated an Environmental Protection Act, Act 490, in 1994 to ensure the preservation of the environment (John, 2019).

Notwithstanding the establishment of the Environmental Protection Agency to see to the implementation of the law, the models seem not to be working appropriately, especially with businesses, and still raising environmental concerns (John, 2019). In this setting, the current study is poised on consumer goods companies to explore the influence of green marketing orientation on competitive advantage in this particular sector. Moreover, Papadas et al. (2019) suggest the effect of GMO on sustainable competitive advantage should be studied by relying on different settings and measures. A gap exists for an appropriate evaluation of the interplay between green marketing orientation (SGMO & IGMO), its effect on sustainable competitive advantage, and elements that encourage green marketing strategies at the corporate level.

Relying on the gaps revealed, the study puts out the following questions for the current research:

RQ1. Does CSR have any effect on GMO (SGMO) in the consumer goods industry in Ghana?

RQ2. Is there any direct effect of GMO (SGMO & IGMO) on sustainable competitive advantage in the consumer goods industry in Ghana?

RQ3. Does IGMO moderate the association between SGMO and sustainable competitive advantage in the consumer goods industry?

The initial focus of the study comprised the development of a hypothesis and conceptual framework; fast forward, the study’s methodology is presented, which takes into consideration data collection, sampling, constructs measurement, and data analysis procedures; the next aspect considers results presentation, interpretation, and discussions; the last aspect would focus on the conclusion, study implications, limitations and hints for subsequent studies.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

The theoretical model underpinning this study is Green Marketing Orientation (GMO) (Papadas et al., 2017) and the theoretical principles of corporate social responsibility and competitive advantage. The current research responds to the organizational-wide aspect of the green marketing principle. Additionally, a comprehensive green marketing strategy has been employed to stipulate businesses' current strategic and internal policies (Chahal et al., 2014a; Mishra et al., 2019). Because of this reason, brief literature has been adopted to conceptualize the structure and interplay of several relevant components.

2.1 Green marketing orientation (GMO)

The GMO is conceptualized as the processes undertaken by companies to evaluate, identify, fashion, and satisfy consumers and societal expectations gainfully and sustainably by employing reliable initiatives from conception and production to post-purchase activities (Mishra et al., 2019b). Per Ullah & Danish (2020), the origination and leveraging of products are aided by GMO. The GMO has been designed as a model to address the gap between the orthodox way of marketing and societal and ecological needs (Habib et al., 2020). According to Papadas et al. (2017), GMO is "the extent to which an organization engages in strategic, tactical, and internal processes and activities to create, communicate, and deliver products and services with the minimum adverse environmental impact." In this vain, businesses should cultivate a comprehensive marketing orientation pattern to attain their objectives.

2.2 Corporate social responsibility (CSR) and strategic green marketing orientation (SGMO)

Increasingly some researchers are trying to unravel what corporate social responsibility represents in business, especially in the marketing space (Papadas et al., 2019b; Punitha & Mohd Rasdi, 2013). On all fronts, small or large businesses have been admonished not to make profitability their only goal. Still, they must also contribute to initiatives that benefit society and sustain the environment they operate (Widyastuti et al., 2019). Any action of businesses that is injurious to the environment is regarded as unethical and must not be encouraged (Uma & Varsha, 2018). Revelation on CSR shows that practices such as fostering the relevance of environmentally affable products and cognizance must be a constant social responsibility (Chowdhury & Dasani, 2021). Packages that could be recycled, channeling some of their profits into resolving environmental issues, and encouraging appropriate marketing efforts come to bear because of businesses' orientation on CSR (Widyastuti et al., 2019). Given this, CSR has been positioned as an instrument for enhancing corporate environmental behavior (Papadas et al., 2019b). Management of companies has the duty toward society to introduce green initiatives and operate ethically, legally, and morally in the community's best interest. Moreso, marketing experts, and research institutions are paying attention to CSR and its effects on corporate marketing. Businesses must use environmentally sanctioned initiatives as an essential marketing element, as studied by many researchers. Given this, this study proposes that:

H1 – Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has a positive association and effect on strategic green marketing orientation (SGMO).

2.3 Strategic green marketing orientation (SGMO) and sustainable competitive advantage (SCA)

An avenue for promoting innovation among businesses is to be environmentally conscious, including environmental issues in their business discussions and policy initiatives (Mydock III et al., 2018). We could see the introduction of green production, the minimization of carbon emissions through new technologies, and the greening of supply chain systems by businesses (Yeum et al., 2020). Governments' regulations, existing business opportunities, and consumers create a varying business atmosphere that encourages competitiveness (Alsaqal et al., 2021). With the goal of businesses becoming economically stable and gaining higher profits from their operations, they are confronted with positive pressure to become ecologically efficient (Leonidou et al., 2015). Several companies engage in the administration of green marketing to take advantage of the opportunities available, be socially and environmentally accountable, be competitive, minimize the cost of production (Papadas et al., 2019b) and reduce pressures from governments (Moravcikova et al., 2017).

