

GREEN BRAND: AN INTEGRATED CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

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Abstract:

The increase in the number of consumers who choose to focus on sustainable consumption has led companies to develop a series of solutions to match their needs and desires. Developing a brand that integrates the green philosophy of the organization can result in a heightened attachment to the brand from receptive consumers to the ecological principles. In this context, the concept of green brand has begun to attract the attention of many brand management practitioners and academics. However, at the organizational level, the decision to associate a series of green values with a brand is not a sufficient measure to classify the brand as a green brand. For this reason, it is necessary to define the concept of green brand, starting from the opinions expressed by the specialists in the field. Therefore, this paper follows an exploratory approach in terms of defining the green brand and highlighting its specific features. Additionally, the dimensions of brand equity will be customized for a green brand. At the practical level, companies have the possibility to create a new green brand or they can resort to a brand extension. These alternatives are presented in the paper.

Keywords: green brand; green brand equity; green marketing; green brand extension; brand strategy.

1. Introduction

Today's society is more prepared and willing to buy green products, as long as it has sufficient reliable information provided by organizations to increase consumers' knowledge of ecology and its benefits.

The development of some brands that integrate the green philosophy of the organization can lead to a stronger rapprochement with consumers receptive to ecological principles, managing to meet both their needs and desires and to increase the well-being of society.

2. The concept of green brand

The power and creativity of companies are transposed into the market through the brands they hold in their portfolio, brands that are in constant competition for the mind, heart and spirit of consumers (Kotler, et al., 2010). Companies need to create a close and long-lasting relationship with customers, in an attempt to always be present, in their lives, through the brands in their portfolio.

The American Marketing Association defines a brand as "a name, a term, a sign, a symbol or any other feature that identifies one seller's good or service as distinct from those of other sellers" (Kotler and Keller, 2012, p. 241).

Regardless of the fields and levels of economic or non-economic activity, brands have the role of creating a strong link between organizations and different categories of public. Because sustainability issues have become a major current in the world, many companies integrate the notions of sustainability in business strategies and thus marketing practices have become vital for the company to gain a competitive advantage. Therefore, organizations are concerned to differentiate their products through a green brand which is considered a communication vector that delivers information about the unique attributes and benefits of an eco-friendly product (Huang, et al., 2014).

The development of the green brand concept is the result of significant changes in the way of life in society, including the increase of environmental awareness among the population, which gives an increasing importance of ecological solutions, including marketing. As part of these solutions, the importance of the green brand increases as a result of the organization's efforts towards a sustainable development (Danciu, 2015).

An important research issue is to integrate ecological and brand management perspectives from the consumer's point of view (Huang, et al., 2014). As a result, some of the specialists and researchers in the field (Hartmann, et al., 2005; Hartmann and Apaolaza Ibanez, 2006; Darnall, 2008; Chatterjee, 2009; Chen, 2010; Rahman and Haque, 2011; Kang and Hur, 2012; Mourad and Serag Eldin Ahmed, 2012; Ng, et al., 2013; Wheeler, et al., 2013; Chang and Chen, 2014; Huang, et al., 2014; Kim and Ma, 2014; Danciu, 2015; Bekk, et al., 2016; Hussain and Waheed, 2016; Grubor and Milovanov, 2017) have adopted, by referring to the market of green products and services, the concept of green brand. In the specific literature, we also find the term eco-brand (Rahbar and Wahid, 2011; Muposhi and Dhurup, 2017).

Starting from the definition proposed by American Marketing Association, Rahbar and Wahid (2011, p. 74) define a green brand as "a name, symbol or design of products that are harmless to the environment". Consequently, a green brand can only represent a certain category of products, its role being to differentiate green products from other products available on the market.

Other researchers (Hartmann, et al., 2005, p.10) view a green brand as a set of attributes and benefits associated with reducing the negative impact on the environment and creating a positive impression on consumers by increasing environmental concerns.

On a thorough analysis of the definition presented above, we can see two defining elements for the concept of green brand:

- Green brand associations: in addition to the classic associations that can be attributed to a large number of brands, several specific associations can be created concerning green brands, such as organic, energy-efficient and environmental friendly. Along the same lines, Yazdanifard and Mercy (2011) consider that green brands are those that consumers associate with specific practices of sustainable business and environmental conservation. Also, we must not forget the emotional elements through which a brand can resort to association with pleasure, the emotional image of nature (Hartmann, et al., 2005).

- The objectives of a green brand: the possession of a green brand in an organization's portfolio implies, among other things, the achievement of the following objectives:

- Reducing the negative impact on the environment: this approach must involve the entire company, which also depends to a large extent on the external

environment (public organizations, government, political parties and other social institutions). However, at the organizational level, marketing activity remains the core that can catalyze and integrate all the efforts of the organization to maintain and enhance the well-being of consumers and society;

- Creating a positive impression on consumers by increasing environmental concerns: achieving the first goal gives to the organizations the opportunity to shape a positive image both corporate and commercial one, as a result of its efforts and involvement in maintaining the quality of the natural environment.

