



Market Analysis of Zoological Products: Trends and Ethical Considerations

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

The market for zoological products, including items such as leather, ivory, exotic pets, and traditional medicines, has undergone significant growth and transformation over recent decades. This paper aims to provide a comprehensive market analysis of zoological products, focusing on current trends and ethical considerations. Utilizing both primary data from surveys of 200 consumers and 50 retailers, and secondary data from academic journals, industry reports, and official statistics, the study examines market size, consumer behavior, regulatory frameworks, and ethical dilemmas. The findings highlight the economic importance of zoological products while emphasizing the need for sustainable and ethical practices to ensure wildlife conservation. This research contributes to the discourse on balancing commercial interests with ethical considerations,

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offering insights for policymakers, retailers, and consumers. Future research should explore the impact of emerging regulations and the effectiveness of consumer education programs in promoting ethical consumption.

Keywords: Zoological products; market trends; ethical consumerism; wildlife trade; regulatory frameworks; sustainable alternatives.

1. INTRODUCTION

The trade and consumption of zoological products, encompassing items derived from animals such as leather, fur, traditional medicines, and exotic pets, have historically played a vital role in human societies worldwide. These products have been esteemed for their functionality, aesthetic value, and cultural significance, contributing significantly to various industries and economies. However, the ever-increasing demand for these products has led to numerous challenges, notably concerning wildlife conservation and animal welfare. The exploitation of species for these products has often resulted in overharvesting, illegal trafficking, and severe ethical concerns regarding the treatment and well-being of animals.

In recent years, heightened awareness of these issues has sparked global debates and prompted regulatory actions aimed at curbing the negative impacts of this trade. International agreements like the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) have been instrumental in regulating and monitoring the trade of endangered species to prevent further decline. Despite these efforts, the clandestine nature of illegal wildlife trade and the high profits involved make enforcement difficult [1-4].

Consumer attitudes are also shifting, with growing interest in ethical consumerism and sustainable alternatives. This shift is driven by increased public awareness of the environmental and ethical implications of traditional zoological products [5,6]. This research paper aims to provide a comprehensive market analysis of zoological products, examining current trends, consumer behavior, and the ethical considerations involved. By integrating primary data from surveys and secondary data from existing literature and reports, this study seeks to offer a nuanced understanding of the economic and ethical dimensions of the zoological products market, highlighting the need for sustainable and ethical trade practices [7-10].

2. BACKGROUND

Historically, animal products have played a crucial role in the development of various industries. Leather and fur have been prized for their durability and luxury, while traditional medicines derived from animal parts are deeply embedded in the cultural practices of many societies, particularly in Asia. Exotic pets, too, have become status symbols and sources of fascination, leading to a thriving market that spans continents.

Despite their economic significance, these products pose substantial challenges. The extraction and trade of zoological products often involve unsustainable practices that threaten the survival of numerous species. The ivory trade, for instance, has been a major factor in the decline of elephant populations. Similarly, the demand for exotic pets has led to the capture and sale of many wild animals, often in inhumane conditions, contributing to the decline of wild populations and the spread of diseases.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Market Trends in Zoological Products

The market for zoological products is diverse, including luxury goods such as leather and fur, traditional medicines, and exotic pets. Over the past few decades, the demand for these products has fluctuated due to changes in consumer preferences, regulatory measures, and global conservation efforts. Studies have shown a shift towards more ethical and sustainable consumption, with increasing awareness about the environmental and ethical implications of zoological products (Anderson et al., 2019).

3.2 Ethical Considerations

The ethical considerations surrounding zoological products are complex and multifaceted. Key issues include animal welfare, species conservation, and the impact of illegal trade. The Convention on International Trade in

Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) has been instrumental in regulating the international trade of endangered species, but enforcement remains a challenge (Smith et al., 2020). Ethical consumerism is on the rise, with more consumers opting for cruelty-free and sustainable alternatives (Johnson & Parker, 2018).

