



From Product Quality to Green Credibility: A Bibliometric Review of Quality Management and Green Marketing

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Abstract

This study examines the evolution of research at the intersection of quality management and green marketing, focusing on the shift from product quality toward green credibility. A bibliometric review analyzed 103 Scopus-indexed journal articles and reviews published between 2015 and 2026. Performance analysis and science mapping identified publication trends, influential sources, major themes, and conceptual relationships among quality and green marketing constructs. VOSviewer was used to analyze keyword co-occurrence and collaboration networks. The findings reveal increasing scholarly attention in recent years and identify four major clusters: quality management, sustainability, and greenwashing; green consumer behavior and sustainable consumption; green marketing, perceived quality, and market outcomes; and green perceived quality, trust, and credibility. Green marketing emerged as the central concept, while product quality, perceived quality, green perceived quality, green trust, and greenwashing connected operational quality with market-oriented sustainability. The findings indicate a shift from functional and product-level quality toward the credibility, trustworthiness, and consistency of environmental claims with organizational practices. This study contributes by integrating quality management and green marketing perspectives and positioning quality as a foundation for credible environmental positioning. Future research should examine how quality systems, certification, traceability, and environmental performance influence green credibility and sustainable market outcomes.

Keywords: Green Credibility, Green Marketing, Green Trust, Greenwashing, Quality Management.



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INTRODUCTION

Sustainability has evolved from a peripheral corporate responsibility initiative into a fundamental strategic orientation that shapes organizational value creation, market positioning, and competitive advantage. Increasingly, firms are expected to balance economic performance with environmental and social responsibilities by integrating Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles into their business strategies, reflecting a broader transition from shareholder-centered value creation toward stakeholder-oriented sustainability in which legitimacy, environmental stewardship, and transparent communication become strategic organizational resources. Recent scholarship indicates that sustainability-oriented strategies can strengthen brand visibility, stakeholder engagement, organizational legitimacy, and long-term competitiveness, while theoretical perspectives such as Stakeholder Theory, Signaling Theory, Legitimacy Theory, Institutional Theory, the Resource-Based View, and Dynamic Capabilities explain how organizational capabilities interact with institutional and stakeholder pressures to shape sustainability outcomes (Sukye et al., 2026; Hue & Le, 2026; Haozhe et al., 2025; Gasulla-Tortajada et al., 2024). This transformation has also expanded the scope of sustainability research from broad corporate responsibility toward more specific questions concerning how firms demonstrate, communicate, and substantiate environmental performance in increasingly scrutinized markets. The growing integration of ESG with digital technologies, financial systems, and corporate disclosure has further intensified scholarly attention to the credibility and verifiability of sustainability-related information (Hassan et al., 2026; Nguyen et al., 2025; Yu et al., 2025). Within this evolving landscape, environmental performance can no longer be treated solely as an internal operational concern because its strategic value increasingly depends on how credibly such performance is translated into market-facing claims and stakeholder perceptions.

Within this sustainability paradigm, green marketing has emerged as a strategic communication mechanism through which firms communicate the environmental benefits of their products, services, and business practices. Beyond promotional activities, green marketing functions as a signaling mechanism that reduces information asymmetry by communicating firms' environmental capabilities and sustainability commitments to consumers and other stakeholders. Research on green consumption demonstrates that green purchase decisions are shaped by the interaction between product-specific environmental values, individual values, perceived quality, trust, satisfaction, and broader consumer motivations, indicating that environmental communication is effective when it is supported by substantive value rather than persuasive appeals alone (Bhardwaj et al., 2023; Gil & Jacob, 2018; Hashish et al., 2022). Green brand equity is similarly constructed through multiple antecedents, suggesting that environmental positioning requires consistency between what firms communicate and what consumers actually experience. The rapid expansion of social media and influencer-based communication has made this alignment increasingly consequential because consumers can publicly evaluate, challenge, and disseminate corporate environmental claims at unprecedented speed (Jung & Lee, 2025; Nguyen et al., 2026; Salimi et al., 2025). Recent research on green marketing communication further indicates that image coherence and transparent sustainability information influence whether environmental messages are interpreted as authentic signals or as strategic persuasion (Seyfi et al., 2025; Uikey et al., 2025). The effectiveness of green marketing therefore increasingly depends on the organizational capacity to substantiate environmental promises through observable product quality, processes, and performance rather than merely increasing the volume or sophistication of promotional communication.

The credibility of green marketing is fundamentally supported by quality management, which provides the operational foundation necessary to ensure that environmental claims are genuinely reflected in organizational practices and product characteristics. Traditionally, quality management, including Total Quality Management (TQM), quality assurance systems, continuous improvement, and process optimization, has focused on ensuring product consistency, reliability, and customer satisfaction. More recently, these practices have expanded toward environmental performance and sustainability objectives by incorporating ecological criteria into organizational processes, service delivery, resource efficiency, and continuous improvement systems (Saleh et al., 2025; Zhang, 2022). Robust quality management systems minimize process variation, reduce operational inconsistencies, and create organizational routines through which environmental attributes can become measurable and verifiable rather than remaining symbolic claims. Evidence from sustainability-oriented quality management research suggests that green marketing strategies and TQM practices can jointly support environmental performance, indicating that operational quality and environmental communication are not necessarily independent strategic domains (Saleh et al., 2025; Haozhe et al., 2025). The relationship is particularly important because perceived green quality and green trust have repeatedly been associated with consumers' green behavioral intentions, implying that the credibility of environmental positioning is partly constructed through the quality signals embedded in products and services (Wasaya et al., 2021; Hashish et al., 2022). Quality management and green marketing can therefore be conceptualized as complementary capabilities in which internal operational excellence provides the substantive basis for external environmental signaling, creating a pathway from product quality and process reliability toward green credibility and sustainable market value.

