



**A CRITICAL OVERVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ADDRESSING SUSTAINABILITY,
GREEN MARKETING STRATEGIES, AND THE CONCEPT OF THE GREEN ECONOMY**

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ABSTRACT :

The main objective of this paper is to review existing literature on sustainability, green marketing mix in developing countries. Green marketing represents an innovative strategy with the potential to both improve overall business performance and protect the environment. Previous studies highlight that adopting a green marketing strategy is crucial for environmental preservation and for providing consumers with access to clean, eco-friendly products and services. This study aims to raise awareness about the concept of green marketing and its environment significance. Generally green marketing refers to the promotion of these environmentally friendly products. In today's market, the importance of green marketing has grown significantly. Given the limited availability of resources and the fact that human desires are infinite, it is crucial to use resources wisely to satisfy them. Increasing awareness of environmental issues and personal challenges has made people less willing to compromise on their purchasing choices. Furthermore, many individuals have shifted their lifestyles to become more environmentally conscious as the environment has had a profound impact on our collective mind set. This study will also explore the challenges associated with green marketing. This paper will explain the green marketing and green economy as parts of Sustainability. Keywords: Sustainability, Green Marketing, Green Economy, Green Marketing Mix

1.1 Introduction:

In this century, the environmental threats facing the Earth have intensified swiftly, marked by a decrease in natural resource availability, the deterioration of the ozone layer, and a contraction of farmland (Eneizan et al, 2016a). In light of these issues, consumers have started to adopt more sustainable practices, including the use of eco-friendly transportation and household goods. Currently, green marketing strategies represent a crucial focus for marketers, who are dedicated to producing recycled, non-toxic, and environmentally friendly products to fulfill consumer needs and to leverage these benefits on a broader scale (Eneizan et al, 2015a). The on- going absence of advancements in environmental sustainability has sparked discussions regarding sustainable development. Humanity utilises approximately 40% of natural resources annually, surpassing the quantity that can be naturally replenished within the same timeframe. The availability of crude oil a fundamental elements of an industrialised economy, has reached its peak. Currently, about three-quarters of global reserves are situated in oil fields, yet oil production is declining at a rate twice as fast as it did two years prior. Each year, new oil fields are discovered, but most are small in size and contain reserves that are difficult to extract. While several alternatives to oil have been identified, their availability is limited. For example, the generation of photovoltaic energy necessitates various minerals that are in short supply, with demand outstripping current extraction capabilities. The global appetite for biofuels cannot be met due to land scarcity, and the production of these resources competes with food production for land use. Similar challenges also threaten the sustainability of food supplies, biodiversity, and overall ecosystem health. The contemporary lifestyle, marked by



extensive industrialization and globalization, is influenced by the repercussions of protein overconsumption, the limited availability of alternative resources, and the reliance on inexpensive oil. Consequently, the energy-efficient production and transportation of goods may also impact our way of life.

These issues also pose significant social challenges. Consumption habits vary considerably from one country to another. For example, the daily resource consumption of an average European is three times that of an Asian individual and four times that of an African individual. Furthermore, the resource usage of individuals in developed nations is ten times higher than that of those in developing nations. Notably, substantial social disparities are evident in these contexts, even within developed countries (Lorek and Fuchs, 2013) [5].

Academics and environmental activists collaborate to promote sustainable consumption and de-growth strategies. The discussions on sustainable consumption are predominantly centered on environmental issues, while the de-growth debates focus mainly on social challenges. Although the topics of discussion differ, both are closely connected to the dual aspects of the challenges they aim to tackle, as well as the interplay between environmental and social issues (Lorek and Fuchs, 2013). During the 19th and 20th centuries, the global population expanded from one billion to six billion. Projections indicate that this number may reach nine billion by 2050. Prior to the industrial revolution and the advent of mass production, significant economic growth and increased consumption were largely unachievable. However, these advancements have had profound effects on the environment, resulting in climate change, a decrease in biodiversity, and a depletion of both renewable and non-renewable resources. Nations worldwide strive to promote growth by addressing poverty and improving living conditions. Nevertheless, many countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America continue to grapple with issues related to poverty and substandard living conditions (Reutlinger, 2012).