According to Ferenc et al. (2017), incorporating environmental strategies into marketing will give a business a sustainable competitive advantage. These strategic green marketing initiatives should focus on solving environmental challenges, which invariably translate into winning consumer trust and having a competitive advantage (Papadas et al., 2019b). Moreover, the capacity to identify consumers who are in dire need of green products goes a long way to maximizing business competitiveness (Leonidou et al., 2015). In the administration of green marketing strategies by businesses, they could realize their objective of having a competitive advantage in the manner of differentiation over their rivals. Moreover, cost-reduction borne out of differentiation, efficient energy use, recycling, and minimization of water usage could ensure a competitive advantage. These empirical pieces of evidence make the study hypothesis that:

H2 – the administration of strategic green marketing orientation (SGMO) would positively influence sustainable competitive advantage (SCA)

2.4 Internal green marketing orientation (IGMO), strategic green marketing orientation (SGMO), and sustainable competitive advantage (SCA)

Inculcating environmental ideologies and responsibility within a business entity's internal staff (workers) is the beginning of becoming more responsible towards the environment (Mishra et al., 2019a). The internal green marketing orientation posits cultivating green culture along the length and breadth of an organization through the introduction of organizational values and principles (Chahal et al., 2014b; Menguc et al., 2010; Papadas et al., 2019). This ushered in the need to undertake environmental training, conferences, and round table discussions and enhance environmental awareness within and among company workers (Menguc et al., 2010). The successful administration of strategic green marketing initiatives depends on the knowledge, willingness, and environmental culture & leadership manifesting in the organization (Chung, 2020). This would even dawn on management and employees the skills, knowledge, and competence required to support the integrated green strategies of businesses (Chahal et al., 2014).

Going green is a medium of becoming competitive. It requires organizations to invest in the education and development of employees on environmental issues to grow environmental kingpins who could champion the course of green marketing strategies (Papadas et al., 2017, 2019b). According to Banerjee (2002), internal values, organizational ethics, and workforce dedication are aimed at sustaining the environment other than destroying it. Urging the need to make marketing greener must come with corporate objectives that synchronize with employee attitude, responses, values, and the business culture (Chahal et al., 2014c; Mishra et al., 2019; Papadas et al., 2019). This aids businesses in selling their green values to their workforce, ultimately resulting in implementing green strategies to satisfy green consumers and achieve a competitive advantage (Chahal et al., 2014). According to Papadas et al., (2017), green workers become more efficient in their duties and minimize wastage establishing differentiation and enhancing the business's goodwill. Additionally, Papadas et al., (2017) treated IGMO as an aspect of green marketing orientation, which could be studied differently, and in association with other dimensions like SGMO. This study, hence, proposes that:

H3 – IGMO positively associates with a sustainable competitive advantage (SCA)

H4 – internal green marketing orientation (IGMO) moderates the relationship between strategic green marketing orientation (SGMO) and sustainable competitive advantage (SCA) specifically; the positive relationship between SGMO and SCA will be stronger at higher levels of IGMO.

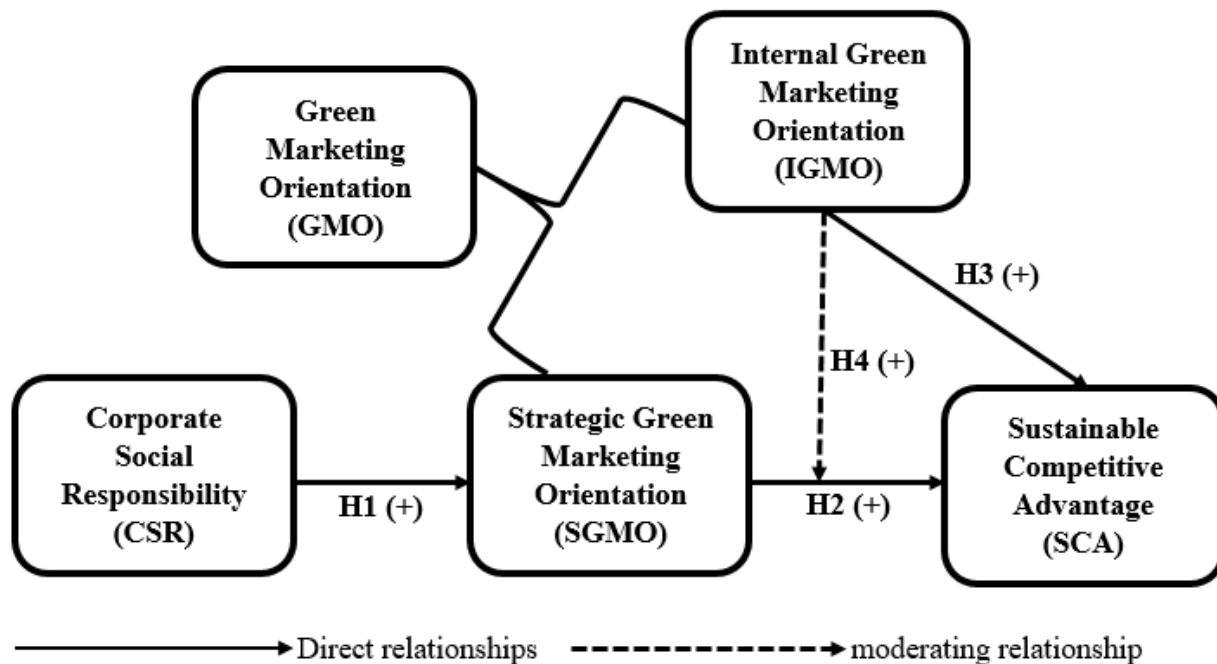


Figure 1 model of the study.

Source: author 2022

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Setting

The structural foundation of every nation is its industrial sector. Simultaneously, companies' dangerous emissions and pollution are gradually degrading the environment (John, 2019). The Ghana Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), as a regulatory framework, has been poor in executing its mandates toward the environment (John, 2019). It is challenging to ascertain considerable initiatives undertaken to manage environmental destruction from the industries over the past years (Adjarko et al., 2016). The pollution and poor disposal of their waste of industries in Ghana have consequences on the people's health, especially those who live closer to these companies. Bigger cities in Ghana, such as Accra and Kumasi, are gradually experiencing moderate air quality. If not managed, the air quality will fall into a poor state, and the health conditions of millions of citizens will be at risk (IQAIR, 2022). Hence the need to assess the contributions of companies to ensure their operations contributes to greening and sustaining the environment.

