



Review Article

An Analysis of Key Elements of Corporations' Social Responsibility in Green Marketing of Organic Products in Scientific and Theoretical Texts

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Abstract

Organic products have been considered by marketing experts from various aspects and they are considered as prominent factors in commitment to the corporates social responsibility in green marketing field in development of commitment of business system to environmental issues. It could be claimed that green approaches in marketing science have led to desirable social and environmental trends in commercial fields and the common points of this type of marketing with social responsibility in some aspects have led their concepts to be parallelly considered in scientific communities. Hence, viewing corporates social responsibility in implementation of green marketing could be considered as one of marketing styles in the modern times that have simultaneously made the realization of commercial and social goals possible. Therefore, this study was carried out to analyze the main factors in corporates social responsibility in marketing of organic products. This study is of qualitative type and the method used in this study is thematic analysis. The data collection method in this research was to study the scientific documents and coding the data in three open, pivotal and selective coding stages. According to the data analysis in open coding, 87 primary contents were extracted and subsequently, 25 pivotal codes and nice primary contents were identified and categorized. The extracted primary contents include ratio to green marketing, management orientations in green marketing, brand dimension in green marketing, mixed aspects of green marketing, environment in green marketing, customer orientation in green marketing, social measures in green marketing, corporates sustainability in green marketing and organizational issues in green marketing.

Keywords: social responsibility, green marketing, organic products, scientific and theoretical texts.

INTRODUCTION

Corporates social responsibility has extensively turned to a growing part of landscapes in many corporates. In 2015, corporates donated \$17.8 billion. Many of the Fortune 500 corporates employ their fulltime employees in carrying out social responsibility activities and participating in a variety of activities whose financial impacts are millions of dollars annually.^[1]

Corporates see corporate social responsibility (CSR) as an important issue in success of their businesses. Corporates social responsibility refers to sustainable and equitable benefits to the society and the organization for various stakeholders.^[2]

Green marketing is a new concept that focuses on optimal application of resources. This goal is offered to the clients and other interested parties, by considering the long-term environmental and social needs. Moreover, considering the

broad science and plans in weather-related disasters, consumers around the world become increasingly sensitive towards preserving the environment. This situation has forced the corporates to incorporate the principles of sustainability into their marketing strategies in order to respect the demands of green consumers.^[3] Green marketing is defined as the application of marketing tools for facilitating commerce that preserve, protect and maintain the environment to realize both corporate and individual goals.^[4]

The concept of green marketing first emerged in the 1970s when American Marketing Association (AMA) formed a workshop on marketing and the environment. This workshop led to the publication of one of the first environmental marketing books, entitled *Ecological Marketing*. Consequently, environmental marketing was defined as “studying the positive and negative aspects of marketing activities in pollution, energy reduction and reduction of non-energy resources. However, Kotler and Keller positioned green marketing in 1990s.^[5] Awareness of green marketing is related to the corporates’ understanding of their responsibility towards the environment quality while meeting the needs, wants and satisfaction of the customers.^[6] In the contemporary society that is involved with sustainability issues, green marketing highlights new aspects of economic, social and environmental responsibilities.^[7]

It could be said that, generally, the corporate social responsibility has an undeniable role as a strategic tool in forming and improving the brand for any production or service organization. (Swannel, 2012) Hence, one of the necessities of senior management in any organization is to improve the brand through considering the social responsibility and forming strong relationship with customers so that it can increase its power and capabilities overtime, while fulfilling its promises and commitments. Therefore, it could be said that one of the methods in creating a positive image of the brand is considering the role of social responsibility and this could be considered as a method of reaching sustainable competitive advantage.^[8]

In green marketing, when the individuals are attracted by organic products, they become interested in these products and their brands, and after some time, due to their mental characteristics that they have for themselves, they become more dependent on these products and they fulfill their needs only through corporates that are committed to their social responsibility and green marketing and in the meanwhile, this leads to the dependence on the brand.^[9] Many of these corporates that are active in green marketing believe that to create a dependency on the brand, it is necessary to create credit for their businesses and this is possible through improving the qualitative and quantitative level of green products and creating a positive experience towards these products among customers so that they can form more dependence on their brands among their organic products consumers. Results suggest that consumers generally involved their perception while selecting a brand and they repeat their purchase from the same brand if they have a positive perception and brand preference. The more obvious the amount of the customer satisfaction-based service delivery, the greater the likelihood of their brand dependence.^[10]

Considering the current theoretical discussions and scientific texts on social responsibility and green marketing suggest the necessity for the analysis of the relationship between these factors with brand, especially in products compatible with the green marketing field, such as organic products, in fact, the current analytic and cognitive paths for implementation of green marketing in companies with organic products are leading to social responsibility and in this regard, they can have an effective and efficient approach towards branding. Hence, this study tries to identify and analyze the key factors of corporate social responsibility in green marketing of organic products in scientific texts.