However, when environmental claims are not supported by actual organizational practices, firms become vulnerable to accusations of greenwashing, which substantially undermine the effectiveness of green marketing. Greenwashing occurs when companies exaggerate, obscure, or misrepresent their environmental performance, creating discrepancies between communicated sustainability claims and operational reality. Such inconsistencies can weaken consumer trust, stimulate negative word-of-mouth, and generate reputational and regulatory risks, while consumers may increasingly rely on skepticism when environmental claims are vague, excessive, or difficult to verify (Lin et al., 2026; Yang, 2026; Murfree & Brison, 2025). The problem is not confined to consumer perception because institutional pressures, strategic incentives, and disclosure practices can also create conditions under which firms selectively emphasize favorable environmental information while limiting transparency regarding less favorable outcomes. Studies examining the institutional roots of greenwashing show that stakeholder pressures and environmental practices may interact in complex ways, meaning that stronger sustainability pressures do not automatically guarantee more credible

corporate environmental communication (Testa et al., 2018; Donkor, 2026). Digital environments have intensified this challenge because social media enables consumers and other stakeholders to expose inconsistencies between sustainability discourse and corporate practice, while emerging artificial-intelligence-based approaches increasingly facilitate the detection of greenwashing patterns in corporate disclosures (Salimi et al., 2025; Sari et al., 2025). Greenwashing consequently represents more than a communication problem; it reflects a deeper credibility gap between organizational capability, product and process quality, environmental performance, and the claims communicated to markets.

Despite the rapid growth of research on sustainability, quality management, and green marketing, the existing literature remains fragmented across different disciplinary domains and analytical traditions. Research on green marketing has largely concentrated on consumer attitudes, purchase intentions, brand equity, communication, and behavioral responses, whereas quality-oriented research has tended to emphasize operational performance, environmental management, process improvement, and organizational systems. Recent reviews illustrate that the green marketing field itself has expanded substantially across regions and themes, while bibliometric research on green marketing innovation and the circular economy has mapped broad intellectual structures without necessarily resolving the specific relationship between internal quality capabilities and external environmental credibility (Sharma et al., 2022; Uikey et al., 2025; Rana et al., 2026). This fragmentation leaves a conceptual gap concerning how quality management functions as a substantive antecedent of credible green marketing rather than merely as an operational mechanism operating in parallel with marketing activities. The literature also contains an empirical imbalance because considerable attention has been devoted to the consequences of green claims for consumers, while comparatively less systematic attention has been directed toward the organizational mechanisms that make such claims credible, including product quality, process consistency, environmental practices, transparency, and governance. Existing studies on CSR, customer loyalty, green brand equity, and sustainable consumption further demonstrate that credibility-related constructs are dispersed across multiple conceptual frameworks, making it difficult to identify the dominant intellectual trajectories and unresolved relationships within the broader field (Santos et al., 2025; Hue & Oanh, 2023; Lopes et al., 2024). A systematic mapping of the literature is therefore required to determine whether quality management and green marketing are converging into an integrated research domain or remaining largely disconnected streams of inquiry.

Against this backdrop, the present study positions itself at the intersection of quality management, green marketing, sustainability, and bibliometric research by examining how scholarly knowledge has evolved from product and process quality toward the broader problem of green credibility. The study treats green credibility not simply as a communication outcome but as an emergent construct that depends on the alignment between operational capabilities, environmental performance, product quality, sustainability disclosure, and market-facing claims. This positioning responds to the growing need for research frameworks capable of connecting internal organizational practices with external stakeholder evaluations rather than examining operational sustainability and green communication as isolated phenomena. Methodologically, bibliometric analysis provides an appropriate means of identifying publication trends, influential documents and authors, intellectual structures, thematic clusters, collaboration patterns, and emerging research fronts within a rapidly expanding interdisciplinary field. Following established bibliometric principles, systematic mapping can reveal structural relationships in a literature that conventional narrative reviews may overlook, particularly when concepts originate from different disciplinary traditions (Donthu et al., 2021). The study therefore aims to systematically map the intellectual development of research connecting quality management and green marketing, identify the dominant themes and conceptual linkages underlying the transition from product quality to green credibility, and uncover underexplored research directions that can strengthen the integration of operational excellence and environmental communication. Theoretically, the study contributes by clarifying the emerging conceptual relationship between quality management and green credibility, while methodologically it contributes a structured bibliometric research agenda for future empirical studies seeking to explain how credible green marketing can be built upon verifiable organizational quality and sustainability capabilities.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a non-empirical bibliometric research design to systematically examine the development, intellectual structure, and emerging research directions at the intersection of quality

management and green marketing. Bibliometric analysis was selected because it enables the quantitative and systematic examination of scientific publications to identify publication trends, influential contributors, conceptual relationships, and thematic developments within an established body of literature (Donthu et al., 2021). The conceptual scope of the review was defined around two interconnected knowledge domains, namely quality management as the internal organizational foundation of product and process quality and green marketing as the external mechanism through which environmental value and credibility are communicated to stakeholders. Bibliographic data were retrieved from the Scopus database on August 11, 2026, because its multidisciplinary coverage and standardized bibliographic metadata provide an appropriate foundation for mapping research across management, marketing, sustainability, and environmental studies. The search was restricted to publications issued between 2015 and 2026 and used the TITLE-ABS-KEY field, with the first keyword group comprising “quality management,” “total quality management,” TQM, “quality management practices,” “quality assurance,” “product quality,” “perceived quality,” “green product quality,” and “environmental quality management,” while the second group comprised “green marketing,” “green marketing strategies,” “green marketing practices,” “green marketing orientation,” “green market orientation,” “environmental marketing,” “ecological marketing,” “green credibility,” “green trust,” “green claims,” “green communication,” and “greenwashing.” The two keyword groups were connected using the Boolean operator AND, whereas alternative terms within each group were connected using OR to capture terminological variation across the literature. The initial search produced 125 English-language records, after which 21 non-journal documents comprising 11 conference papers, eight book chapters, one editorial, and one note were excluded, followed by duplicate screening based on titles, authors, publication years, and digital object identifiers that removed one repeated record and produced a final dataset of 103 journal articles and review articles, consistent with the systematic filtering logic recommended for bibliometric studies (Donthu et al., 2021).