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To identify and evaluate current market trends for various zoological products, including leather, fur, traditional medicines, and exotic pets, in terms of market size, growth, and consumer demand.
- To understand consumer awareness regarding the ethical issues associated with zoological products and to analyze their purchasing behaviors and preferences for sustainable alternatives.
- To examine the effectiveness of international and national regulatory frameworks in governing the trade of zoological products and their impact on market dynamics and conservation efforts.
- To explore the ethical implications of the zoological products market, focusing on animal welfare, species conservation, and the impact of illegal trade.
- To investigate the market for sustainable and ethical alternatives to traditional zoological products, assessing consumer interest and market potential.
- To provide insights that can inform policymakers, conservationists, and industry stakeholders about the need for sustainable trade practices and enhanced regulatory measures.

Research Questions:

- What are the current market trends for zoological products?
- How aware are consumers of the ethical issues surrounding zoological products?
- What are the major regulatory frameworks governing the trade of zoological products, and how effective are they?
- What ethical considerations are most prominent in the trade of zoological products?
- How is the market for sustainable and ethical alternatives to traditional zoological products evolving?

5. METHODOLOGY

5.1 Primary Data Collection

Primary data was collected through a structured survey administered to 200 consumers and 50 retailers of zoological products. The survey aimed to capture consumer behavior, preferences, and awareness of ethical issues, as well as retailers' perspectives on market trends and regulatory challenges.

5.2 Secondary Data Collection

Secondary data was gathered from academic journals, industry reports, and official statistics. Key sources included the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), CITES, and market research reports from Euromonitor and Grand View Research.

6. ANALYSIS OF THE STUDY

6.1 Market Trends

6.1.1 Market size and growth

The market for zoological products has exhibited varied growth trends across different categories. From 2015 to 2023, the leather market has shown a steady increase, growing from \$50 billion to \$70 billion. This consistent growth reflects a stable demand for leather products, despite rising awareness of ethical and environmental concerns. Conversely, the fur market has experienced a significant decline, dropping from \$35 billion in 2015 to \$22 billion in 2023. This decline is likely due to growing ethical concerns and shifts in fashion trends away from real fur towards synthetic alternatives.

The traditional medicines market has seen a robust increase, rising from \$80 billion in 2015 to \$105 billion in 2023. This growth underscores the persistent demand for traditional medicinal products, driven by cultural practices and beliefs in many regions. The exotic pets' market has also expanded significantly, growing from \$10 billion in 2015 to \$25 billion in 2023. This rise can be attributed to increasing interest in exotic pets and the status associated with owning them, despite regulatory challenges and ethical issues related to the trade.

Table 1. Shows the estimated market size and growth rates for key zoological products from 2015 to 2023

Year	Leather (Billion USD)	Fur (Billion USD)	Traditional Medicines (Billion USD)	Exotic Pets (Billion USD)
2015	50	35	80	10
2016	52	34	82	11
2017	54	33	85	12
2018	57	32	88	14
2019	60	30	90	16
2020	62	28	95	18
2021	65	25	98	20
2022	68	24	100	22
2023	70	22	105	25

(Source: Secondary Data)

Table 2. Summarizes consumer preferences and awareness regarding zoological products based on survey results

Category	Percentage of Consumers (N=200)
Aware of Ethical Issues	65%
Prefer Sustainable Products	55%
Regular Buyers of Zoological Products	45%
Support Ban on Illegal Trade	85%

(Source: Primary Data)

Table 3. Provides an overview of major international regulations governing the trade of zoological products

Regulation	Description	Effective Year	Impact
CITES	Regulates international trade of endangered species	1975	High
EU Wildlife Trade Regulations	Implements CITES within the EU	1984	High
Lacey Act (USA)	Prohibits trade in illegally sourced wildlife products	1900	Moderate
Endangered Species Act (USA)	Provides for the conservation of threatened and endangered species	1973	High

Table 4. Highlights the types of sustainable alternatives that consumers are interested in

Alternative Product	Percentage of Consumers Interested (N=200)
Synthetic Leather	40%
Faux Fur	35%
Herbal Medicines	30%
Captive-Bred Pets	25%

(Source: Primary Data)

6.2 Consumer Behavior

The survey results indicate a significant level of consumer awareness and concern regarding the ethical issues associated with zoological products. 65% of respondents are aware of ethical issues, reflecting a growing public consciousness about the impact of their purchasing choices on wildlife and the

environment. A majority of 55% prefer sustainable products, indicating a shift towards more ethical consumption habits. However, 45% of consumers are still regular buyers of zoological products, suggesting that despite awareness, traditional products remain popular due to various factors such as cultural preferences and perceived quality.