Research Literature

Green Marketing

Green marketing is considered as a comprehensive concept by the scientific community and it is defined through various methods around the world. In his studies, Polansky (1995) has defined green marketing as a marketing effort for codifying strategies by targeting conservationist consumers. This term is also described as the efforts made by an organization in designing, advertising, pricing and distributing products that do not hurt the environment. In actual fact, green marketing refers to the markets of products that are lesser toxic than the normal levels, have higher durability, contain reusable materials or recyclable materials.^[11]

Green marketing is defined as an integrated management process, accountability, predicting and meeting the customers’ and society’s needs in a profitable and sustainable manner.^[4] Peattie (1995) defines green marketing as an integrated management process responsible for identification, predication and meeting the customers’ and society’s needs in a profitable and sustainable manner. (Papadas et al., 2019)

Recently, green commerce and environment friendly values have become popular and organizations are creating special marketing programs that focus on desirable responses to such approaches. However, it should be noted that this has not always been the case. Although sustainable consumption was considered in the universities in late 1960s, the

term “green marketing” was not considered until late 80s and then in 90s, an era which was experiencing the advancement of labeling the environment.^[12]

Green marketing is a part of an organizational strategy for meeting the customers, stakeholders, organizational and legal needs. Green marketing has gained a higher popularity due to its importance in environmental sustainability.

The theoretical framework of green marketing based on the approach of Karna et al. (2003) is as follows: sustainability is based on three hierarchical green market planning levels including marketing strategies, structures and functions. Strategies see the use of environmental strengths as a competitive advantage. Executing the strategies depend on the marketing structures and functions. Structures refer to the management and organizational systems, while functions are generally communicative and advertising.^[14]

Social Responsibility

Social responsibility is a social contract and requires commitment for the corporates to act in a moral framework whose aim is to minimize the negative impacts and maximize the positive impacts for the business and society due to their importance for their stakeholders. (Hoseyni et al., 2015)

Social responsibility is generally imagined as the commitment of a corporate or commercial brand for maximizing the long-term economic, social and environmental welfare through commercial methods, policies and resources.^[13] The broad concept of social responsibility includes corporate actions that address the issues beyond its economic, technical and legal requirements. Barnett (2007) defines corporate social responsibility as the optional allocation of organizational resources to improving the social welfare that is a tool for improving the relationship with the main beneficiaries. (Vercic and Coric, 2018) Corporate social responsibility includes activities that a business carries out in an effort to have a positive impact on the society or the environment.^[14]

Corporate social responsibility is turning to a tool for managing different expectations of beneficiaries.^[15] The positive relation between social responsibility and consumer protection has led the managers to become aware of the fact that social responsibility is not only theoretically important but it is an economic necessity in today's market.^[15]

Green Marketing and Social Responsibility

The main understanding of social responsibility stems from the concept of beneficiaries' expectations (Carol, 1979) that are necessary for strategic marketing. Moreover, marketing scholars link social responsibility to marketing for expanding social responsibility in an organization. Podnar and Golob (2007) define social responsibility as a strategic tool for refocusing from consumer marketing to organizational marketing. This concept is not a new concept in the marketing literature since Kotler and Levy (1969) tried for the first time to merge the social aspects with marketing. This led to the conceptualization of holistic marketing that include the stakeholders' view of marketing and social responsibility aspects. (Papadas et al., 2019)

In the field of marketing, some studies have shown that different motivations of social responsibility lead to different consumer attitudes and behaviors. Some have pointed out that attributing social responsibility motivation is a key mechanism for defining the relationship between being exposed to social responsibility and stakeholders' outputs.^[16] Hsu (2012) points out that social responsibility activities help with maintaining the positive credit of the corporate as the capability of the corporate in distinguishing their products/services through creating a positive brand face.^[17] The capability of a corporate in proving and legalizing its social and environmental measures are quite important and corporates' social responsibility activities have positive impacts on value and brand of commercial companies.^[2]

Study Background

There has been some research carried out in this field which is mentioned briefly in Table 1. A look at the available theoretical literature and research background confirms the existence of a relationship between corporate social responsibility and green marketing and in many cases; they follow the same goals in the organizations. A considerable point in the relationship between the abovementioned variables is the determining role of brand and its various aspects (such as brand reputation, brand special value, brand preference, green brand, etc.) and it could be expected that brand dependence plays an important role in carrying out social responsibility in the field of green marketing. Another point while considering the current study background is the comprehensive view of the studied issues and the factors related to it.