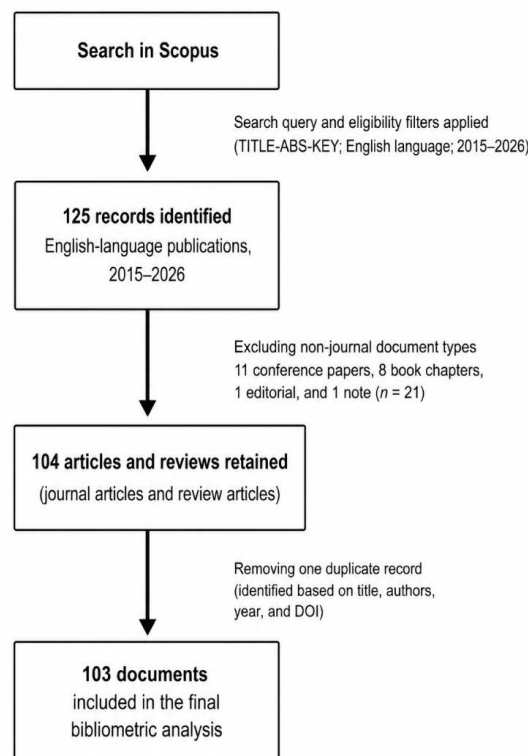


Figure 1. Data Filtering Process for Bibliometric Analysis

The analytical procedure combined performance analysis and science mapping to identify both the quantitative development and intellectual configuration of the research field. Performance analysis examined annual publication growth, citation patterns, leading journals, productive authors, contributing institutions, and participating countries to establish the development and visibility of

research on quality management and green marketing. Science mapping was subsequently applied to investigate collaboration structures and conceptual relationships through co-authorship and keyword co-occurrence analyses, enabling the identification of dominant research themes and thematic clusters. Microsoft Excel was used for initial data inspection, metadata checking, classification, and data cleaning, while VOSviewer was employed to generate bibliometric networks and visualize relationships among authors, institutions, countries, and keywords. The co-authorship analysis focused on identifying patterns of scholarly collaboration, whereas keyword co-occurrence analysis was used to reveal the conceptual associations that characterize the transition from conventional quality-oriented research toward green marketing, green trust, greenwashing, and credibility-related themes. The analytical interpretation followed established bibliometric practices in sustainability and green marketing research, where network structures and thematic concentrations are examined to identify established knowledge domains as well as emerging research fronts (Sharma et al., 2022). The resulting maps and performance indicators were interpreted comparatively across publication periods and thematic clusters to determine how the literature has evolved, where quality management and green marketing converge or remain conceptually separated, and which underdeveloped connections provide opportunities for future research, following the broader mapping logic applied in recent bibliometric research on circular economy and marketing (Rana et al., 2026).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Dataset Profile and Publication Development

The final bibliometric dataset comprised 103 publications indexed in Scopus and published between 2015 and 2026, representing the body of literature that simultaneously addresses quality-related concepts and green marketing within the defined search scope. As presented in Table 1, these publications were distributed across 77 academic journals and involved 316 author profiles, demonstrating that the research domain has developed through contributions from a relatively broad scholarly community rather than being concentrated among a small group of researchers. The dataset also contained 359 unique author keywords, indicating substantial conceptual heterogeneity in how researchers have approached the relationship between quality, sustainability, environmental marketing, consumer perceptions, and green credibility. The 4,384 accumulated citations, equivalent to an average of 42.56 citations per document, indicate that the selected literature has achieved considerable scholarly visibility despite the relatively recent expansion of the field. Bibliometric indicators of this type are useful for assessing the development and intellectual visibility of a research domain because publication volume alone does not adequately capture its scholarly influence (Donthu et al., 2021). The average of 3.18 authors per publication and the 89.2% proportion of multi-authored documents further indicate that research in this area is predominantly collaborative, reflecting the interdisciplinary character of sustainability research across management, marketing, and environmental studies.

Table 1. Main Characteristics of the Bibliometric Dataset

Indicator	Result
Timespan	2015–2026
Documents	103
Sources/Journals	77
Authors/author profiles	316
Author keywords	359
Total citations	4,384
Average citations per document	42.56
Average authors per document	3.18
Multi-authored documents	89.2%

The profile in Table 1 suggests that the research domain has reached a level of conceptual breadth in which quality management and green marketing are no longer examined exclusively as independent managerial concerns. The relatively high number of unique keywords compared with the number of documents indicates that researchers employ diverse conceptual lenses to explain environmental value, product quality, consumer responses, trust, sustainability, and corporate

environmental communication. Such diversity is consistent with the broader expansion of green marketing research across consumer behavior, sustainability, branding, and environmental management perspectives (Uikey et al., 2025). At the same time, the ratio of publications to journals indicates that the knowledge base remains distributed rather than institutionally concentrated, which may reflect the absence of a single dominant theoretical or methodological tradition governing the field. The strong prevalence of collaborative authorship reinforces the likelihood that knowledge production occurs across disciplinary and geographic boundaries, a characteristic commonly observed in interdisciplinary sustainability scholarship. The citation intensity also suggests that the literature is not merely expanding numerically but is becoming increasingly integrated into established conversations concerning sustainable consumption, green trust, environmental performance, and organizational strategy.

The annual publication pattern shown in Figure 2 provides a clearer indication of how scholarly interest in the intersection of quality management and green marketing has evolved over the observation period. During 2015–2019, annual output remained comparatively modest, ranging from three to six publications, indicating that the specific intersection represented by the search strategy had not yet developed into a highly visible research stream. Publication activity increased after 2020, coinciding with a broader expansion of scholarly attention toward sustainable consumption, green marketing, environmental responsibility, and the credibility of corporate sustainability practices. The field subsequently experienced a pronounced acceleration, reaching 19 publications in 2024 and 21 publications in 2025, compared with only six publications in 2015. This expansion is consistent with bibliometric evidence showing the increasing integration of green marketing with sustainable consumption and innovation research (Sharma et al., 2022). The publication trajectory suggests that quality-related dimensions are increasingly being incorporated into environmental marketing discussions as firms face stronger expectations to demonstrate that sustainability claims correspond with actual product and organizational performance. The pattern also indicates that the intellectual development of the field has become particularly dynamic in the most recent years.