3.2 Sample and data collection

This study used a quantitative design approach and employed a questionnaire to gather data. The study selected fifteen (15) consumer goods companies listed on the Ghana Stock Exchange (GSE) to investigate the phenomenon under study. The research respondents incorporated marketing and human resource managers, supervisors, departmental heads, operational heads, and junior staff of consumer goods companies. The top officials of the companies were engaged because they were at the decision table regarding policy initiation and administration through the ranks and files of the company. Data was mobilized between June-August 2022. After the researcher and team made personal visits, the questionnaire was shared through WhatsApp and emails. Because the study included top managerial personnel who were not accessible quickly, a convenient sampling approach was employed. A random sampling pattern was used to gather data from the junior staff, primarily the online questionnaires. A total of 495 questionnaires were shared among the study's population, of which 401 were completed representing an 81% response rate. However, 94 were discarded, and the completed 401 were used as the sample. Among the 495, 150 were administered through personal visits, for which 137 were completed, and 13 were discarded for incompleteness. 345 were issued online, 264 were adopted, and 81 were discarded for incompleteness.

The questionnaire distribution is stated in Table 1. The table shows the entire distribution, the ones completed and uncompleted. The sample size of 401 satisfies the structural equation model (SEM) analysis conditions.

Table 1 Questionnaire administered for data collection

Questionnaires shared	Distributed	Completed	Uncompleted
Personal visits	150	137	13
Online (WhatsApp & Email)	345	264	81
Total questionnaire	495	401	94

3.3 Constructs measurement

The constructs relied upon for the research were “corporate social responsibility, strategic green marketing orientation, internal green marketing orientation, and sustainable competitive advantage.” All the elements were evaluated using a five-point Likert scale, which spans from 1 – “strongly disagree” to 5 – “strongly agree.” The CSR as a predictor was measured with 7 elements comprised of issues covering society, the environment, and what it holds for the future. These elements were expunged from (Turker, 2009) (the said scale has been employed by several scholars (Mishra et al., 2019b; Papadas et al., 2019b)). Moreover, 9 elements employed from (Papadas et al., 2017) were used to evaluate SGMO, and it hovers over marketing policies and strategies companies undertake to preserve the environment. A 6-item scale was deduced from (Chang, 2011) to measure sustainable competitive advantage (SCA). IGMO was evaluated with 7 elements deduced from (Papadas et al., 2017) which covers environmental initiatives aimed at aiding employees to be ecologically inclined and be excellent in their delivery. Table 2 spells out the constructs and the elements that were used to measure them.

Table 2 Measurement of constructs

Constructs	Number of items	Notation	Literature sources
Corporate Social Responsibility	7	CSR1-CSR7	(Turker, 2009)
Strategic green marketing orientation	9	SGMO1-SGMO9	(Papadas et al., 2017)
Internal green marketing orientation	7	IGMO1-IGMO7	(Papadas et al., 2017)
Sustainable competitive advantage	6	SCA1-SCA6	(Chang, 2011)

3.4 Data analysis procedure

Analysis of the information collated was processed through the Smart-PLS 3.0 software. The PLS-SEM approach is a popular way of evaluating, perusing, and substantiating causal associations among complex constructs (Hair, 2021). Numerous studies in social sciences have used this approach to peruse the information appropriately (Shmueli et al., 2019). Moreover, academic fields such as management, environment, and health sciences have consistently usedLS-SEM to navigate several complex research models (Hair et al., 2019). This statistical instrument aided in defining complex associations in the entire model. Hair et al., (2019) indicate that the Smart-PLS mathematical tool is suitable for producing the best estimates when working with complex models with large and smaller data sample sizes (Sharif et al., 2019). The Smart-PLS was used to process data to establish the reliability, validity, and relationships between variables under consideration.

IV. RESULTS PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Measurement model evaluation

4.1.1 Initial test: Reliability and Validity

The analysis undertaken in measuring the model brings to the table test for the internal consistency and reliability of responses derived for this study. The test undertaken captures the factors loadings (λ), composite reliability (CR), Cronbach alpha (α), and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE). Table 3 indicates the thumb rules for the tests (minimum thresholds). Moreover, table 4 depicts the outcome for internal consistency and reliability. These evaluations form part of the initial test to ascertain the dependability of the measurement model. Table 4 & figure 2 indicates the factor loadings. No factor was expunged while assessing the measurement model because the loadings exceeded the threshold of 0.60.

Additionally, the outcome on AVE, Cronbach alpha, and CR of all the constructs are also not below the threshold (see table 3). The result augments the proposition that the model has internal consistency as they exceed the threshold proposed by the thumb rule (see table 3). As prescribed by Hair et al., (2011), (2019); Shmueli et al., 2019), given the thumb rules, the researcher also presents that the internal consistency and reliability test were fruitful and then summarily meant that the measurement model is good enough to estimate the structural model.

