

## Green marketing, an attitude toward future for improving life quality

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**Abstract:** The aim of marketing system is not to maximize consumption, giving more choices to consumers, or satisfying the customers, but is to improve life quality as high as possible. The life quality not only involves the quantity and quality of goods and services but also it involves the quality of environment too. This issue is entered to all organizational dimensions and effects marketing, and leads to emergence of the concept of green integration. The necessity to produce ecological products and the need for green commercial activities, have led the companies to integrate environmental issues with marketing activities and strategies.

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### Introduction

Perhaps nobody imagined that marketing, along with profitability and sale, concerns about the safety of consumer too. But dynamicity and the increase of concern about environment and also governmental regulations and the growth of consumers' knowledge have impelled companies to think about the psychological and corporal safety, and cleanness of environment around consumers (Doaee et al, 2006). Responsibility against social environment is a vital managerial function and is of importance for the success of every business (Gholipour Soleimani; 2006). Environment has increasingly turned into a critical matter for all people. During the last decade the crucial changes in the preferences of consumers toward green products along with the emergence of green consumers, have excited market mechanisms for new ecofriendly organizations and products. Studies show that the high level of the concerns accounted by consumers have not generally led to widespread behavioral changes. Despite 3 decades from the beginning of concentrated researches on the challenges of natural environment, now the quality of affairs is universally more critical than the time when green marketing began. Scientific publication and mass media are continuously accounted about the destruction of ecosystem.

Weather change, cutting trees, and facilitating the destruction of natural habitats are facts accepted by most scientists and public (Taleghani & Rahmati, 2010). It seems that nowadays every product has an especial social reason for its production, and marketing on the basis of social and environmental considerations has become one of the important activities of the companies; marketing on the basis of social and

environmental considerations has become very famous since 1980s (Katler and Armstrong, 1999). One of the commercial domains which are discussed more in environmental matter is green marketing (Rex and Bowman, P 568; 2007). Energy crisis in the middle of 1970s followed by the primary waves of researches about environmental issues in the first part of 1980s; but it was from 1990s that scientists with general consensus inform us from the critical consequences of economical activities of human being on earth's ecological balance and future life. 1990s is known as the decade of environment: environmental and social concerns have become more important in the decisions of watchful consumers and suppliers for selecting a product. Katler has predicted that more companies will shift their orientations toward the concept of social marketing, which not only tries to meet the needs of goal market effectively but also tries to reinforce the idea of being a good citizen and consumer (Katler, 2003). Most of companies try to contain sustainability as one of their commercial strategy. It seems that some factors such as the necessity to adjust with the increasing volume of social and environmental regulations, concerns about costs and scarcity of natural resources, increasing the knowledge of people and shareholders about social responsibility and the general changes in the values and attitudes of modern capitalistic societies are effective in the description of this new trend (Hillier et al, 2008).

In a study performed by Ottman (1992) in 16 countries of the world, more than 50 percent of the consumers in each country expressed their interest to and concern about environment. Moreover, the results of other study in Australia (1994) showed that 84 percent of people believed that they are responsible against environment,

these consumers state that they reform their purchasing behavior (Polonsky, 2001). In another study it is showed that for 93 percent of people the environmental effect of a product is important during its purchase. In 1994 researchers conclude that 42 percent of European consumers select products on the basis of their environmental functions, and 25 percent of people in England purchase products with above 25 percent sustainability (Rex & Baumann; P 568, 2007).

In 1989 the results of a study in America indicated that 49 percent of subjects had changed their purchasing behavior due to environmental issues (Bovee and Thill, 1992). Studies performed by Australian Statistics Office showed that 75 percent of people concern about environmental issues (Baker, 1996). Kateb and Helson indicated that green marketing reinforces governmental plans (Kateb and Helson, 2004). Bovee and Thill believe that like other elements of marketing environment, social values are also changed during time. Hence, for securing success, marketers and their products must also change in conformity with the society (Bovee and Thill, 1992). In 2006 green products industry had been estimated an industry with the value more than 200 billion (Gupta and Ogden, 2009). In his research Camino studied the effects of benefit owners on green marketing strategy. Previous researches show that profits play an important role in markets and organizations. But a comprehensive consideration of this study shows that there is no relationship between the management of profit owners and green marketing strategy. The findings of this research indicate the connection of profit owners with green marketing strategies and its effects on strategies in companies (Comino, 2007). In another research a model is introduced for interrelationships among green strategic trend, product development, homogeneity of supply chain, green revenues, and commercial units function. The aim of this research is to introduce innovative subjects by strategic trend, interior commercial operations, homogenizing the supply and measuring the function (Hong and Jungbae; 2009, P 512). In his research, Lee has studied the effects of gender differences on the environmental treatment, environmental importance, and perceiving environmental responsibility in Hong Kong young consumers green purchasing behavior. The findings indicate that the above mentioned characteristics are more remarkable in young women (Lee, 2009, P 87).