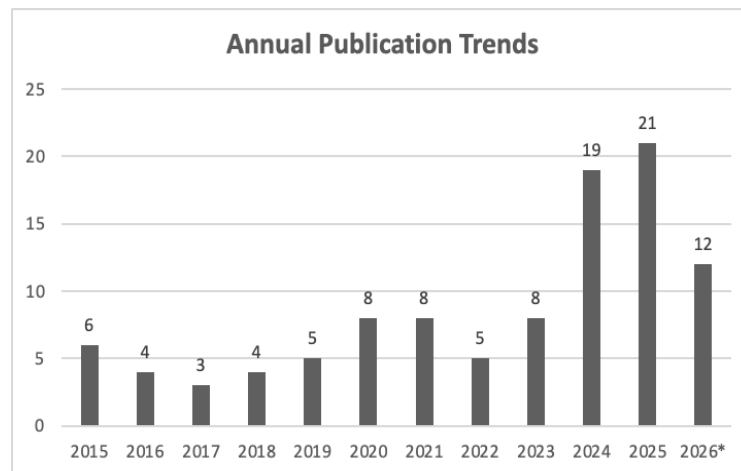


Figure 2. Annual Publication Trends in Quality Management and Green Marketing Research, 2015–2026.

Note: Data for 2026 cover publications indexed up to August 7, 2026.

The sharp increase in publications during 2024–2026 is particularly important for interpreting the current direction of the field because approximately half of the documents in the dataset were published during this three-year period. This concentration indicates that the intersection between quality and green marketing is not a static research area but an emerging domain whose conceptual boundaries are still being negotiated. Recent studies increasingly connect environmental strategy with brand positioning, stakeholder engagement, green communication, and organizational performance, suggesting a shift from treating green marketing primarily as a promotional instrument toward understanding it as part of broader strategic sustainability management (Haozhe et al., 2025; Sukye et al., 2026). The recent growth also reflects increasing concern regarding whether environmental claims can be substantiated through organizational practices, particularly as greenwashing becomes more visible to consumers, regulators, and other stakeholders. Greenwashing research has consequently

expanded from conceptual discussions toward empirical approaches capable of identifying inconsistencies between corporate environmental discourse and observable organizational behavior (Santos et al., 2025). This development creates a stronger rationale for examining quality management as an internal mechanism that may influence the reliability and credibility of environmental claims. The temporal concentration of recent publications therefore provides an important basis for investigating whether the field is moving toward a more integrated understanding of operational quality, environmental performance, and green credibility.

A further characteristic of the publication trajectory is the increasing convergence between research concerned with organizational sustainability and research concerned with consumer evaluation of green products and claims. Earlier studies within the broader green marketing literature frequently emphasized green purchase intention, perceived quality, satisfaction, and trust, establishing consumer perceptions as central mechanisms through which environmental attributes generate market outcomes (Gil & Jacob, 2018; Wasaya et al., 2021). More recent research has expanded this perspective by considering transparency, social media scrutiny, greenwashing detection, and the consistency between environmental communication and actual corporate practices. The shift is analytically important because credibility cannot be inferred solely from the presence of green claims; it depends on whether stakeholders perceive those claims as consistent with observable quality and environmental performance. Research on social media, for instance, demonstrates how digital interactions can expose suspected greenwashing and amplify consumer evaluations of corporate environmental communication (Salimi et al., 2025). The increasing prominence of these issues suggests that green marketing research is moving beyond the question of whether environmental messages influence consumers toward the more fundamental question of why some environmental messages are trusted while others are rejected. Quality management becomes relevant within this transition because consistent product and process performance can provide substantive evidence supporting the environmental attributes communicated through marketing channels.

The temporal and structural characteristics of the dataset collectively indicate that research connecting quality management and green marketing is entering a period of accelerated intellectual development. The combination of substantial citation visibility, high collaborative authorship, considerable keyword diversity, and strong publication growth suggests a field characterized by interdisciplinary expansion rather than theoretical consolidation. This pattern is consistent with recent bibliometric research in adjacent sustainability domains, where increasing publication activity has accompanied the emergence of new thematic connections between marketing, circular economy, environmental management, and sustainable business models (Rana et al., 2026). Yet the concentration of recent publications also implies that several conceptual relationships remain insufficiently established, particularly the pathway linking internal quality management practices with externally perceived green credibility. The literature therefore appears to be moving from an emphasis on product-level environmental attributes and consumer responses toward a broader consideration of how organizational capabilities substantiate sustainability claims. Such a transition provides the analytical foundation for examining the sources, conceptual structures, and thematic clusters that characterize this emerging research domain. The next analysis focuses on the distribution of these publications across academic sources to determine how quality management, green marketing, and sustainability perspectives are institutionally positioned within the scholarly landscape.

Source and Scholarly Distribution of the Research Field

The 103 publications in the dataset were distributed across 77 academic journals, indicating that research on quality management and green marketing is dispersed across multiple scholarly communities rather than concentrated within a single disciplinary outlet. This source distribution reflects the multidimensional nature of the research problem, which simultaneously involves operational quality, environmental management, marketing strategy, consumer behavior, and sustainability. Sustainability (Switzerland) emerged as the most productive source with eight publications, followed by the Journal of Cleaner Production with five publications, demonstrating the strong role of sustainability-oriented outlets in shaping this research domain. The prominence of these journals is consistent with the broader development of sustainability scholarship, where environmental management and market-oriented sustainability have increasingly converged around questions of organizational transformation and sustainable value creation (Sharma et al., 2022). The distribution also

indicates that the field has developed beyond a narrowly defined quality-management perspective because a substantial proportion of relevant research is situated within journals whose primary orientation concerns sustainability, environmental performance, or consumer behavior. This dispersion provides evidence that the relationship between quality and green marketing is being interpreted through different theoretical and managerial perspectives rather than through a single established research tradition.

The source structure becomes more informative when the journals are considered according to their dominant intellectual orientations. Sustainability (Switzerland) primarily represents the broad sustainability perspective, while the Journal of Cleaner Production provides a stronger connection to environmental management, cleaner production, and sustainable organizational practices. Meanwhile, Marketing Intelligence and Planning and the Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services represent the market-oriented dimension of the field, particularly consumer responses, marketing strategy, and purchasing behavior. Total Quality Management and Business Excellence contributes a more explicit quality-management perspective, positioning organizational quality systems and continuous improvement within the broader sustainability discussion. This combination demonstrates that the research domain is structured around a tension between internal organizational capabilities and external market perceptions. The increasing interaction between these perspectives is particularly relevant because green marketing effectiveness depends not only on how sustainability is communicated but also on whether organizational practices can substantiate the communicated environmental value. Recent research on proactive environmental strategy similarly connects environmental capabilities with green brand positioning and firm performance, reinforcing the strategic relationship between organizational practices and market-facing sustainability claims (Haozhe et al., 2025).