Table 3 Rule of thumb and sources

Factor loading (λ)	>0.60	(Hair et al., 2011)
Cronbach Alpha (α)	>0.70	(Hooper et al., 2008)
Composite reliability (CR)	>0.70	(Hair et al., 2011)
Average Variance Explained (AVE)	>0.50	(Hair et al., 2019)

**Construct reliability test

Table 4 Reliability of items and constructs

Constructs	Notations	Loadings(λ)	Cronbach Alpha (α)	CR	AVE
Corporate social responsibility	CSR1	0.900	0.886	0.911	0.595
	CSR2	0.709			
	CSR3	0.723			

		CSR4	0.740			
		CSR5	0.703			
		CSR6	0.810			
		CSR7	0.794			
Strategic green marketing orientation		SGMO1	0.810	0.935	0.945	0.657
		SGMO2	0.810			
		SGMO3	0.808			
		SGMO4	0.819			
		SGMO5	0.817			
		SGMO6	0.824			
		SGMO7	0.808			
		SGMO8	0.798			
		SGMO9	0.803			
Internal green marketing orientation		IGMO1	0.820	0.917	0.933	0.667
		IGMO2	0.809			
		IGMO3	0.822			
		IGMO4	0.819			
		IGMO5	0.812			
		IGMO6	0.805			
		IGMO7	0.829			
Sustainable advantage	Competitive	SCA1	0.826	0.906	0.927	0.681
		SCA2	0.816			
		SCA3	0.831			
		SCA4	0.816			
		SCA5	0.834			
		SCA6	0.826			

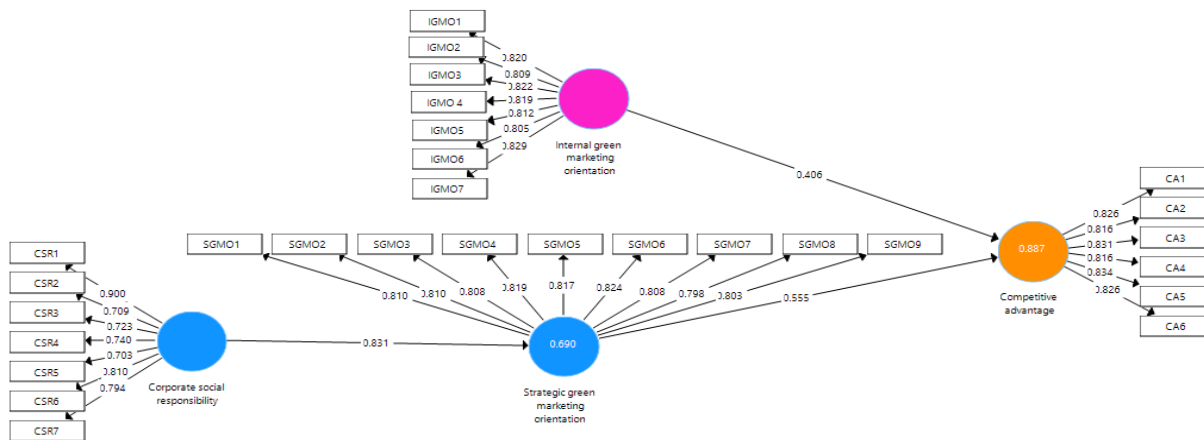


Figure 2 measurement model assessment (factor loadings)

Source: author's estimation

4.1.2 Discriminant validity test

To ensure the latent elements do not replicate themselves in the model analysis, it was prudent to establish the discriminant validity test to ascertain such. Doing so calls for two fundamental approaches: the Fornell-Larcker and Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) methods proposed by (Henseler et al., 2015). Table 5 (Fornell-Lacker) validates the discriminant validity where the correlations between the two dimensions are more significant than the square root of its AVE in each dimension as they meet the threshold <0.85 .

Table 6 indicates that the HTMT is <0.90, which satisfies the threshold requirement. The reported values show the reliability and validity of the variables (see table 3-6).

Table 5 Fornell -Larcker criterion

Constructs	SCA	CSR	IGMO	SGMO
Competitive advantage	0.828			
Corporate social responsibility	0.725	0.771		
Internal green marketing orientation	0.712	0.631	0.817	
Strategic green marketing orientation	0.715	0.638	0.704	0.811

Table 6 Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

Constructs	SCA	CSR	IGMO	SGMO
Competitive advantage				
Corporate social responsibility	0.657			
Internal green marketing orientation	0.672	0.526		
Strategic green marketing orientation	0.523	0.507	0.510	

Note: Shaded boxes are the standard reporting format for the HTMT procedure.

SCA=sustainable competitive advantage, CSR=corporate social responsibility, IGMO=internal green marketing orientation, SGMO= strategic green marketing orientation.

4.2 Evaluation of structural model

The direct association between construct and moderation analysis was undertaken by relying on the bootstrapping approach proposed by (Hair, 2021). The study estimated the R², the path coefficient (β), and the model's associated t & p-values. Moreover, the predictive essence (Q²) and the extent of effects (f²) were determined to predict the relevance of the representation as asserted by (Hair, 2021). To evaluate the predictive error degree, the model may carry the PLS predictive summary presented in table 10, as introduced by (Hair et al., 2019).

The study undertook the SEM-PLS direct calculative model for the direct relationships. Table 7 shows the model's path coefficient, values for t & p, and decisions. Figure 3 also captures the path coefficients of the constructs. Given table 9, CSR had a significant positive effect on strategic green marketing orientation (SGMO) with a path coefficient (β) =.831, t=51.556, and p=.000 and <.01; hence, H1 is seconded. Furthermore, SGMO significantly affects competitive advantage with (β) =.555, t=14.615, p=.000, and <.01. The outcome means that H2 is accurate and supported. Additionally, IGMO has a definite and significant effect on competitive advantage with (β) =.406, t=10.790, p=.000, and <.01. This also means that H3 is supported. The t-statistics values that support the significance of the influence of the predictors on the supposed outcome variables can be found in figure 3.