1.2 Sustainability

The topic of sustainability has recently become a focal point for both marketing researchers and practitioners. It is defined as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This concept is being increasingly integrated into corporate strategies. Consequently, business norms and regulations in various countries are experiencing significant changes. Companies are not only pursuing economic growth but also committed to promoting the welfare of their environment and society.

1.2.1 Definitions of Sustainability

The concept of sustainability is grounded in two primary elements: the needs of the population and the technological and social constraints that exist. "Needs" specifically refers to the essential demands of impoverished communities, which should take precedence for governments and other governing bodies. On the other hand, "limitations" denotes the environmental boundaries that influence the ability to fulfil present and future needs of individuals (Lorek and Spangenberg, 2014).

1.2.2 Prior research on sustainability

After the World Commission on Environment and Development established the concept of sustainability in the late 1980s, a number of researchers and organizations began to view it as one of the most formidable challenges facing various economies. The influence of globalization has transformed sustainability from a technical idea into a political issue, and later into a critical element of mainstream business. The theories of markets and competition highlight the roles of demand (including customers and interest groups), supply (involving stakeholders in supply chains), and the broader environment (which encompasses regulations, societal dynamics, and natural conditions).



The three key factors influencing business environments and shaping corporate strategies are identified as resources (Liu et al., 2012) [4]. The goal of establishing sustainable supply chains is to tackle issues related to the triple bottom line, which encompasses social, environmental, and economic dimensions (Mollenkopf et al., 2010) [7]. In contrast, the green marketing concept seeks to identify and engage consumers who are socially and environmentally aware from a demand perspective (Smirnova et al., 2011) [11]. Although ethical, societal, and environmental concerns in business have been explored since the 1960s, research in this area has only gained prominence in recent decades. Various theoretical frameworks, such as stakeholder theory, political economy, resource-based view, and institutional theory, have been employed in these studies, which have also introduced marketing concepts like corporate social performance, cause-related marketing, environmental marketing, and corporate environmentalism. Despite their diverse theoretical foundations and objectives, these studies are fundamentally connected by the sustainability concept, often linked to the triple bottom line framework that highlights the need for balance among economic success (profit), social equity (people), and environmental integrity (planet) (Leonidou et al., 2013) [3]. Research on sustainability has concentrated on five primary issues. Firstly, these studies examine the drivers of sustainability, focusing on both external and internal factors that motivate companies to implement strategies that are beneficial to the environment and society. Additionally, they explore external influences on firms' decisions to adopt such strategies, including public and customer environmental pressures, regulatory bodies, media and community influences, the overall business environment, and various industry-specific factors.

In the fourth aspect, these studies delve into the marketing implications of sustainability, focusing on how these elements are woven into marketing strategies and how the market responds to sustainable practices in purchasing, distribution, advertising, and promotion. The research also aims to uncover how businesses factor environmental concerns into their pricing strategies and the development of new products to draw in more customers. However, the volume of research in this area is relatively low compared to other disciplines. Additionally, the sustainability of numerous marketing practices has yet to be thoroughly examined. Although the "marketing mix" concept can illuminate firms' marketing efforts, only a limited number of studies have explored the simultaneous greening of different marketing mix elements (Leonidou et al., 2013) [3].

1.2.3 Sustainability and Marketing

The Sustainability framework has encouraged companies to evaluate their responsibilities in terms of triple bottom line, which includes environmental quality, social equity and economic prosperity. These elements can also provide a foundation for businesses to enhance their market-oriented resources, capabilities and competitive edge. Environmental quality involves business operations that do not deplete natural resources. Social equity highlights the influence of corporate actions on society, community welfare, education, and charitable contributions. Economic prosperity is concerned with creating value and boosting a company's financial outcomes. Competitive firms play a role in enhancing individuals' quality of life by offering employment opportunities and meeting their needs. The implications of these dimensions on corporate practices, customer reactions, and business performance have been examined in numerous marketing studies (Chabowski et al., 2011).