Table-1: Research Background Summary.

Row	Researcher	Year	Description
1	Panda et al.	2020	Having awareness about the sustainability impacts the altruism of the consumer that in turn leads to increase in customer purchase, green brand loyalty and advertising and green brand altruism and this could create a value gap in green brands. Current analysis of this approach confirms that there is a positive significant relation between the identified structures.
2	Zamir et al.	2020	The green brand image leads the process of strengthening the green competitive advantage. Customer pressure, regulatory pressure and green creativity have positive impacts on green production.
3	Xie et al.	2019	Both ethical feelings and positive attitudes are mediators in the impact of perceived CSR measures on brand support behaviors. Social justice and empathy values have different roles in regulating moral feelings and attitudes, depending on the CSR measures.
4	Su and Swanson	2019	Social responsibility impacts trust, identity, welfare and green behavior. Self-confidence and organizational identity impact employees' health and green behaviors, while employees' health increases green behavior. Findings suggest that organizational confidence and identity are to some extent and mediator in the relationship between perceived social responsibility with employees' health and green behavior.
5	Vidiastoti et al.	2019	The implementation of the social responsibility should include the ability to be approved and be committed to the society so that environmental impacts are minimized not only in the corporate image but also in its operational processes.
6	Kardos et al.	2019	The research results confirm a set of hypotheses on: Romanian consumers' lack of awareness that leads to environmental responsibility, the impact of environmental information and awareness on green responsible behavior and the need to intensify efforts for environmental responsibility.
7	XXX	2019	Advancing knowledge on the implementation of social responsibility in the field of marketing is important through the review of the relevant literature and empirical evidence.
8	XXX	2016	Social responsibility activities effectively impact the special value of green brand and green brand performance and this special value of brand includes brands loyalty, perceived performance, brand awareness, brand associations and green brand satisfaction.
9	Denis et al.	2016	The study emphasizes the importance of the role of brand dependence that results from green brand satisfaction.
10	Levi	2016	The results suggest that the higher the social responsibility of the corporates among the organic products consumers, the higher the consumer satisfaction and the likelihood of green brand dependence and preference.
11	Xu and Sarkis	2016	A conceptual framework is used to identify the future research gaps and orientations based on marketing strategy, industrial sector, international comparisons, and green consumerism and all of which play a role in society and its sustainability.
12	Suki et al.	2016	The results suggested that social responsibility is to some extent a mediator between green marketing awareness and product purchase goals. Consumers create positive awareness of green marketing based on the environmental knowledge growth. The stores have dedicated a space to selling eco-friendly products and the consumers have noticed the retail store's green marketing plans.
13	Georg	2015	Results suggested that most corporates consider social responsibility in relation to their supplier, but considering the scarce resources, they trust the intermediary corporates. Many of the ethical commerce approaches focus on production conditions and fair-trade initiatives focus on the society development. Study approaches are proposed for understanding the impacts of social responsibility in trading organic products.
14	Isik and Yasar	2015	There is a significant relationship between the green brand and the organic product with the desire to purchase. The more organic the product is and the more it advertised through green marketing tool, the higher the tendency of the individuals in taking on social responsibility voluntarily.
15	Laming et al.	2014	People acknowledge that if a part of the airplane passengers' expenses is spent of airlines' social responsibility such as using clean fuel, reducing noise, producing low-risk wastes, using organic products and food for passengers, this leads to the individuals' satisfaction and loyalty.
16	Aysel Boztepe	2012	They came to this conclusion that environmental awareness, green product characteristics, green promotion and green price positively impact the green purchase behavior of the consumers and also, demographic properties are effective in the model.
17	XXX	2012	The came to this conclusion that green marketing has a great role in development of

			renewable energy source and will be very influential in reaching environmental goals.
18	Perrini et al.	2010	The results suggested that Italian consumers trust the organic products with special labels, abled by the retailers with social responsibility. The results also showed that the consumers' confidence leads to brand loyalty and a willingness to pay higher for organic products.

Research Methodology

The research method in this study was of qualitative type and the qualitative method used in this study was thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a method in qualitative studies that focuses on identification, analysis and interpretation of qualitative data meaning pattern. Theme is the key element in this method. Themes are the most valuable units that should be considered in content analysis and theme refers to the specific meaning that is extracted from a sentence and paragraph. These themes do not occupy a special space, since a sentence might have several themes or several paragraphs of a text might have one theme only.