In another study Lee tries to identify the effective factors on young consumers green purchasing behavior. The findings indicate that the main factors are as followings: society impact, environmental importance, environmental preservation, and environmental responsibility (Lee, 2007, P 573).

Other researchers studied the degree of mutual trust or effective factors on intra organizational knowledge

sharing in green supply chain; this research included 13 hypotheses, which was performed in Taiwan. Its findings showed that trust is an impacting factor in intra organizational knowledge sharing (Chung et al, 2008). The abovementioned statistics and researches indicate that environmental issues and preserving environment is one of the most important criteria, which consumers consider it during their purchase. As a result these issues have caused the entrance of environmental issues to marketing concepts and this leads to the emergence of an approach known as green sustainable marketing. Then before discussing the concept of green marketing and its related issues and because of the fact that green marketing is the subset of social responsibility, first we discuss about foresight, then about social responsibility and finally we explain the concept of green marketing. (Moniri, 2011)

### **The concept of foresight**

It is closest in meaning to policy. Policy means to study the consequences of works. The lexical meaning of foresight is to measure and acting accordingly.

Knowing how to deal with the future, with regard to changes' rapidity in the world, have increasingly become necessary. Undoubtedly, for making wise decisions about our life and business we must know that how our world in change and how future will be; the goal is not to predict future, but for making it better. We have a lot of opportunities for making our future better, and if we pay attention to the future, we will be able to prevent the occurrence of many difficulties (Richard, 1996).

### **Social responsibility**

Some times in the past, regardless of the products' secondary effects and footprints, it was imagined that organizations and producers are only responsible against their employees and shareholders or they imagined that they must provide the best products with low price and high quality for the consumers. Intensive competitions, increasing of population, scarcity of resources, and environment pollution have caused the emergence of new approach in organization and management, which result in commitment and social responsibility. In fact, introducing this responsibility was an answer to environmental needs and challenges. (Moniri, 2011)

Granham and Cateora believe that supporting exterior environment is not an arbitrary choice but it is a major part of business process (Granham and Cateora, 2002). In taking social responsibility, company considers all aspects of consumers and even takes their environmental problems and long term welfare in to account. Stuart and Solomon define social responsibility as following: Methods of management according which organizations perform their activities in a way that have a positive effect on society and upgrading of public goods (Stuart and Solomon, 1997).

In fact, Stuart and Solomon's view was on the basis that requires elimination of the negative effects of organization on society. They tried to change consumers' attitude and behavior. Some scholars like Serto and Greif go beyond that and obligate organizations to improve society's welfare. Count Hutten and Mary Hutten believe that institution's inattention to its exterior beneficiaries causes some problems for its consumers (Amini, 2000).

Meanwhile, business morality determines that companies must know the manner in which their benefits affect the others (Zikmund and Damico, 2001). Since social responsibility has an eminent effect on marketing mixes and reform them, considering it as merely environmental issues is simple-mindedness. Bovee and Thill consider classification, advertising, private sale, and services as the required usable tools in social responsibility, which marketer must identify the profit and welfare of the society with regard to potential element (Bovee and Thill, 1992).

### **Green marketing history**

Management theory had primarily its origin in that part of economy and technical system, which concentrated on exchange, product, production and profit. Gradually, this field by taking impression from behavioral science, human resource, business morality and social marketing reach to more comprehensiveness, in a way that now we can say it is of human function. But sometimes we forget that businesses are faced with non-renewable environmental resources. Green marketing history is dated back to 1970 (Rex and Bowman, 2007).

Regardless of some supports in 1970s, an idea known as green marketing was emerged in 1980s. At that time consumers' focus of attention was on green products, then green marketing concept is introduced and many related researches especially in developing countries are performed (Peattie and Crane, 2005).

At the end of 1980s and beginning of 1990s the main focus of green marketing was on the size of green market and consumers' characteristics (Rex and Bauman, 2007).

### **Green marketing attributes**

Some scholars try to include green marketing concept in the framework of social marketing definition. But green marketing has some attributes which clearly differentiate it from social marketing:

Emphasis on physical sustainability of marketing process and accepting its social responsibility;

Presenting a more comprehensive view and seeing the relationships among economy, society, and environment more interdependent;

Having a constant view instead of long term one;

Considering environment as a phenomenon, which is more valuable than its usefulness to the society;

Paying attention to global concerns instead of one especial society (Mulhern, 1992).

### **Green marketing**

Unfortunately most people believe that green marketing is merely referred to promotion or propagation of products with environmental attributes. Most of consumers relate some words such as non-phosphate, recoverable, consistent with ozone layer to green marketing; while, these are some signs of green marketing. The beginning of green marketing activities must be accompanied with universal and group movement (Mater; 2000, P 199).