1.2.3.1 Environmental dimension

Research on the environmental aspect of sustainability primarily examines the factors leading to the adoption of environmental strategies and their impact on corporate performance. Some studies have noted a growing trend in green practices and eco-friendly purchasing behaviours within the market. For effective implementation of green initiatives, it is essential to have policy entrepreneurs, backing from senior management, and the enforcement of relevant regulations. Additional research has



explored the precursors and consequences of green practices in relation to the integration of environmental strategies. Various antecedents of environmental marketing have been analysed to understand how regulatory influence, competitive pressure, and internal governance affect corporate performance. The on-going development of environmental marketing strategy modelling is motivated by the potential for environmental strategies to enhance both performance and reputation. One study highlighted the pivotal role of top management commitment as a key driver of corporate environmentalism, emphasizing the significance of environmental strategies and both external and internal environmental orientations. Another investigation, utilizing the resource-based view (RBV) framework within the context of environmentalism, found that a firm's environmental orientation can boost product sales and strengthen competitive advantage. As environmentalism and corporate performance are recognized as interconnected factors, further exploration of the environmental dimension is warranted in future sustainability research (Chabowski et al., 2011).

1.2.3.2 Social dimension

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) serves as a valuable capability-based resource that organizations can leverage to improve their environmental reputation. Consequently, the CSR initiatives undertaken by companies have been extensively explored within sustainability research. These initiatives have been analysed alongside cause-related marketing efforts, customer reactions to such programs, and the impact of these activities on overall business performance. The effective execution of socially-focused initiatives relies heavily on customer choices, perceptions, and support, as well as employee motivation. Numerous studies have sought to connect CSR with corporate social performance (CSP) by examining the direct effects of sustainability on firm performance or its moderating role. Research has also concentrated on consumer perceptions of CSR, which reflect an organization's societal responsibilities. Additionally, some studies have investigated how brand competitiveness and perceived corporate intentions influence the relationship between CSR and business performance. Overall, these studies emphasize the importance of consumer perceptions in the successful adoption of social sustainability strategies.

1.2.3.3 Economic dimension

The exploration of sustainability's three dimensions has largely emphasized the economic dimension, with a significant focus on the connections between resources, capabilities, assets, and the performance of firms. Some research efforts have aimed to pinpoint the critical resources and capabilities necessary for boosting competitive advantage and enhancing firm performance. Numerous studies apply the Resource-Based View (RBV) and resource advantage theory to analyse how resources based on capabilities—like organizational learning, marketing expertise, environmental marketing, entrepreneurial orientation, and market orientation—can elevate business performance. Furthermore, understanding the unique traits of markets and customer capabilities is vital for improving firm performance. These studies collectively suggest that a lack of such capabilities may lead to competitive disadvantages, which can impede firms from achieving sustainability in their practices (Chabowski et al., 2011).

1.3 Environmental issues

The growing awareness among individuals regarding sustainability has transformed greening into a prevalent business concept. As the public becomes more informed about the impact of sustainability on their lives and future, they are increasingly motivated to take action (Ottman, 2011). The heightened awareness among individuals regarding environmental issues is largely attributed to their belief that their activities are persistently damaging the planet. Green marketers frequently address these concerns in their advertisements by incorporating nostalgic elements like infants, daisies, and



celestial bodies. However, there is a growing realization among these marketers of the genuine concerns their consumers have about the sustainability of the planet and its effects on health and future generations. Consequently, health-related issues—including water quality, hazardous waste, air pollution, water supply, global warming, and overpopulation—continue to dominate the environmental concerns of consumers (Ottman, 2011)

1.4 Green economy

Researchers and industry experts regard the green economy as a framework that facilitates economic growth and addresses critical sustainability challenges, such as climate change (Ciocoiu, 2011) [2]. A "green" economy is often equated with sustainability. The principle of green marketing highlights the significant changes necessary to ensure the sustainability of economic systems (Ciocoiu, 2011) [2].

CONCLUSION :

A sustainable economy is founded on the principle that all individuals possess an equal right to access natural resources. This right is accompanied by the responsibility to share these resources equitably and to safeguard them for the benefit of future generations, embodying the concept of intergenerational justice. Nevertheless, there remains an on-going discourse among philosophers and policymakers regarding the obligations of the present generation towards those yet to come. Key questions arise: What are the boundaries of these obligations? Should resource entitlements be allocated on an individual basis or collectively? What distribution methods are most effective? Furthermore, how can the ecological debts incurred by wealthier nations be addressed? To prevent a scenario of "temporal dictatorship," it is imperative for the current generation to thoughtfully consider the needs and preferences of future generations. The preservation of natural resources for future use necessitates a restriction on the consumption of non-renewable resources by the present generation (Lorek and Spangenberg, 2014).

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