

## Organizational Capabilities of Retail Companies to Develop Green Marketing Strategies

### *Capacidades Organizacionales de las Empresas Minoristas para Desarrollar Estrategias de Mercadeo Verde*

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#### Abstract

The human being has damaged the planet by the indiscriminate consumption of products that are not friendly to the environment, hence now the trend of consumers to choose sustainable products. This is the reason why companies are changing the way they make their products, as well as the style of communication to inform that their products are favorable to the environment. The scope of this work is to assess retail enterprises ability for developing green marketing strategies. The study is quantitative-exploratory based on a non-probabilistic sample. A questionnaire was applied to 30 business owners and/or managers. Data was analyzed by using the principal components method. It was observed that the retail companies in Rioverde city, San Luis Potosí (S.L.P.) are able to develop green marketing strategies. The correlation matrix shows acceptable correlations and the values of the Sample Adequacy Measure (MSA) values are greater than 0.500: These values



allow corroborating that the data structure is adequate to be examined by factor analysis. The analysis detects two latent factors that together explain 69.18% of the common variance. The results indicate that green marketing strategies require that owners or managers reformulate their business and processes from different perspectives: internally and with their customers. With respect the first point, staff must be trained on the importance of ecological products for the environment, health and the benefits for the company. With reference to, the second point, the owner or manager must identify the specific market for these products, because customers are varied and with different needs.

**Keywords:** Green marketing; strategies; enterprises; consumers; retail companies.

### Resumen

El ser humano ha dañado el planeta por el consumo indiscriminado de productos no amigables con el medio ambiente, de ahí que ahora la tendencia de los consumidores es que opten por productos sostenibles. Esta es la razón por la que las empresas están cambiando la forma en que elaboran sus productos, así como el estilo de comunicación para informar que sus productos son favorables al medio ambiente. El alcance de este trabajo es evaluar la capacidad de las empresas minoristas para desarrollar estrategias de marketing ecológico. El estudio es cuantitativo-exploratorio basado en una muestra no probabilística. Se aplicó un cuestionario a 30 empresarios y/o gerentes. Los datos se analizaron utilizando el método de componentes principales. Se observó que las empresas de retail de la ciudad de Rioverde, San Luis Potosí (S.L.P.) son capaces de desarrollar estrategias de marketing verde. La matriz de correlación muestra correlaciones aceptables y los valores de la Medida de Adecuación de la Muestra (MSA) son mayores a 0.500: Estos valores permiten corroborar que la estructura de datos es adecuada para ser examinada por análisis factorial. El análisis detecta dos factores latentes que juntos explican el 69,18% de la varianza común. Los resultados indican que las estrategias de marketing verde requieren que los propietarios o gerentes reformulen sus negocios y procesos desde diferentes perspectivas: internamente y con sus clientes. Con respecto al primer punto, el personal debe estar capacitado sobre la importancia de los productos ecológicos para el medio ambiente, la salud y los beneficios para la empresa. Con referencia al segundo punto, el propietario o gerente debe identificar el mercado específico para estos productos, porque los clientes son variados y con diferentes necesidades.

**Palabras clave:** marketing verde; estrategias; empresas; consumidores; empresas minoristas.



## Introduction

Today, the human being has damaged the planet by the indiscriminate consumption of products that are not friendly to the environment. Serna, (2014) explains that every time, more interest is seen on the part of users, for more environmental friendly products, since they are less harmful to both man and the environment. Hence, companies are changing the way they make their products, as well as the style of communicating that their products are favorable to the environment.

Due to these existing changes in the thoughts of society, the need for social responsibility is born by organizations, using marketing as a means, in which green marketing is found, based on strategies that prove to be effective, but at the same time as sustainable for the development of the environment and the business. In recent years, consumers - through various changes in the purchasing process - have exposed needs that were previously reserved and that today require to be addressed by companies, including sustainable products. This information causes organizations to carry out a reformulation of their identity, in accordance with elements that respect the environment.

### *Literature review*

The notion on the environmental issue saw its beginnings in the sixties and this trend continued during the seventies and eighties (Martínez 2018). During this decade a trend about caring for the environment becomes relevant. In these years there was a great concern due to the harmful effect that was generated by poor consumption habits as a result of economic growth. This is also supported by the authors Fraj-Andrés, et, al (2007) in the article profile of industrial companies that develop corporate strategies and environmental marketing.