Table 7 Testing for direct relationships – Hypotheses

Hypothesis	Path coefficient (β)	T-value	P-values	Decision
H1: Corporate social responsibility-> Strategic green marketing orientation	0.831	51.556	0.000***	Supported
H2: Strategic green marketing orientation-> sustainable competitive advantage	0.555	14.615	0.000***	Supported
H3: Internal green marketing orientation-> sustainable competitive advantage	0.406	10.790	0.000***	Supported

Note: * T-value >1.96, ***p<0.001.

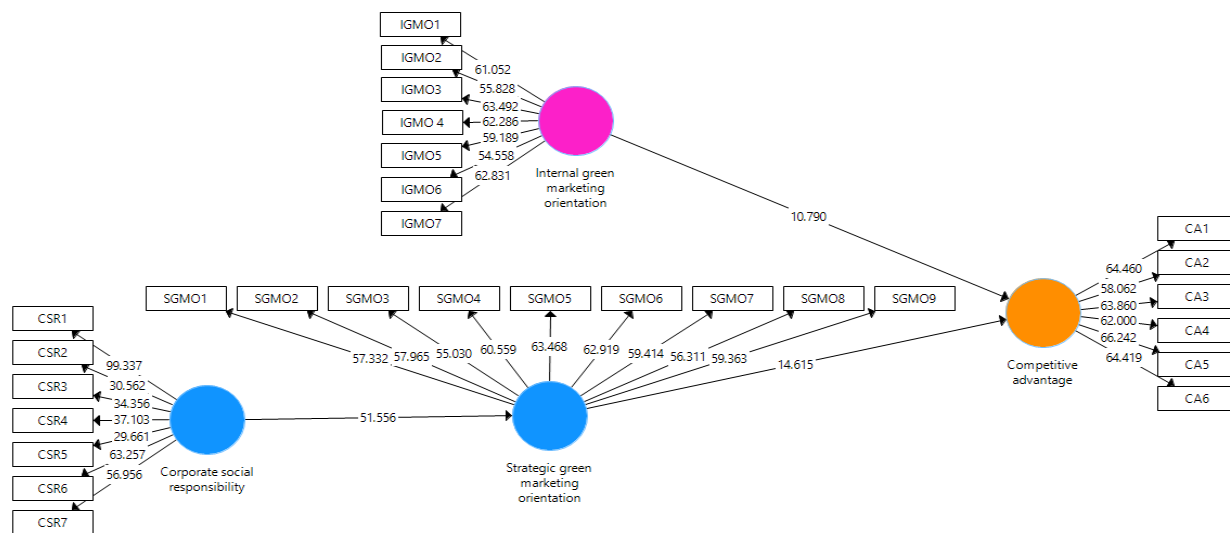


Figure 3 Structural model assessment (Direct relationship)

Source: author’s estimation

4.2.1 Testing the moderation role of internal green marketing orientation (IGMO)

Table 8 presents results on IGMO moderation role in the association between strategic green marketing orientation (SGMO) and sustainable competitive advantage (SCA). The results show that the moderating role of IGMO is significant and positive with path coefficient (β) = .041, t -statistics=2.617 (see figure 5), and p =.009 at a significant level of p <.05 (see Table 8). In ascertaining the overall R^2 of the model, SGMO and IGMO collectively define 42.2% of the entire variations in competitive advantage. The $R^2 = 0.422$ is >0.26 as depicted by (Cohen, 1988) (see table 9). This suggests that the entire model of the study was significant, thus making the results resolute and aligning with that of (Ahakwa et al., 2021; Oдай et al., 2021). Per information from Tackie et al., (2022), when $Q^2 > 0$, the study’s model is said to have higher predictive relevance. About table 9, the Q^2 value is 0.565, which implies that there is higher predictive relevance of the research model.

Table 8 Hypothesis testing (Moderating relationship)

Hypothesis	Path coefficient (β)	T-value	P-value	Decision
H4: Internal green marketing orientation \times Strategic green marketing orientation \rightarrow sustainable competitive advantage	0.041	2.617	0.009**	Supported