An encouraging 85% of respondents support a ban on illegal trade, demonstrating strong public backing for regulatory measures aimed at curbing unethical and illegal practices in the zoological products market. This support can be a driving force for policymakers to implement and enforce stricter regulations.

6.3 Ethical Considerations

6.3.1 Regulatory framework

The Table 3 provides a snapshot of key international regulations governing the trade of zoological products. CITES, effective since 1975, plays a crucial role in regulating international trade in endangered species, significantly impacting the market by restricting illegal and unethical trade practices. The EU Wildlife Trade Regulations, implemented in 1984, serve to enforce CITES within the European Union, further strengthening regulatory measures in a major market.

The Lacey Act, in effect since 1900 in the USA, aims to prohibit the trade of illegally sourced wildlife products. While its impact is rated as moderate, it has been foundational in establishing legal precedents for wildlife protection. The Endangered Species Act of 1973 in the USA is another critical regulation that focuses on the conservation of threatened and endangered species, having a high impact on the protection of biodiversity and restricting harmful trade practices.

6.4 Ethical Consumerism

The data indicates a significant interest among consumers in sustainable and ethical alternatives to traditional zoological products. Synthetic leather is the most popular alternative, with 40% of respondents expressing interest, reflecting its acceptance as a viable and ethical substitute for animal leather. Faux fur, with 35% interest, also shows substantial demand, driven by fashion trends and ethical considerations.

Herbal medicines, chosen by 30% of respondents, highlight a growing preference for plant-based remedies over animal-derived traditional medicines. This shift could be attributed to increased awareness of conservation issues and the availability of effective herbal alternatives. Lastly, 25% of consumers are interested in captive-bred pets, indicating a demand for ethically sourced pets

that do not contribute to the depletion of wild populations.

Overall, the interest in these alternatives reflects a positive trend towards more sustainable and ethical consumption patterns in the market for zoological products.

7. DISCUSSION

7.1 Market Trends Analysis

The market for zoological products has exhibited diverse growth patterns across different categories. Leather remains a robust and steadily growing sector, increasing from \$50 billion in 2015 to \$70 billion in 2023. This trend suggests a consistent demand driven by fashion and utility, despite rising concerns over ethical and environmental impacts. Conversely, the fur market has significantly declined from \$35 billion to \$22 billion over the same period. This decline is likely attributed to increased consumer awareness and the availability of synthetic alternatives, reflecting a shift in fashion trends towards cruelty-free products.

The traditional medicines market, however, has shown robust growth, expanding from \$80 billion in 2015 to \$105 billion in 2023. This growth is driven by the persistent demand for traditional medicinal products in various cultures, particularly in Asia. The exotic pets market has also seen substantial growth, from \$10 billion in 2015 to \$25 billion in 2023, indicating a rising interest in exotic pets as status symbols and novelty items, despite ethical and conservation concerns.

7.2 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations in the zoological products market are profound and multifaceted. The extraction and trade of these products often involve significant animal suffering and pose severe threats to biodiversity. The decline in the fur market is a positive indication of growing ethical consumerism, where 55% of surveyed consumers prefer sustainable products. However, the continued high demand for traditional medicines and exotic pets highlights ongoing challenges. Cultural practices and economic benefits drive this demand, but they often conflict with conservation efforts and animal welfare standards.

The survey results show that 65% of consumers are aware of ethical issues, and 85% support a

ban on illegal trade, suggesting strong public backing for stricter regulatory measures. However, the persistence of traditional product markets indicates a gap between awareness and action. This gap underscores the need for effective consumer education and stronger regulatory enforcement.

7.3 Regulatory Challenges

The regulatory landscape, including frameworks like CITES, the EU Wildlife Trade Regulations, and national laws such as the Endangered Species Act in the USA, plays a critical role in curbing illegal trade and promoting conservation. While these regulations have a high impact, enforcement remains a significant challenge due to the clandestine nature of illegal wildlife trade and high-profit margins. Strengthening international cooperation and increasing penalties for illegal activities are essential steps to enhance regulatory effectiveness.

8. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the market analysis of zoological products reveals a complex landscape where economic interests intersect with significant ethical and conservation concerns. The study has highlighted dynamic market trends across various categories such as leather, fur, traditional medicines, and exotic pets, showing both growth opportunities and challenges related to sustainability and ethical sourcing. Consumer awareness and preferences are shifting towards ethical consumerism, indicating a growing demand for sustainable alternatives that prioritize animal welfare and environmental conservation. Regulatory frameworks, including international agreements like CITES, play a pivotal role in mitigating the negative impacts of wildlife trade, yet enforcement remains a critical challenge. Moving forward, there is a clear need for enhanced collaboration among stakeholders—policymakers, industry players, conservationists, and consumers—to promote responsible trade practices and protect biodiversity. This research underscores the importance of informed decision-making and collective action in fostering a more sustainable and ethically sound market for zoological products.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Promote Ethical Consumerism**
 - **Public Awareness Campaigns:**

- Launch extensive media campaigns (TV, radio, social media) to inform the public about the ethical implications of using zoological products.
- Use influential figures and celebrities to advocate for ethical consumerism.
- Collaborate with educational institutions to incorporate wildlife conservation topics into curricula.
- **Labeling and Certification:**
 - Develop standardized labels and certification schemes for ethical and sustainable zoological products.
 - Implement a recognizable logo or symbol for certified products to make them easily identifiable for consumers.
 - Partner with third-party organizations to ensure transparency and credibility in the certification process.
- 2. **Strengthen Regulatory Frameworks**
 - **Enhance Enforcement:**
 - Invest in advanced surveillance technologies such as drones, satellite imaging, and AI to monitor wildlife areas and trade routes.
 - Increase funding and training for wildlife protection agencies to improve their capabilities in enforcing regulations.
 - Establish stricter penalties for illegal wildlife trade, including higher fines and longer prison sentences.
 - **International Cooperation:**
 - Foster greater collaboration between countries through international treaties and agreements aimed at combating wildlife crime.
 - Share intelligence and resources between nations to track and dismantle illegal wildlife trade networks.
 - Conduct joint operations and initiatives to strengthen global enforcement efforts.
- 3. **Support Sustainable Alternatives**
 - **Research and Development:**
 - Allocate funds for R&D initiatives focused on improving the quality, affordability, and availability of synthetic alternatives to zoological products.
 - Collaborate with universities, research institutions, and private companies to innovate and develop new sustainable materials.
 - Promote the use of bio-based and recycled materials in product manufacturing.
 - **Subsidies and Incentives:**
 - Provide tax breaks and financial incentives for businesses that adopt sustainable practices and produce ethical alternatives.

- Offer grants and low-interest loans to startups and SMEs that are developing and marketing sustainable zoological products.
 - Recognize and reward companies that demonstrate a commitment to sustainability through awards and public acknowledgments.
4. **Engage and Educate Retailers**
- **Training Programs:**
 - Develop comprehensive training programs for retailers on the ethical implications of zoological products and the benefits of selling sustainable alternatives.
 - Offer workshops and seminars conducted by conservation experts and NGOs.
 - Create online courses and certification programs for retail staff to enhance their knowledge and customer service regarding ethical products.
 - **Partnerships with NGOs:**
 - Encourage retailers to partner with conservation NGOs to promote and sell ethical products.
 - Co-host events and campaigns that raise awareness about sustainable and ethical consumption.
 - Engage in joint marketing efforts to highlight the ethical credentials of products.
5. **Focus on Cultural Sensitivity**
- **Community Engagement:**
 - Work closely with local communities to understand their cultural practices and dependencies on zoological products.
 - Involve community leaders and influencers in conservation and ethical consumerism campaigns to ensure culturally sensitive approaches.
 - Conduct community workshops to discuss the benefits of conservation and alternative livelihood options.
 - **Alternative Livelihoods:**
 - Support programs that offer alternative sources of income for communities reliant on the trade of zoological products.
 - Provide training and resources for sustainable agriculture, eco-tourism, and other environmentally friendly economic activities.
 - Partner with NGOs and government agencies to implement and sustain these livelihood programs, ensuring they are viable and attractive to local populations.

Implementing these detailed recommendations, the market for zoological products can move

towards more ethical and sustainable practices, benefiting both wildlife conservation efforts and the communities involved.

DISCLAIMER (ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE)

Author(s) hereby declare that NO generative AI technologies such as Large Language Models (ChatGPT, COPILOT, etc) and text-to-image generators have been used during writing or editing of manuscripts.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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