Regarding green marketing, Johri et, al (1998) and Martínez (2018), highlighted that there is a wealth of knowledge on the subject mainly oriented: its relevance, the impact on competitiveness, the preference of consumers for organic products and finally its effectiveness. In this framework, Chamorro (2001) provides a description of ecological marketing as "the process of planning, implantation and control of a product policy, award, promotion and distribution that allows to achieve the three criteria: (1) that the needs of the customers are satisfied, (2) that the organization's objectives are achieved and (3) that the process generates the least negative impact on the ecosystem" (p. 4).



According to Salgado, et, al, (2009), green marketing is defined as a set of actions carried out by non-profit institutions, especially those associations whose purpose is community-based, which promote and publish ideas for that the inhabitants and officials to have a correct behavior in relation to the environment.

The concept of green marketing has been evolving. Monteiro, et, al, (2015) point out that in the 1960s and 1970s, environmental care was an event with particularities of a place, while from 1980 to 1990, the phenomenon reached world interest. It is worth mentioning that the period of the 60s is classified as the ecological period, because it provokes care for the environment in the business environment and the consumer. After the decade of the seventies, it was notable for the great impetus to carry out actions for caring of the environment. Later, the decade of the eighties was characterized by the worldwide promotion of an environmental conscience in a spectacular way among the population.

The American Marketing Association (2014) presented the definition of green marketing as the commercialization of products that claim to be environmentally safe for the ecology and for their target audience. This includes various activities, such as reducing waste, modifying the entire process of the product, its production, packaging, marketing, paying special attention to the trend of green marketing.

Currently, the use of green marketing is not only a matter of multinational companies that generate exuberant income, but also for smaller companies as pointed out by Mendoza, et, al (2017). Green marketing provides the entrepreneur with knowledge of market trends, new segments and new types of consumers, as well as marketing tools aimed at satisfying market demand, generating competitive advantages and added value for the customer, all of this with social and eco-environmental responsibility.

Today, businesses must consider mix elements within the marketing to demonstrate that their products are not harmful to the environment, but that they also meet the demands of buyers, as stated by Uribe et,al (2016). Customers tend to purchase goods and services that are promoted as environmentally friendly (Rahbar, et, al, 2011). The importance of sustainability and preservation of the environment has become an area of interest in recent decades for companies around of the world, for governments and academics (Ansar, 2013).

Some companies have taken the initiative to not only review the products they offer, but also the processes they carry out, with the intention of identifying those that have a negative impact



on the environment, working to modify their offer and finally assume a role of green or socially responsible companies (Llamas, 2007). Companies are evolving and developing their processes and image to be considered in the aspect of social responsibility. In this way the implementations of green marketing strategies are becoming competitive advantages for companies (Juscus, 2008, cited by Banyte, et,al, 2010).

As green marketing is becoming increasingly important, companies, regardless of their size or sector, must develop strategies that allow them to show users their responsibility to the environment. However, some companies generally do not have clear the benefits, processes, and consequences of the correct application of green marketing (Cranin, et, al, 2011).

For Mexican companies, carrying out green marketing is a challenge based on the environmental management conditions that exist in the country. Mexicans in general perceive that it is the government's responsibility to take care of the environment and their ecological knowledge varies depending on the social group to which they belong: there is a small group with environmental care practices very similar to those of other post-industrialized countries. There is a second group of people belonging to the middle class with growing concern for environmental aspects and finally, at least 40% of Mexicans who are classified as poor, for whom green behavior except for a few represents a difficult concept to understand (Conraud et, al, 2009).

Today, companies are considering environmental aspects within their strategies, that is, they have taken measures concerning the manufacture, distribution and marketing of their products in such a way that they favor the environment. Therefore, the use of green strategies in the market generates that the buyer perceives the brand, in a different way, since current world trends and the evolution in the mentality of consumers, demand more and more industries concerned about the environment. Companies get involved in the training and implementation of actions that contribute to the protection of the environment, having changes in the way of operating and / or use of resources.

### Retail trade concept

According to the Mexican Business Information System (SIEM), of the Ministry of Economy (Sistema de Información Empresarial Mexicano, 2013), in Rioverde SLP, the total number of economic units is 167, out of the 136 economic units that belong to the commercial sector, 120 are micro-enterprises engaged in retail trade.



The Industrial Classification System for North America (NAICS) classifies the trade sector in two areas: 1) Wholesale trade and 2) Retail trade. The first refers to companies whose activities are buying and selling, the second includes economic units that offer in small quantities, goods for personal or home use and generally micro and small companies. The merchandise of these stores is generally displayed in counters and showcases.