Thematic analysis is one of the simple and efficient methods in qualitative research. In fact, thematic analysis is the first method in qualitative analysis that should be learned by the researchers. This method provides the main skills required for many of qualitative analyses. Thematic analysis is one of the general and common skills in qualitative analyses; hence, it is introduced not as a special method, but an appropriate tool for various methods. Also, some introduce theme coding as a prerequisite process for main and common qualitative analyses, and not a unique and special method. But, according to Brown and Clark, thematic analysis should be considered as a special method one of whose advantages is its flexibility.

Thematic analysis is method for determining, analyzing and expressing patterns (themes) available in the data. This method can at its least organize the data and describe it in details. However, it could go further and interpret different aspects of the study subject.

The data collection data methods include studying scientific documents and evidence. In this regard, the research carried out on corporate social responsibility in the field of green marketing of organic products (including the papers presented in the scientific databases of emerald.com, sciencedirect.com and Elsevier.com) was reviewed. According to the scientific texts in the theoretical literature second, the study background of the research was collected and the primary themes of the research were extracted.

Data analysis in thematic analysis method is based on coding process. Theme expresses the concept of the pattern available in the data and it is related to research questions. This method is a process for analyzing the textual data and it transforms the scattered and diverse data into rich and detailed data. Based on a specific procedure, the themes network systematizes the following themes through four stages of viewing the text, appropriate perception of seemingly irrelevant information, analyzing the qualitative data and finally systematic observation of the person, interaction, group, situation, organization or culture:

- Basic themes (codes and key points in the text)
- Organizing themes (categories obtained from composition and summary of basic theme)
- Comprehensive themes (higher themes including the principles governing the text as a whole)

Data Analysis

In this study, thematic analysis is used in this study in order to reach the research goals and open, pivotal and selective coding was used to analyze the data. In the open coding stage, the available articles and studies on the studied topic were deeply scrutinized. Subsequently, the basic concepts presented in them were identified, and extracted and categorized in the form of 87 open codes as the basic themes. For instance, themes such as awareness on green marketing, environmental knowledge and awareness and manager awareness were categorized together. In this stage of pivotal coding peripheral themes were linked to more basic themes. In fact, the presented themes in the open coding were linked to a basic theme. In this stage, 25 pivotal themes were introduced. As an example, the abovementioned themes were linked to the pivotal code of Understanding Green Marketing. (Table-2)

Table-2: An Example of the Link between Open Codes and Selected Pivotal Code.

Themes Extracted from Open Coding	Selected Pivotal Code
Awareness on Green Marketing	Understanding Green Marketing
Environmental Knowledge and Awareness	
Manager Awareness	

In the selective coding stage, the themes introduced in pivotal coding stage were systematically categorized. Accordingly, the pivotal codes introduced in the previous stage were selectively introduced in the form of nine main categories. Intimately, by explaining the themes and categorizing the data, the basic themes were determined for key factors of corporate social responsibility in the field of green marketing. (Table-3)

Table-3: Key Factors of Corporate Social Responsibility in the Field of Organic Products Green Marketing.

Subset Themes (Pivotal Coding)	Basic Themes (Selective Coding)
Understanding Green Marketing	Insights into Green Marketing
Environmental Awareness	
Manager Support	Management Orientations in Green Marketing
Managerial Commitments	
Trust in the Brand	Brand Aspects in Green Marketing
Customers' Attitude towards the Brand	
Green Brand	
Brand Value	
Product Aspects	Mixed Aspects in Green Marketing
Price Aspects	
Promotion Aspects	
Distribution Aspects	
Environmental Culture	Environment in Green Marketing
Measures toward the Environment	
Customer Behaviors	Customer Orientation in Green Marketing
Customer's Expected Benefits	
Social Programs	Social Measures in Green Marketing
Social Accountability	
Green Executive Measures	
Green Sustainability Advantage	Corporate Sustainability in Green Marketing
Green Behavior	
Green Advantages	
Employees Organizational Identity	Organizational Issues in Green Marketing
Environmental Pressures	
Corporate Social Status	