The presence of both marketing and quality-management journals in the dataset provides evidence of an interdisciplinary knowledge structure rather than simple thematic overlap. Marketing-oriented publications tend to conceptualize quality through consumer-facing constructs such as perceived quality, green perceived value, green trust, satisfaction, and purchase intention, whereas quality-oriented research is more likely to emphasize process consistency, quality assurance, continuous improvement, and organizational performance. This distinction is important because the concept of quality changes meaning as it moves across disciplinary boundaries: it may represent an operational capability within the organization but become a perceptual signal when evaluated by consumers. Research on green brand equity illustrates this transition by positioning perceived quality among the factors that shape consumers' evaluations of environmentally positioned brands (Hue & Oanh, 2023). The coexistence of these perspectives within the source distribution suggests that the literature has begun to connect organizational quality with market outcomes, although the connection remains distributed across separate scholarly conversations. The source structure therefore reveals an intellectual field in which convergence is occurring, but disciplinary specialization continues to shape the way quality and environmental credibility are conceptualized.

The distribution across journals also reflects the expansion of green marketing from a conventional promotional perspective toward a broader sustainability-oriented strategic function. Research published in sustainability and environmental-management outlets increasingly addresses green marketing alongside environmental strategy, circular economy, organizational practices, and sustainable performance, while marketing outlets continue to examine how consumers interpret and respond to environmental information. Bibliometric evidence from related green marketing research shows that the field has developed through interconnected themes involving innovation, sustainable consumption, environmental responsibility, and marketing strategy rather than through a single dominant conceptual stream (Sharma et al., 2022). The presence of quality-management outlets within the same research landscape extends this development by introducing questions about whether operational quality systems can serve as foundations for credible environmental positioning. This relationship is particularly significant in contexts where consumers face information asymmetry regarding the actual environmental performance of products. When quality and environmental attributes cannot be directly verified, perceived quality and green trust become important mechanisms through which consumers evaluate the reliability of green claims (Hashish et al., 2022). The journal distribution consequently illustrates a field that is progressively incorporating organizational and operational considerations into a research agenda historically dominated by consumer-oriented green marketing.

The relatively broad source distribution also suggests that no single journal has yet established a comprehensive intellectual monopoly over the quality–green marketing relationship. The eight publications in *Sustainability* (Switzerland) and five in the *Journal of Cleaner Production* represent meaningful concentrations, but they account for only a limited share of the 103 documents, leaving a substantial proportion distributed among other journals. Such dispersion is characteristic of emerging interdisciplinary fields in which researchers draw upon different theoretical traditions and publish according to the substantive context of their studies. Recent systematic reviews similarly demonstrate that green marketing research spans consumer psychology, corporate sustainability, communication, branding, and sustainable consumption, creating a research landscape that is broad but conceptually heterogeneous (Uikey et al., 2025). From an intellectual-development perspective, this heterogeneity provides opportunities for cross-disciplinary integration but can also impede cumulative theory building when similar constructs are defined differently across research communities. The fragmentation is particularly visible in the distinction between objective product or process quality and subjective green perceived quality, which are related but not conceptually interchangeable. A more integrated research stream would need to explain how organizational quality capabilities become observable environmental signals that shape stakeholder perceptions and ultimately influence green credibility.

The scholarly distribution identified across the 77 sources therefore provides an important contextual explanation for the thematic complexity observed in the dataset. Quality management, green marketing, sustainability, and consumer behavior have developed as partially overlapping but historically differentiated research communities, and their convergence is reflected in the growing number of publications positioned between these domains. The distribution across specialized journals indicates that the research field is sufficiently established to support interdisciplinary dialogue but remains insufficiently consolidated to produce a unified conceptual framework. This situation is consistent with the broader development of sustainability scholarship, where research agendas increasingly connect organizational capabilities, stakeholder expectations, environmental communication, and market outcomes (Hue & Le, 2026). The source landscape also implies that green credibility may be better understood as an integrative construct located between operational performance and market perception rather than as a purely marketing-based outcome. Such an interpretation shifts attention from the effectiveness of environmental communication alone toward the organizational conditions that allow environmental claims to be perceived as credible. The next stage of the analysis therefore examines keyword co-occurrence patterns to identify the intellectual connections through which these different scholarly communities converge and to determine which concepts occupy central or peripheral positions within the research structure.

Keyword Co-occurrence and Intellectual Structure

The keyword co-occurrence analysis provides a more detailed representation of the intellectual structure underlying research on quality management and green marketing. The analysis identified green marketing as the most prominent keyword, occurring 47 times with a total link strength of 96, indicating that it functions as the principal conceptual hub connecting diverse research themes within the dataset. As shown in Table 2, marketing occupied the second position with 19 occurrences and a total link strength of 75, followed by consumption behavior with 15 occurrences and a link strength of 67. Sustainability, consumer behavior, and green trust also demonstrated substantial connectivity, suggesting that environmental marketing research is strongly oriented toward the interaction between sustainability objectives and stakeholder responses. The prominence of these terms indicates that the field has developed primarily around market and consumer perspectives, while quality-related concepts operate as important but comparatively more specialized components of the broader intellectual structure. This configuration is consistent with research demonstrating that green marketing operates through consumer perceptions of environmental value, product characteristics, trust, and behavioral intentions (Huo et al., 2025).