The importance of studying this sub-branch and this extract of companies underlies their relevant participation in the economic activity of the country.

### *Environmental behavior in small business*

In the field of small business, considerable responses are observed for proactive environmental behavior (Clemens, 2006; Worthington, et,al, 2005, cited by Kumar, 2015). These entities have recognized the commercial benefits of addressing environmental problems derived from their activities commercial.

In this sense, some authors (D'Souza, et, al, 2015; Kumar, 2014; Ko, et, al,2013; Leonidou, et,al, 2013; Karjaluoto ,et,al, 2009), have focused their studies in green marketing practices and business innovations, and their strategic importance. Kumar (2015) alludes that small companies have an environmental commitment and managers work to go beyond the offers of ecological products and their immediate sales to compete for a superior position with their rivals. However, he points out that there is little knowledge of the factors that determine green marketing decisions and practices in this sector.

On the other hand, Hasan, et, al, (2015) indicate that the performance of green innovation, the product and the process has a positive influence on the performance of companies. In their research, Lampe et,al (1995, cited by Papadopoulos, et, al, 2010) pointed out that "every aspect of the product: design, production, packaging, use and disposal, provides an opportunity for a company not only to protect the environment, but also to benefit from the positive attitudes of the consumers towards the environment" (p.3).

However, the absence of an authentic green marketing strategy is observed, which brings together all its elements -product, price, place and promotion- to develop competitive positions in the long term. It becomes a challenge to manage ecological practices in the four 4Ps since a green marketing strategy based solely on promoting the environmental attributes of a product will not contribute significantly to the concept of sustainability (Chen et,al, 2011; Peattie et,al, 2005).



The limited scope of some of the green actions implemented by companies, for example communication (promotion), can lead to a lack of credibility about the true intentions of organizations to go green (King, 1995). The advantage of implementing an authentic green marketing strategy is to gain competitiveness, either by reducing environmental costs, differentiating the company's products as ecological or improving the reputation of the market (Fraj-Andrés, et,al, 2013).

### Marketing Mix

Ecological marketing is focused on three functions: 1) redirect consumer choice, 2) reorient the company's marketing mix, and 3) reorganize the behavior of the organization (Villegas, 2013). The growing wave of green consumers has led to the development of marketing within the social environment and as a result it is not only about creating communication campaigns with ecological messages but also transmitting a philosophy of life that effectively connects with the organization.

Companies have their own marketing mix, that is, that each organization uses an adaptation of the P's of marketing (price, product, place and promotion) according to their own preferences. In their study, Monteiro et al., (2015) develop the 4 P's of marketing applied to green marketing:

A. Green product: it responds to environmental needs and requirements. Once customer needs are considered to improve and develop new products, safer and healthier environments are also important and must be considered.

B. Green price: This is the price specified in light of company policies with respect to environmental considerations imposed by company rules and instructions, or its green initiatives.

C. Green place: describes the distribution of ecological products that are suitable for consumers, in terms of facilitating delivery and guaranteeing recycling procedures, which are carried out within environmental conditions and requirements.

D. Green promotion: Refers to the provision of real information about products, in a way that does not harm the interests of consumers using means that contribute to a decrease in environmental impact, or that have no impact.

The growing interest in environmental issues has led to the emergence of new markets and products (Salas, 2018). This is beneficial for companies, since they can lose many valuable and loyal customers to the brand due to the absence of green (Surya, 2012). The clients of the companies



are an important part of the formulation of green marketing plans due to their cooperation to reduce impacts on the environment (Grant, 2008).

Hence, the following question arises: Do the retail stores in Rioverde, San Luis Potosí, have the capacity to develop green marketing strategies? To answer this question, the following objective is proposed: to carry out a diagnosis on the application of green marketing strategies in retail stores located in the city of Rioverde San Luis Potosí (S.L.P.).

The results of this research will be timely for the owners and / or administrators of retail companies to realize that implementing green marketing strategies implies reconsidering their businesses and their commercial processes from an internal perspective of the companies and from the perspective of the customers. They will also be useful to raise awareness among owners that the projection of a better brand image of the ecological products they offer impacts on the consumer, because customers are living a green lifestyle, where behaviors, attitudes and consumption are focused on saving to the planet, without neglecting their tastes or needs.