Hence, considering the basic themes derived from the research data analysis, factors of Insights into Green Marketing, Management Orientations in Green Marketing, Brand Aspects in Green Marketing, Mixed Aspects in Green Marketing, Environment in Green Marketing, Customer Orientation in Green Marketing, Social Measures in Green Marketing, Corporate Sustainability in Green Marketing, Organizational Issues in Green Marketing were proposed as the basic themes in relationship with corporates social responsibility in the field the of organic products green marketing. According to the derived themes, the themes network is proposed in Figure-1, based on the qualitative analysis of data.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This research was carried out to analyze the corporates social responsibility key factors in organic products green marketing in scientific texts. Corporates social responsibility is one of the basic fundamentals for successful expansion of commercial activities in the contemporary era. This could be understood from the emphases rate of the successful and pioneer organizations on the one hand and experts and researchers in the field of business and management. Also, the design of green approaches in marketing science has led to formation of desirable social and environmental trends in business systems and common points between this type of marketing and social responsibility in some aspects have led their concepts to be considered in scientific circles in parallel. Hence, this approach in corporate social responsibility in implementation of green marketing could be considered one of the marketing styles in the current era that has simultaneously made realization of commercial and social goals possible. There is no doubt that such a challenge for the managers and activists in the field of organic products (due to the importance of such products in conserving the environment and the increase of social values in the field of trade and commerce) is more significant, compared to other product areas. To carry out the study in line with the abovementioned objectives, implicit analysis was applied and using the deep study of available scientific studies and research, data coding was carried out in three open, pivotal and selective coding stages.

Based on the findings derived from the carried-out coding, 87 primary themes, 25 pivotal codes and 9 basic themes were identified and categorized. Accordingly, ultimately, the themes of Insights into Green Marketing, Management Orientations in Green Marketing, Brand Aspects in Green Marketing, Mixed Aspects in Green Marketing, Environment in Green Marketing, Customer Orientation in Green Marketing, Social Measures in Green Marketing, Corporate Sustainability in Green Marketing, Organizational Issues in Green Marketing were proposed as the basic aspects and themes in relationship with corporates social responsibility in the field the of organic products green marketing.

Considering the derived basic themes, it could be said that social responsibility in the field of organic products green marketing should be considered with an emphasis on green marketing and its essential concepts. In this regard, some basic themes could be considered as prerequisites for implementation of social responsibility in corporates offering organic products. In fact, issues such as Insights into Green Marketing, Management Orientations in Green Marketing, and Environment in Green Marketing are among factors that should be considered in preparing a corporate for accepting the social responsibilities. Also, themes such as Brand Aspects in Green Marketing, Mixed Aspects in Green Marketing, and Organizational Issues in Green Marketing could be considered by the managers and activists of corporates with organic products in executive stages of social responsibility measures. Also, some of the themes show the level of effectiveness and success of social responsibility of the mentioned corporates to some extent, such as Customer Orientation in Green Marketing, Social Measures in Green Marketing, and Corporate Sustainability in Green Marketing.

Of course, based on the studies and issues for social responsibility in the field of organic products green marketing, some solutions and suggestions could be also proposed for activists and enthusiasts in this field. It seems that understanding different aspects of social responsibility in the field of green marketing for the employees and the managers could play a great role in improving the activities of relevant corporates. Hence, it is proposed that the level of general and specialized knowledge and understanding of managers and employees of corporates in this field are increased through policies, and training programs and personnel empowerment. Also, it seems that presence of proper plans in relationship with social responsibilities that are supported by the senior managers could have a great role in operational and executive measures and reaching great results. Therefore, it is recommended that, with the help of their committed and expert managers, corporates with organic products codify and implement strategic plans and policies in line with social responsibility for organic products green marketing. A point worth considering in data analysis is the issues raised in the field of brand and mixed aspects of green marketing with marketing in green marketing. In this regard, it is recommended that, by setting professional goals in terms of brand aspects and mixed aspect, the marketing managers of corporates offering organic products provide a measurable marketing for their corporates over time to improve their performance level and they try to consider performance improvement in improve goals and plans through cross-sectional and interval evaluations. In the field of social responsibility, it should be acknowledged that the approach and the attitude of the society towards the corporate should be important for the corporates and maybe due to the same reasons, it could be expressed tat themes such corporate sustainability and organizational issues were extracted in findings analysis. Hence, another recommendation for corporates which have organic products is that they have to always

detect current environmental and social problem and challenges and function towards continuing the activities and carrying out other timely measures, along with the current changes in the society and the target market. In general, considering the existing study gaps in the field of organic products and related marketing systems, researchers and enthusiasts in this field are advised to raise social responsibility issues and challenges related to organic products so that the level of scientific knowledge on the executive and operational activities for organic products marketing increases.

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