Table 2. Most Frequent and Influential Keywords

Rank	Keyword	Occurrences	Total Link Strength
1	Green marketing	47	96
2	Marketing	19	75

3	Consumption behavior	15	67
4	Sustainability	17	52
5	Consumer behavior	10	50
6	Green trust	15	49
7	Green perceived quality	13	43
8	Commerce	11	40
9	Sustainable development	12	40
10	Human	7	38
11	Product quality	8	36
12	Perception	6	32
13	Environmental sustainability	7	31
14	Consumer attitude	5	30
15	Perceived quality	12	30
16	Green economy	7	29
17	Green satisfaction	9	26
18	Greenwashing	14	26
19	Environmental impact	5	25
20	Green products	8	24

The position of green perceived quality at 13 occurrences and a total link strength of 43 is particularly significant because it provides a direct conceptual connection between product quality and environmental evaluation. Product quality appeared eight times with a link strength of 36, while perceived quality occurred 12 times with a link strength of 30, indicating that quality remains an important component of the research landscape even though it does not occupy the same central position as green marketing. The coexistence of these three quality-related terms suggests a conceptual movement from quality as an objective product characteristic toward quality as a consumer interpretation of environmental performance. This distinction is important because green credibility is unlikely to be established solely through technical quality attributes if consumers cannot recognize or trust their environmental significance. Research on green perceived quality consistently links quality perceptions with green satisfaction, green trust, and behavioral intentions, supporting the interpretation that quality functions as a precursor to broader credibility-related evaluations (Gil & Jacob, 2018; Wasaya et al., 2021). The keyword structure therefore indicates that quality has increasingly entered the green marketing literature through consumer-perceived mechanisms rather than through formal quality-management terminology alone. Such a pattern provides an important explanation for why total quality management appears less central than green perceived quality within the observed network.

The prominence of green trust, green satisfaction, and greenwashing further reveals that the intellectual structure extends beyond the conventional relationship between environmental claims and purchase intention. Green trust appeared 15 times with a total link strength of 49, while green satisfaction occurred nine times with a link strength of 26, indicating that relational and evaluative mechanisms have become important components of the research domain. These concepts imply that consumers do not merely evaluate whether a product is environmentally positioned but also assess whether the firm and its claims are sufficiently reliable to justify confidence. The emergence of greenwashing with 14 occurrences demonstrates a parallel concern with situations in which environmental communication lacks sufficient substantive support. Studies of greenwashing have shown that discrepancies between environmental discourse and actual organizational practices can generate skepticism and negative stakeholder responses, making credibility a strategic issue rather than a purely communicative outcome (Salimi et al., 2025; Lin et al., 2026). The coexistence of green trust and greenwashing within the same keyword structure is analytically meaningful because trust represents the desired outcome of credible environmental communication, whereas greenwashing represents a principal mechanism through which that credibility can be undermined. The network therefore captures both sides of the credibility problem: the construction of trust through credible quality and environmental signals and the erosion of trust through inconsistent or misleading claims.

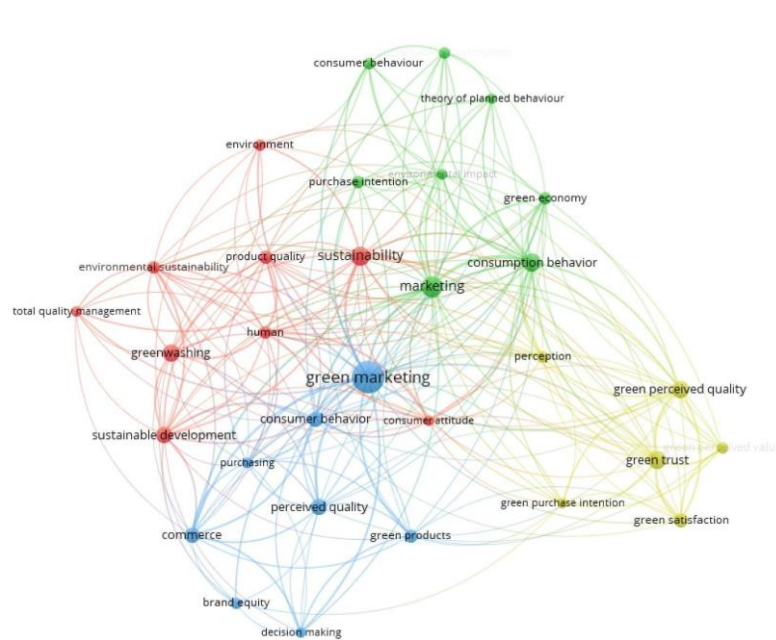


Figure 3. Keyword Co-occurrence Network in Quality Management and Green Marketing Research

The network presented in Figure 3 reveals four major thematic clusters that organize the intellectual structure of the field. The first cluster, Quality Management, Sustainability, and Greenwashing, connects total quality management and product quality with environmental sustainability, sustainable development, and greenwashing, positioning organizational practices as an important foundation for environmental credibility. This relationship is supported by evidence that the internalization of environmental practices can interact with stakeholder pressures in ways that either strengthen substantive environmental management or create conditions conducive to greenwashing (Testa et al., 2018). The second cluster, Green Consumer Behavior and Sustainable Consumption, brings together marketing, consumption behavior, purchase intention, the theory of planned behavior, green economy, and sustainable consumption, reflecting the dominant behavioral orientation of green marketing research. The third cluster, Green Marketing, Perceived Quality, and Market Outcomes, links green marketing with perceived quality, green products, purchasing, brand equity, and decision making, indicating that quality perceptions increasingly mediate the relationship between environmental positioning and market responses. The fourth cluster, Green Perceived Quality, Trust, and Credibility, integrates green perceived quality, green perceived value, green trust, green satisfaction, and green purchase intention, representing the closest conceptual configuration to the green credibility construct examined in this study.

The first cluster is particularly relevant to the organizational dimension of the proposed transition from product quality toward green credibility because it establishes a connection between internal quality practices and the risks associated with unsupported environmental claims. Total quality management and product quality occupy a different analytical level from consumer trust because they concern organizational processes and tangible product outcomes rather than stakeholder perceptions. Yet their appearance within the same network suggests that scholars increasingly recognize the relevance of operational practices to environmental communication. Research examining TQM and green marketing strategies demonstrates that quality-oriented managerial practices can contribute to green performance, providing a substantive basis for sustainability-oriented communication (Saleh et al., 2025). Zhang (2022) similarly demonstrates that environmental regulation can influence firm-level product quality improvement while interacting with firms' responses to greenwashing pressures. The cluster consequently suggests that greenwashing cannot be understood exclusively as a marketing communication failure because the credibility of environmental claims is partly determined by the quality and environmental practices underlying those claims. This interpretation strengthens the

theoretical position that green credibility requires alignment between internal organizational capabilities and external sustainability communication.