Note: significant at T-value >1.96, **p<0.05

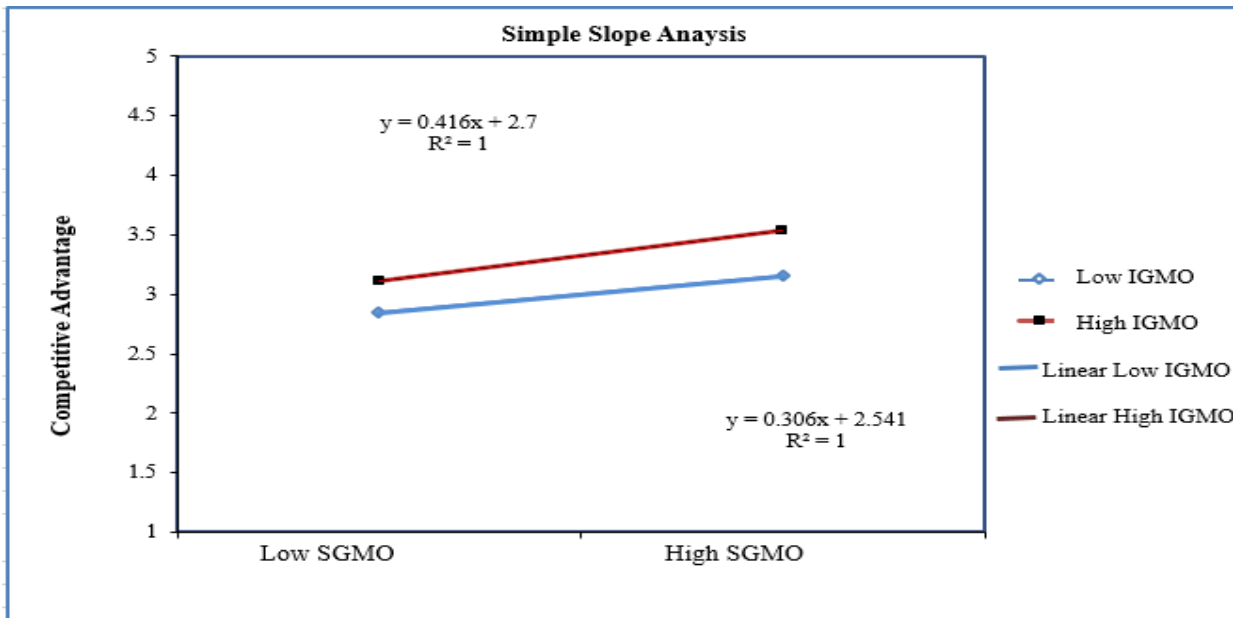


Figure 4 the moderation effect of IGMO on SGMO and competitive advantage

Moreover, the study determined the simple slope analysis for the moderating influence. Figure 4 shows the slope evaluation of the moderating effect of IGMO on SGMO and SCA. The x value is the high and low limits of the predicting construct. Per Hair (2021), the R^2 figures must span between 0 to 1, which represents a percentage (%) assessment of how a model plotted is good. The graph R^2 value of 1 makes the model 100% right and close to the points employed in graphing. One could deduce that when IGMO is high, the linear association between SGMO and sustainable competitive advantage increases (fig. 4). Conclusively, the outcome indicates that IGMO activities strengthen the positive association between SGMO and sustainable competitive advantage, therefore supporting the moderation results.

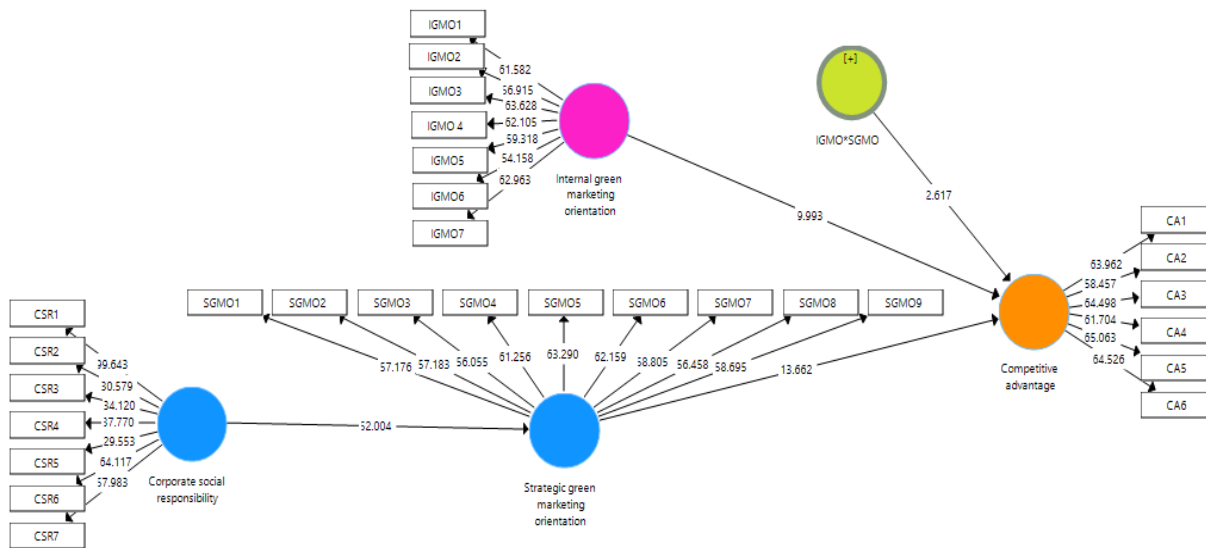


Figure 5 Outcome of the moderation analysis.

Source: author’s estimation

4.2.2 Effect sizes (f^2)

According to (Cohen, 1988), the f^2 adopted to establish the effect size of the exogenous variable on the endogenous element. Table 9 reveals the outcomes of the f^2 evaluation of the model. The thumb rule proposed by Cohen (1988) states that 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 posit weak, moderate, and strong coefficients, respectively. Table 9 reveals that corporate social responsibility to SGMO had a medium f^2 value of 0.211. F^2 values of SGMO to competitive advantage and IGMO to competitive advantage are 0.361 and 0.2020, respectively, which are large and medium respectively. Additionally, the moderation role of IGMO between SGMO and competitive advantage recorded a medium f^2 value of 0.205. The effect size of the model could be labeled medium since the majority of the relationship reported produced a medium effect (table 9)

Table 9 Effect size of Exogenous Factors.