In recent years green movement or environmentalism have grown as an important process in United States. Green movement as an obvious social movement expands to different areas of life such as politics, consumption, technology, purchasing of product, market, production and resources (Mater; 2000, P 193). Most companies ask themselves, whether they can be green, clean, and profitable for ever (Polonsky and Rosenberg, 2001).

Nowadays the determinant environmental factors are public interest, great impressibility, and social welfare. Castenow (1993) in his book "New Marketing" describes the universal self-inclination as followings:

1. Having interest to cleanness of weather, soil and its resources;
2. Preserving and keeping environment from destruction;
3. Having a reasonable function in using natural resources with the emphasis on marketing (retrieve);
4. Economizing the use of non-renewable materials;
5. Having a progress in the use of wastages for producing new products;
6. Generalizing the familiarity with environment and having a healthy life (Castenow, 1993).

### **Definitions of green marketing**

1. American marketing society (1976):

To study of positive and negative effects of marketing on pollution and reduction of energy and other resources; but this definition is not comprehensive and we must find more comprehensive definition.

2. Pried and Firel (1995)

Green marketing is referred to the improving of pricing, and promotion and distribution of products, which do not damage environment.

3. Petty ken (1995)

It is a consistent management process, which is responsible for identifying, predicting and satisfying of

society and consumers' needs in a profitable and sustainable manner (Petty, 1995).

4. Steffen Groove (1996)

Green marketing describes the environmental activities such as designing, promotion, pricing, and distribution of eco-friendly products (Groove, 1996).

5. Solomon and Stewart (1997)

It is a marketing strategy, which supports environment through the creation of recognizable benefits and based on what consumers expect (Solomon, 1997).

6. Polonsky and Charter (1999)

All in all green marketing is a very broad concept, which is applicable to consuming and industrial products and even to services (Polonsky and Charter, 1999).

7. Polonsky and Rosenberger (2001)

Green or environmental marketing involve all activities, which are designed for creating and facilitating exchanges to meet the needs and wants of humans in a way that have minimum destructive effects on environment. Green marketing is a complicated tool and for attaining to a success or a long term benefit, engages the entire organization and its activities (Polonsky and Rosenberger, 2001).

8. Calin and Ranchhod (2005)

Green marketing is considered as an important trend in a developed trading. The demand for ecological products and sustainable business activities has different reasons such as increasing the level of consumers' knowledge about environmental issues and the intense national regulations, especially in industrial and developed countries (Calin and Ranchhod, 2005).

9. Rex and Bauman (2007)

Green marketing is a social process in which individuals and groups satisfy their needs and wants through the exchange of products and their values. This is done through an ethical method, which minimizes the negative effects on environment (Rex and Bauman, 2007).

9. Lee (2008)

It is defined as marketing or product promotion on the basis of an environmental function or an improvement in it (Lee, 2008).

11. Paco and Raposo (2009)

Green marketing is managerial process, which has the responsibility to identify, predict and satisfy the needs of consumers and society by a profitable and sustainable method (Paco and Raposo, 2009).

Environmental activities are occasionally considered in all evaluative standards of a company. Most of companies employ traditional measuring tools (such as profit, ROI, market share etc.) for evaluating the success of green innovations. Although some companies go green for humanitarian reasons, some others perceive it as a strategic opportunity (Polonsky and Rosenberg, 2001, P22).

Although demand is unstable and market's standards and conditions differ from one company to another, green marketing has reached to its universal importance (Calin and Ranchhod; 2005, P 548).

Western studies show that environmental awareness of American and Western Europe consumers has been increasing during the last decade, and recently green consuming has also begun in Asian countries (Lee; 2009, P 87).

Barnet and Minery indicate that women are more inclined to environment than men, in a way that they purchase more green products and contribute more to separating retrievable packages; but they did not find a remarkable distinction between the two genders (Paco and Raposo; 2009, P 367).

### Conclusion

With regard to the expansion of environmental pollution, reduction of natural resources and ever-increasing threats to life quality of people, the necessity to consider environmental issues has not reached to its importance. At the present research we study the importance of paying attention to the future with green marketing approach and analyze the importance considering life quality in the future. The results of this research indicate that markets are function within the ecosystem. Although paying attention to the future with green marketing approach seems to be certain, but due to the conducted researches this concept is ignored in most of managerial decision-making. Markets (i.e. those who involved in selling, purchasing and consumption) must regard the environment as a stable entity for long successive years. Since we face with the ever-increasing scarcity of resources in the future, therefore we must consider the environmental priorities and the consequences of marketing activities. Beside consumers and governments, different companies must also understand green marketing. Companies need to understand green marketing for preserving themselves and their brands. Companies with severe dependency on rare human capital and those with dependency on natural resources, for assuring the safe use of their property, follow subjects related to future especially to green marketing. Hence, marketers and productive companies must consider some factors like energy consumption; the quality of water, earth, and air; biodiversity; and the manner in which consumption effects the production of greenhouse gases.

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