The remaining clusters demonstrate how this organizational foundation is translated into consumer and market-level outcomes through perceptions, trust, and behavioral responses. The second and third clusters emphasize consumption behavior, purchase intention, perceived quality, and green marketing, showing that the literature has predominantly examined credibility-related consequences from the consumer side. Research on green purchasing indicates that product-specific values and perceived environmental attributes interact with personal values in shaping consumer decisions, suggesting that quality and environmental value operate jointly rather than independently (Bhardwaj et al., 2023). The fourth cluster extends this logic by positioning green perceived quality and green trust alongside satisfaction and purchase intention, indicating that credibility is constructed through sequential perceptual evaluations rather than through environmental claims alone. This interpretation is consistent with evidence showing that green perceived quality influences purchase intention through green satisfaction and green trust, while green trust itself strengthens consumers' willingness to engage in environmentally oriented purchasing (Hashish et al., 2022). The four-cluster configuration therefore presents a coherent intellectual progression from organizational quality and environmental practices to consumer perception, trust, and market response. The structure also exposes a remaining conceptual distance between formal quality-management systems and the consumer-level construct of green credibility, which becomes a central issue for future research.

The combined keyword evidence indicates that the field is organized around a broad causal logic in which quality-related attributes contribute to environmental perceptions, environmental perceptions influence trust and satisfaction, and these evaluations shape sustainable consumption and market outcomes. The centrality of green marketing demonstrates that the field remains strongly market-oriented, whereas the simultaneous presence of product quality, perceived quality, green perceived quality, and green trust indicates an expanding interest in the substantive foundations of environmental claims. Similar developments have been observed in green brand equity research, where perceived quality is positioned alongside other antecedents of brand value rather than being treated as an isolated product characteristic (Hue & Oanh, 2023). The emergence of greenwashing as a connected concept further suggests that researchers increasingly recognize the importance of congruence between environmental communication and actual organizational performance. From an intellectual-structure perspective, the four clusters therefore represent complementary stages of a developing research agenda rather than independent topics. The strongest conceptual opportunity lies in connecting the organizational logic of quality management with the perceptual logic of green trust and credibility. This connection provides the basis for the next stage of analysis, which examines the density and intensity of keyword relationships to identify the field's dominant research hotspots and clarify the transition from product quality to green credibility.

Research Hotspots and the Transition from Product Quality to Green Credibility

The density visualization in Figure 4 provides a complementary perspective on the intellectual structure by identifying areas in which keyword activity and interconnections are most concentrated. Green marketing appears as the most prominent research hotspot, surrounded by closely connected concepts such as marketing, sustainability, consumption behavior, consumer behavior, and green trust. The concentration of these terms indicates that the field remains strongly oriented toward understanding how environmental value is communicated and evaluated in market settings. At the same time, green perceived quality, perceived quality, product quality, and green products form a secondary but strategically important concentration, suggesting that quality-related concepts increasingly function as explanatory mechanisms within green marketing research. This configuration is consistent with the broader development of green marketing scholarship, which has expanded from environmental promotion toward questions of sustainable consumption, consumer engagement, and the credibility of environmental positioning (Uikey et al., 2025). The density pattern therefore reveals a field in which marketing constitutes the dominant intellectual center while quality operates as an increasingly important connecting dimension between organizational performance and consumer evaluation.

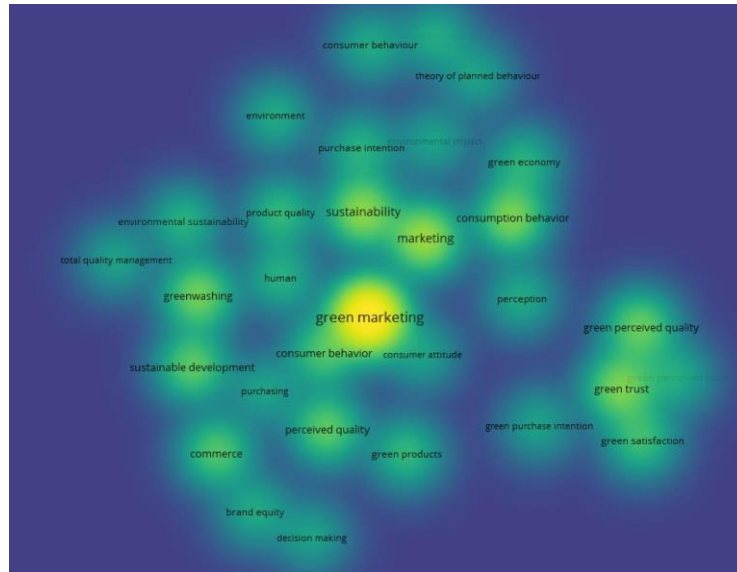


Figure 4. Density Visualization of Keywords in Quality Management and Green Marketing Research

The relatively strong density around green perceived quality and green trust is particularly relevant to understanding how environmental claims become meaningful to consumers. Green perceived quality represents an evaluative judgment concerning whether a product delivers environmental and functional value, whereas green trust reflects the extent to which consumers consider environmental claims and commitments reliable. Their simultaneous prominence indicates that the literature increasingly treats environmental credibility as a perceptual process involving both product evaluation and confidence in the information communicated by firms. Empirical evidence demonstrates that green perceived quality can contribute to green purchase intentions through green satisfaction and green trust, positioning quality perceptions as an important antecedent of market responses (Gil & Jacob, 2018). Similar evidence from environmentally positioned hospitality services indicates that green perceived quality, satisfaction, and trust are interconnected components of consumers' green behavioral intentions (Hashish et al., 2022). The density structure therefore suggests that quality is gaining significance not merely as a technical characteristic but as a signal through which consumers evaluate the reliability of environmental value propositions. This shift provides an important conceptual bridge between conventional product quality and the broader construct of green credibility.

A contrasting pattern emerges from the position of total quality management, which appears more peripheral than green marketing, green trust, and green perceived quality within the density structure. This peripheral position does not imply that quality management is theoretically unimportant; rather, it suggests that formal quality-management practices have been less frequently integrated into the dominant consumer-oriented discourse of green marketing. The distinction is consequential because TQM concerns internal processes, continuous improvement, standardization, and organizational capabilities, whereas green perceived quality reflects the external interpretation of product and environmental attributes. Evidence from organizational sustainability research indicates that TQM practices can operate alongside green marketing strategies to strengthen environmental performance, suggesting that the operational and market dimensions are capable of forming an integrated sustainability mechanism (Saleh et al., 2025). Research on environmental regulation and product quality similarly indicates that improvements in product quality can become part of firms' responses to environmental pressures and greenwashing risks (Zhang, 2022). The relative peripheral position of TQM consequently identifies a research opportunity rather than a conceptual weakness, because the network suggests that the organizational mechanisms capable of generating credible green attributes have not yet received the same level of attention as their consumer-level consequences.