## Method

The research is quantitative, exploratory, since there are few advances in the explanation of green marketing strategies in small companies and thus investigates a phenomenon taking into account the application to reality. The research is carried out by means of an exploratory factorial study and the principal components method (PCA) is used. Lozares *,et,al* (1995) define it as a statistical method that seeks to reduce and give a structure to the information contained in a matrix of data. For this, the PCA homologates the matrix to a vector space trying to find in it some axes or dimensions that, being a linear combination of the entered variables. This study seeks to identify the structure of variables that underlies the value of the ability to develop green marketing strategies that retail companies have in Rioverde, S.L.P.

For the purposes of this research, the sample is non-probabilistic, a sample of 30 people who work in different small companies in the commercial sector of the city of Rioverde S.L.P. A questionnaire on green marketing capacity applied by Siepong (2016) was applied, which consists of 7 sections, of which only the green marketing capacity section is used for this study, which consists of 11 items. Each of the dimensions made up of items is measured on a Likert scale with values ranging from 1 = completely disagree to 7 = completely agree. The data were analyzed with the SPSS version 24 statistical program.



**Table 1.** Variables of the study

Variable	Description
X <sub>1</sub>	The company views the development of green marketing capabilities as a key component of its competitive strategy.
X <sub>2</sub>	The company is determined to develop strong green marketing capabilities.
X <sub>3</sub>	The company believes that green marketing capabilities are necessary for long-term development.
X <sub>4</sub>	The company believes that development of green marketing strategies is not necessary for the competitive success of our industry.
X <sub>5</sub>	Major suppliers expect us to develop strong green marketing capabilities.
X <sub>6</sub>	Customers expect us to develop strong green marketing capabilities.
X <sub>7</sub>	Workers expect strong green marketing capabilities to develop.
X <sub>8</sub>	The company has sufficient internal knowledge to implement green marketing strategies.
X <sub>9</sub>	The company has the right promotional force for green marketing strategies.
X <sub>10</sub>	Quality items are offered at a suitable and competitive price in the market.
X <sub>11</sub>	The increase in the prices of organic products is justified.

## Results

This section presents the results of the exploratory factor analysis, using the principal components method and a Varimax rotation. It should be mentioned that a Pearson correlation analysis of all the variables was carried out in the first instance, even when the variables are significant and the chi-square value at 21 degrees of freedom is 84.57 so is the significance (0.00). However, not all the variables have values of the Measurement of Sampling Adequacy (MSA) greater than 0.50; the variables that show lower values are: X3 (0.337), X4 (0.48), X5 (0.460) and X7 (0.470). For this reason, these variables are not relevant for the analysis, hence they are eliminated, and the test is carried out again.

To use factor analysis requires a set of tests to check that the structure of the data is suitable for analysis. The indicators of these tests are the measures of sample adequacy, since they assess whether the data are appropriate for factor analysis. These tests are Bartlett's Sphericity test, the correlation matrix whose determinant must be close to zero to show that the data matrix is not an identity matrix. In addition to the Kaiser-Meyer Olkin (KMO) adequacy test that evaluates the



strength of the relationship between two variables or items, based on partial correlations, this indicator takes values between 0 and 1, values less than 0.5 are consider unacceptable; from 0.5 to 0.59, poor; from 0.6 to 0.79, regular, and from 0.8 to 1, it is acceptable. Table 3 shows the significance of the Bartlett test of Sphericity and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of sampling adequacy.

**Table 2.** Correlation matrix MSA

Variables	X <sub>1</sub>	X <sub>6</sub>	X <sub>8</sub>	X <sub>9</sub>	X <sub>10</sub>	X <sub>11</sub>	X <sub>2</sub>	MSA
X <sub>1</sub>	1.000	0.368	0.531	0.515	0.448	0.356	0.750	0.820
X <sub>6</sub>		1.000	0.366	0.130	0.457	0.468	0.281	0.854
X <sub>8</sub>			1.000	0.456	0.389	0.643	0.592	0.788
X <sub>9</sub>				1.000	0.164	0.360	0.608	0.766
X <sub>10</sub>					1.000	0.543	0.398	0.754
X <sub>11</sub>						1.000	0.330	0.670
X <sub>2</sub>							1.000	0.733

**Table 3.** KMO and Bartlett tests

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy	0.762
Bartlett's test of sphericity	Approx. Chi-square, 21.g.l
	Significant.
	0.000

As can be seen in table 4, the analysis detects two latent factors that together explain 69.18% of the common variance.