Relationship	f square (f^2)	Effect size	
CSR→SGMO	0.211	Medium	
SGMO→SCA	0.361	Large	
IGMO→SCA	0.202	Medium	
IGMO × SGMO→OC	0.205	Medium	
Predictive relevance			
	(R^2)	Adjusted (R^2)	Q^2
SGMO	0.325	0.309	0.424
SCA	0.422	0.411	0.565

4.2.3 Assessment of PLSpredict

The general predictive power of the model is assessed using PLS prediction (Hair, 2021). Moreover, the manifest variables (LM/MV) form the divisions of the linear regression model. Shmueli et al., (2019) indicate that the PLS projection is the current approach used to evaluate a model’s predictive strength. It ensures the evaluation of the model’s predictive potential from the samples being assessed. To facilitate the PLS projection assessment, an element called the Q^2 –prediction ought to be determined foremost (Shmueli et al., 2019). Some studies indicate that if the Q^2 –predicted outcomes exceed zero (0), then the prediction error of scattering is proportional. Additionally, the RMSE values of the MV prediction ought to be assessed for the predictive power from the representation. Table 12, the Q^2 –predict reveals that the values are > 0, implying high proportionally distributed prediction errors. Additionally, the RMSE results were employed for the evaluation. Shmueli et al., (2019) asserted that the model has high prognostic strength with the MV estimations when all the PLS-SEM results are less than the LM values. Shmueli et al., (2019) assert that when many of the PLS-SEM results are < LM outcomes, it implies the model has moderate predictive power, and when PLS-SEM values are > LM outcomes, the model has low predictive power. Table 12 shows that the predictive strength of the general model is medium. This conclusion comes into play because the PLS-SEM values are < LM figures for many of the indicators, as deduced by (Shmueli et al., 2019).

Table 10 MV Prediction Summary

Constructs	Q^2 predict	PLS- RMSE	LM-RMSE	(PLS RMSE)- (LM RMSE)
CA1	0.395	0.766	0.758	-0.008
CA2	0.391	0.762	0.753	-0.009
CA3	0.425	0.659	0.651	-0.008
CA4	0.384	0.559	0.553	-0.006
CA5	0.403	0.519	0.552	0.007
CA6	0.411	0.531	0.526	-0.005
SGMO1	0.456	0.723	0.717	-0.006
SGMO2	0.466	0.725	0.721	-0.004
SGMO3	0.457	0.762	0.757	-0.005
SGMO4	0.457	0.741	0.738	-0.003
SGMO5	0.448	0.712	0.708	-0.004

SGMO6	0.432	0.662	0.659	-0.003
SGMO7	0.432	0.592	0.586	0.006
SGMO8	0.450	0.521	0.519	-0.002
SGMO9	0.462	0.555	0.547	0.008

Note: LM=linear regression model; MV=manifest variables; RMSE=root mean squared error; SCA=competitive advantage; SGMO=strategic green marketing orientation.

V. DISCUSSIONS

Sustainable competition has been a goal for many entities, especially in this current business environment (Chung, 2020). This study advances in three patterns: beginning, it illustrates the use of green marketing and its effect on sustainable competitive advantages in the Ghanaian context. Secondly, it establishes green marketing from the perspective of organizations while incorporating an antecedent. Thirdly, it considers previous research and stretches subsequent studies by indicating its influence on sustainable business competitiveness in the setting of the consumer goods sector in Ghana.

Previous scholars have studied the element of green marketing strategies and their consequences on advanced economies such as Spain, America, and China (Mishra et al., 2019; Papadas et al., 2019a), but there are limited studies for developing nations like Ghana. This is because the needed attention that is supposed to be given to addressing environmental concerns and efforts to implement environmental laws rigorously is not enough. Environmental frameworks expected to push organizations to sustainable green activities seem inadequate. Among advanced economies, green marketing strategies are relevant to them; hence, several companies have designated offices and positions to address issues under the umbrella of corporate social responsibility. Interestingly, in evolving economies, these responsibilities are undertaken by managers, especially with multinationals but are also rare. In this context, this research takes steps to heighten issues on environmental initiatives at the corporate level, which initiates the appropriate environmental activities that result in advancing sustainable business competitiveness. This research, moreover, would aid and enlighten company management to grasp and fall on a comprehensive approach towards green marketing at the organizational level and obtain sustainability.

The research brings to attention the essence of comprehensive green marketing to promote the competitive advantage of companies. This study evaluates the effect of CSR on green marketing orientation (GMO), specifically strategic green marketing orientation (SGMO); the influence of SGMO on sustainable competitive advantage (SCA); and the direct influence of internal green marketing orientation (IGMO) on SCA; and the moderation role of IGMO on the association between SGMO and SCA within the space of consumer goods companies in Ghana. With the phenomenon understudied in Ghana, it is ideal for initiating this study. Speaking to such, the initial aspect of the research focuses on an antecedent that ensures relevant adoption of GMO in companies and stretches to past studies which introduced green marketing antecedents (Mishra et al., 2019; Papadas et al., 2019). The antecedent CSR aid the administration of environmental initiatives within businesses that result in competitive advantage and other essential benefits. This study augments the absolute assimilation of green policies into business operations instead of attending to CSR separately. The outcome of the research establishes that CSR has a significant positive effect on SGMO as an aspect of GMO and validates the previous study.

Furthermore, the study's outcome ascertained that SGMO and IGMO administration would mature in sustainable business competitiveness, which clarifies that green marketing orientation elevates companies' competitive advantage. It confirms and adds to existing knowledge of green marketing strategies as an instrument for competitiveness. The current study considers a comprehensive approach to green marketing strategies and their competitiveness in the context of the consumer goods sector in an emerging economy and represents a critical research gap. The study's outcome is consistent with that of (Chahal et al., 2014a; Mishra et al., 2019a; Papadas et al., 2019a), which also unraveled the influence of SGMO & IGMO on competitive advantage. The study, however, adds to green marketing evidence by indicating the recent yet unexplored associations. Previous studies with this angle calls for a modern strategic leeway to determine the synergy between green marketing and sustainable competitive advantage.

