

Green Marketing Mix: A Review of Literature and Direction for Future Research

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to report the findings of a systematic review of literature in green marketing domain and to propose directions for future research. Green marketing issues are delineated from literature extending marketing orientation and marketing mix frameworks. As society becomes more concerned with the natural environment, businesses modify their behaviour in an attempt to address society's concerns. Based on the literature review, the conceptual review and direction for future research have been delineated and discussed. The paper concludes with the evidences of integration between sustainability and marketing in forms of corporate environmental actions and green marketing practices in businesses. The paper deals with the concept of 4-Ps and the green marketing practice as business response to the increasing environmental consciousness of consumers in the market. The discussion highlights future research avenues and consequent implications for marketers of green products in designing their marketing strategies.

Keywords: Green Marketing, Green Marketing Mix, Green Marketing Orientation, Sustainability

1. INTRODUCTION

Convergence of sustainability thoughts in marketing has given rise to addressing environmental issues in marketing (Hult, 2011). It believes that economic growth has greatly influenced by society and ecology, and emphasizes upon adopting a variety of management approaches (Crittenden *et al.*, 2011) that reflect business responsibility for the wider societal good (Matten and Moon, 2008). This gives an opportunity to elevate its focus from meeting the needs of consumers to managing a broader

market-related issues related to economy, society and the natural environment. This has given rise to the debate to incorporate social and environmental impact along with economic performance in business assessment. In result, rising worldwide public concern over degrading environmental quality resulting from harmful effects of certain industry practices and stricter environmental regulations posed by governments across the borders can be witnessed. This has altered established norms and rules of business across the world, and has raised the need to adopt environmentally friendly

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approaches in their sourcing, operating, and marketing activities for companies (Banerjee, 2002; Menon and Menon, 1997). So, companies embrace 'ecological consuming approach' perspective to ensure their survival in the market. They now address environmental issues in their management (Pujari *et al.*, 2003; Beamon, 1999) and marketing decision-making (Wong *et al.*, 1996). And, they choose to differentiate themselves by meeting the stricter national and international environmental regulations and demands of environmentally-conscious consumers (Banerjee *et al.*, 2003; Polonsky, 1995). They address environmental issues in several business activities such as designing and manufacturing products, their pricing, distribution and promotion, and develop green marketing practices and strategies (Papadopoulos *et al.*, 2010; Gurau and Ranchhod, 2005). This approach of green marketing is perceived as a profitable and sustainable management process to identify, anticipate and satisfy the requirements of consumers and society (Chan, 2013). Thus, once limited to the ideology of activists, environmental consciousness has become a matter of market competition (Follows and Jobber, 2000).

In contemporary business environment, marketing orientation is shifting to green marketing as firms' environmental actions and product offerings are now catering to eco-conscious consumers, and communicating their environmental actions to stakeholders and consumers (Jones *et al.*, 2008). The concept of sustainability is embraced by the marketing professionals that develop a long term vision for the growth and development of companies as well as for a sustainable future. The recent changes in marketing has raised the need to develop a holistic perspective of green marketing "that embraces all aspects of the company, the product, and the means of production, consumption, and disposal" so that opportunities to make substantive progress towards sustainability can lead to minimizing a transaction's negative impact on the natural environment and a change in corporate thinking towards environmental commitment (Peattie

and Crane, 2005; Polonsky and Rosenberger III, 2001). Though environmental sustainability is gaining importance for business performance and competitive advantage, green marketing literature mainly elaborates upon its strategic development (Rivera-Camino, 2007; D'Souza, 2004; Peattie and Crane, 2005; Kilbourne, 1998; Polonsky, 1995). It lacks significant conceptual and empirical development (Polonsky, 1994) that can develop characteristics of green marketing to develop and exploit the benefits of the concept. There is a need to study green marketing to develop an understanding of interaction between firm and consumers in the marketplace that can act as a medium to develop an environmentally responsible marketplace and a sustainable society. Kotler (2011) has also raised several important issues to explore in green marketing, such as factors leading companies to compete on the basis of sustainability, changes required in marketing practices and opportunities offered by the concept of sustainability, etc. Further, Sharma *et al.* (2010) has recognized that research on inclusion of active role of environmental issues in marketing is still in infant stage and the related discussions are limited to the disciplines of environment management, production, and supply chain, and thus in context of entire value chain. Hence, developing green marketing mix to examine the interface of marketing with other functions of management and business with their impact on the environment is the objective of the paper.

1.1. Methodology for the Review

The objective of this paper is to understand the current state of research in green marketing and to conceptualize green marketing mix. Using a systematic review approach (Tranfield *et al.*, 2003) and methodologically guided by Greer and Lei (2012), it makes an effort to collect and synthesize the available literature (books, edited volumes and journal articles) in the domain from 1965 to 2013. A single research paper/ book was considered as the unit of analysis. The literature in English language was accessed from popular

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