**Table 4.** Total variance explained

Component	Sums of loads squared from extraction			Sums of loads squared of rotation		
	Total	% variance	% accumulated	Total	% variance	% accumulated
1	3.656	52.234	52.234	2.571	36.722	36.722
2	1.187	16.951	69.185	2.272	32.463	69.185

Table 5 presents the matrix of components that indicates the contribution of each variable to each factor. A first factor groups the variables: X2 (determined to develop green marketing strategies), X9 (has the appropriate promotional force for green marketing strategies), X1 (sees green marketing as a key component for its competitive strategy), X8 (has internal knowledge to implement green marketing strategies).

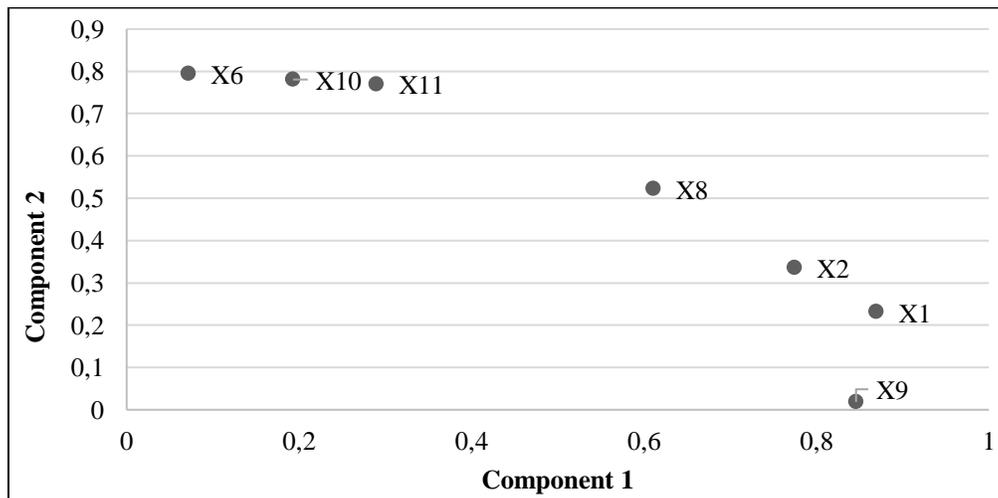


A second factor groups the variables X6 (customers expect the development of green marketing strategies), X10 (offers quality items at an appropriate and competitive price in the market), X11 (we consider that the increase in the prices of organic products is found justified).

**Table 5.** Component matrix

	1	2
X <sub>2</sub>	.869	
X <sub>9</sub>	.846	
X <sub>1</sub>	.774	
X <sub>8</sub>	.611	
X <sub>6</sub>		.795
X <sub>10</sub>		.781
X <sub>11</sub>		.770

The variables that make up both factors have positive signs. Therefore, the internal knowledge to implement green marketing strategies and the determination to develop strategies vary together, that is, if there is more knowledge to implement strategies, the determination for development will be greater. In the same way, it is presented in component two, if the increase in organic prices is justified; the items they offer are of quality and at a good price. To better interpret the components, the original variables can be represented in the space of the first two components (Figure 1), it is observed that both components the variables are positively correlated.



**Figure 1.** Component in rotated space



The results indicate that green marketing strategies require owners and / or managers to reconsider their businesses and business processes from the internal perspective of the companies and from the perspective of the customers.

Regarding the first point, staff must be trained on the importance of ecological products for the environment, health and benefit for the company, since the consumer of this type of products is limited even though this sector is increasing every day of the market, because the benefits it provides to consumers in their health. In addition, more investment can be made in this type of product, since, according to the results, companies have knowledge of green marketing and are willing to develop strategies that promote the ecological product.

Regarding the second point, the owner and / or administrator must be given the task of identifying the specific market for these products, since their customers are varied and with different needs. In addition to looking for a way to offer good quality products at a good price, since some of these products have a higher price compared to traditional products.

## Conclusion

In this research, the proposed objective was achieved since it was found that the retail companies of the city of Rioverde S.L.P. do have the ability to develop green marketing strategies.

The green marketing movement, like green consumption, reflects the responsibility of companies towards society to ensure that they carry out their activities in a way that minimizes negative effects on the environment. The emergence of this green dimension offered new business opportunities for organizations and marketers to develop proactive environmental strategies and launch green products. Effective marketing strategies can help position this product category and gain a competitive advantage by differentiating.

Companies interested in selling organic products must ensure that the consumer is aware of the benefits of these products and, consequently, develop marketing strategies that help guide the purchase decision, because wholesalers or retailers do not expose them in a noticeable way.

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