Lastly, the moderation role of IGMO on the association between SGMO and sustainable competitive advantage was positive and significant. The outcome indicates that a rise in IGMO would cause an increase in the relationship between SGMO and SCA. The midst of having an environmentally focused workforce (Saxena & Khandelwal, 2010) and comprehensive environmental strategies (Chahal et al., 2014) can ensure a business obtain a competitive advantage (Mishra et al., 2019). The outcome of the moderating role of IGMO is consistent with the results of (Papadas et al., 2019). Conclusively, the elements of IGMO and SGMO under the umbrella of GMO synchronized is a positional approach to promoting competitive advantage. The study expands on the different use of GMO elements in promoting competitive advantage. The present research dwells on the green marketing theory that postulates that a green marketing strategy influences a company's competitiveness that invariably produces other organizational outcomes.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

The study's results on the association between GMO (SGMO) and its antecedent, such as CSR, add to the literature on a comprehensive green marketing approach. The research abridges the institutionalization of ecological strategies ensured and assisted by CSR indicates that companies ought to be responsible for the society they operate within. The thriving administration of environmental

initiatives significantly influences the competitiveness of businesses. Additionally, a GMO element such as internal green marketing orientation was determined to encourage competitive advantage. Furthermore, to introduce ingenuity to the model, the study established that synchronizing IGMO and SGMO effectively is a more reliable approach to boosting businesses' competitiveness in the consumer goods industry. Some studies, such as Feng et al., (2022); Sameer (2021), focused on looking at specific elements under the GMO influence on financial performance, business performance, green consumers, loyalty, and green image. This research evaluated the association of more expanded green marketing with a competitive advantage. The outcome highlighted a critical moderating role of IGMO between SGMO and SCA.

VII. IMPLICATIONS

This research highlights the relevance, insights, and implications for managing businesses and experts. The study is positioned to ascertain the principle of green marketing strategies on business competitiveness, empirically determine the association under the umbrella of green marketing initiatives and CSR, and empirically test the moderation role of internal green marketing strategies in encouraging the sustainability of business competition. With this direction, the current study significantly beefs up existing contributions to the advancement of environmental marketing. The research augments outcomes of previous studies with a recall of antecedents of green marketing strategies. The result highlights the relevance of introducing comprehensive environmental policies, which is critical to business competitiveness, rather than focusing exclusively on CSR. Moreover, the research supplements the evaluation of the effects of CSR on green marketing orientation (GMO), in this case, SGMO. Additionally, the study broadens the essence and role of IGMO as an aspect of GMO in that businesses ought to integrate IGMO and SGMO effectively to obtain SCA.

Additionally, the encouragement of CSR results in promoting SGMO. Hence, as a policy recommendation, green practices, policies, carefully crafted comprehensive environmental initiatives, and several CSR initiatives should be geared towards encouraging businesses to practically introduce green ventures to aid environmental preservation and sustainability (Saleem et al., 2020). The advancement of CSR also brings to the table brand recognition (Giantari & Sukaatmadja, 2021), positive business reputation (Fraj et al., 2011), increased profitability (Alsaqal et al., 2021), and achieve customer loyalty (Devi Juwaheer et al., 2012). Additionally, SGMO advancement manifests in attaining a competitive advantage. As a managerial recommendation, businesses must stimulate SGMO by introducing green products (Fuentes, 2015), establishing environmental departments and managers (Hasan & Ali, 2015), researching green products, and pursuing green consumers (Devi Juwaheer et al., 2012) to ensure businesses could remain competitive and exhibit better business performance (Saxena & Khandelwal, 2010).

Lastly, IGMO was identified to aid businesses in having an advantage over their rivals. Similarly, in the face of all possibilities, integrating IGMO and SGMO also saw the advancement within the competitive advantage. Marketing managers and experts in the industry should not handle SGMO in isolation but must endeavor to induce such initiatives in the heart of their workforce (Papadas et al., 2019). The employees of an entity should not be left out when formulating green policies (Mishra et al., 2019b). Their input into environmental policies triggers their commitment to such (Saxena & Khandelwal, 2010). Moreover, incentives and increments in remuneration could be used as a conduit to aid workers to be more ecologically minded and bring on board green innovative ideas to make the entity competitive (Dangelico & Vocalelli, 2017; Garg & Sharma, 2017). Neglect of the workforce is a recipe for environmental policy disaster, and the ignoring of SGMO is a recipe for several avoidable environmental punishments (Hasan & Ali, 2015). Entities in the Ghanaian jurisdiction must conclude that SGMO and IGMO are intertwined, hence the need to exploit both while having a third eye for CSR.

VIII. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Although the research posits to have achieved its objectives and answered questions, there are still inherent limitations. The researcher and team gathered primary data from 15 consumer goods companies to evaluate the phenomenon under consideration in Ghanaian parlance. These companies selected are limited to the ones on the Ghana Stock Exchange. Engaging with several consumer goods organizations scattered across Ghana but not listed on the GSE could produce a contradictory outcome to this research. Future studies could consider researching companies not listed on the GSE.

Secondly, even though the sample representation is quite satisfactory, the study admits that increasing the sample size to cover other companies could negate the effect of IGMO and SGMO on competitive advantage, which constitutes another limitation. The study suggests that future researchers should focus on different firms with greater sample sizes to draw comparative conclusions and better comprehend them.

Lastly, the association between SGMO and competitive advantage (moderated by IGMO) gives a new perspective on the phenomenon. It is, however, not exhaustive. Competitive advantage is influenced by several antecedents or predictors and cannot be captured under a sole study. Moreover, tactical green marketing orientation (TGMO) could be deployed as a moderator.

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