The relationship between greenwashing and the major research hotspots provides another important dimension of the density analysis. Greenwashing is sufficiently visible within the keyword network to indicate that credibility has developed partly through scholarly concern with the consequences of misleading or unsupported environmental claims. Research has shown that vague

environmental claims can affect consumer demand and pricing responses, while greenwashing may also stimulate negative word-of-mouth when consumers perceive a discrepancy between environmental communication and actual performance (Yang, 2026; Lin et al., 2026). The increasing ability of stakeholders to identify and disseminate evidence of environmental inconsistencies has intensified the strategic consequences of such discrepancies, particularly through social media and digitally mediated consumer discussions. Social media research demonstrates that consumers can collectively expose suspected greenwashing, transforming environmental communication from a firm-controlled activity into a publicly scrutinized process (Salimi et al., 2025). Emerging computational approaches further demonstrate the possibility of identifying greenwashing through artificial-intelligence-based analysis of corporate ESG information, strengthening the emphasis on verifiability and consistency (Sari et al., 2025). Greenwashing therefore occupies an important position in the transition toward green credibility because it establishes the negative boundary against which credible environmental communication is conceptually defined.

The density pattern also indicates that green credibility is not represented by a single dominant keyword but emerges through a constellation of interconnected constructs. Green trust, green perceived quality, green satisfaction, greenwashing, product quality, sustainability, and green marketing collectively represent different stages of the credibility formation process, ranging from the substantive characteristics of products and organizational practices to consumers' interpretation of environmental claims. This dispersed representation is consistent with research showing that green brand equity depends on multiple antecedents rather than on environmental communication alone, including perceived quality and other consumer evaluations (Hue & Oanh, 2023). The same logic is visible in studies of sustainable consumption, where green purchasing decisions are influenced by combinations of personal values, product-specific values, perceived environmental benefits, and quality evaluations (Bhardwaj et al., 2023). Green credibility can therefore be interpreted as an emergent relational outcome rather than a discrete communication attribute because stakeholders assess whether environmental claims correspond with expected product performance, organizational behavior, and available evidence. The density visualization supports this interpretation by showing that credibility-related concepts occupy an interconnected position between quality-oriented and market-oriented themes. Such an arrangement suggests that future research can gain greater explanatory power by examining the mechanisms through which organizational quality capabilities are translated into externally perceived environmental credibility.

The overall research structure reveals a conceptual trajectory that can be represented as Product Quality → Perceived Quality → Green Perceived Quality → Green Trust and Satisfaction → Green Credibility, with green marketing operating as the principal communication mechanism connecting organizational and market domains. Product quality represents the substantive foundation, perceived quality represents stakeholder evaluation, green perceived quality adds an environmental dimension to that evaluation, and green trust and satisfaction represent relational responses to the credibility of the resulting environmental proposition. The final stage, green credibility, captures the broader alignment between what firms claim, what their products and processes actually deliver, and what stakeholders are willing to believe. This trajectory is compatible with research demonstrating that sustainable brand positioning increasingly depends on proactive environmental strategies and credible communication rather than isolated promotional claims (Haozhe et al., 2025). It also responds to evidence that transparency, greenwashing exposure, and stakeholder scrutiny have made consistency between corporate practice and environmental communication increasingly consequential (Nguyen et al., 2025; Salimi et al., 2025). The bibliometric evidence therefore positions green credibility as a promising integrative concept capable of connecting quality management, green marketing, sustainability performance, and consumer trust within a common analytical framework. The transition from product quality to green credibility represents not a replacement of conventional quality concerns but an extension of quality logic into the domain of environmental signaling, where the credibility of sustainability claims increasingly depends on the substantive quality and consistency of organizational performance.

CONCLUSION

This study mapped the intellectual development of research at the intersection of quality management and green marketing using 103 Scopus-indexed journal publications published between

2015 and 2026. The bibliometric findings demonstrate a clear expansion of scholarly interest in this intersection, with publication activity becoming particularly pronounced during the 2024–2026 period. The analysis identified four major thematic clusters encompassing quality management, sustainability, and greenwashing; green consumer behavior and sustainable consumption; green marketing, perceived quality, and market outcomes; and green perceived quality, trust, and credibility. Green marketing emerged as the dominant conceptual hub, while product quality, perceived quality, green perceived quality, green trust, and greenwashing functioned as important connecting concepts across organizational, product, consumer, and market-oriented research. The density and co-occurrence structures further indicate that quality-related concepts are increasingly connected to environmental value, consumer trust, sustainability communication, and concerns regarding the credibility of green claims. These findings position the literature as an increasingly integrated research domain in which operational quality and environmental marketing are no longer analytically independent concerns.

The findings also demonstrate a conceptual progression from conventional product and process quality toward the broader issue of green credibility. Although green credibility has not yet developed into a dominant standalone keyword, its conceptual foundations are increasingly visible through green perceived quality, green trust, green satisfaction, greenwashing, sustainability, and environmental communication. This pattern suggests that credible green marketing is constructed through the perceived consistency between product quality, organizational practices, environmental performance, and the claims communicated to stakeholders. Quality management therefore represents more than an internal mechanism for maintaining product consistency because its practices can provide substantive foundations for environmental claims and strengthen stakeholder confidence in green positioning. The study contributes theoretically by connecting quality management and green marketing perspectives through a credibility-oriented framework that explains how product and organizational quality can evolve into credible environmental signaling. Methodologically, the bibliometric mapping contributes by revealing the intellectual structure, thematic concentration, and emerging conceptual connections that remain less visible in fragmented literature streams. Future research should extend this framework through empirical and longitudinal investigations across SMEs, B2B markets, supply chains, digital platforms, service industries, and emerging economies, while examining quality culture, green product quality, traceability, certification credibility, green claim credibility, and green skepticism as mechanisms linking quality practices with trustworthy and sustainable market outcomes.

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