Grant (2008) consider that most successful green brand are based on an alternative technology or a green philosophy of the company. Therefore, green brands implement environmental conservation and sustainable business practices, and provide products and services that minimize environmental impact throughout their life cycle (Albino et al., 2009; Chen, 2010; Kang and Kim, 2017). Thus, green is not an image value like “cool” or “classic”, it is a factual evaluation (Grant, 2008).

In addition to the definitions presented above, which describe the concept of green brand in terms of comparison with the marketing of conventional products and the benefits of adopting sustainable consumption, for the company, consumer and society, there are definitions that include specific marketing tools through which a brand may hold the title of green brand.

From this perspective, a green brand combines one or more specific attributes of green products (environmentally sound production processes, responsible product uses or product elimination), having a specific positioning and involving active communication and differentiation of the brand from its competitors, through its green attributes (Papista and Krystallis, 2013, p. 76).

The above definition can be analyzed based on the concepts it integrates:

- Green attributes: a green brand is represented by a product whose attributes are considered to be ecological, such as degradability, recyclability, low pollution, etc. (Chen and Lee, 2015). The strength of environmental associations exerts an important influence on the credibility of green brand (Danciu, 2015).

- Specific positioning: a green brand helps to emphasize the position that green products have in the target market of the organization. In this regard, all the actions of the organization that wants to position itself as ecological must meet the expectations of the consumers (Polonsky and Rosenberger III, 2001). Therefore, the incorporation of environmental aspects in the brand positioning strategy must take into account the target consumer segment.

- Active communication: a green brand can be seen as a communication vector, through which information about the unique attributes of the green product is provided (Huang, et al., 2014). “When a brand communicates about environmental involvement it reactivates hedonic and experiential benefits and reinforces the favorability of the brand environmental, green associations. The green customers may have favorable attitude when they perceive a congruency between the brand and the cause they supported” (Danciu, 2015, pp. 55-56).

- Brand differentiation: a green brand offers companies an opportunity to gain a competitive advantage against the current growing consumer concerns for environmentalism (Wang, 2017). Green brands should also be used to help consumers differentiate them from other similar brands with the same functions (Rahbar and Wahid, 2011).

The most difficult aspect in the field of green branding is approaching the gap between the company's performance and consumer perception (Interbrand, 2014). Thus, the company's performance should be demonstrated through a clear explanation how organization sources, produces, and distributes products and services in a sustainable-responsible manner, while consumer perception should be built through credible and permanent communication of crucial benefits of sustainable practices (Grubor and Milovanov, 2017).

3. The concept of green brand equity and its dimensions

Brand equity can provide a competitive advantage for the company, as it gives the brand the power to gain a larger market share and use premium prices, which leads to higher profit margins (Jung and Sung, 2008). From the consumer's perspective, the advantage is that most of the time "consumers are willing to pay more for the same level of quality due to the attractiveness of the name attached to the product" (Bello and Holbrook, 1995, cited in Mohd Yasin, et al., 2007, p.39). Therefore, brand equity is "a measure of a brand's ability to capture consumer preferences and loyalty" (Kotler and Armstrong, 2018, p. 264).

Aaker (2005, p. 34) defines brand equity as "the set of assets and liabilities linked to the brand, to its name and symbol that add value to or subtract value from a product or service".

Considering the benefits generated by building and maintaining a high brand equity, Chen (2010) considers necessary that ideas and concepts specific to the green marketing to be integrated into the brand equity concept.

The green brand equity concept was first proposed by Chen (2010), and then taken over by other specialists who were concerned with integrating the principles of ecology into marketing theory (Kang and Hur, 2012; Ng, et al., 2013; Chang and Chen, 2014; Bekk, et al., 2016; Wu, et al., 2016).

Starting from the definition formulated by Aaker (1991), Chen (2010, p. 308) defines the green brand equity concept as "a set of brand assets and liabilities about green commitments and environmental concerns linked to a brand, to its name and symbol that add value to or subtract from the value provided by a product or service".

The green brand equity is absolutely related to its ecological character, so the main association in the minds of consumers is the one between the brand and its green value (Papista and Krystallis, 2013, p. 76). This association needs to be supported by a number of attributes and benefits that are representative for environmentally conscious consumers.

The main advantage of strongly cultivating the green brand equity in an increasing environmentally conscious era is that it allows companies to gain competitive advantage by positioning products differently in the market (Ailawadi and Keller 2004; Ng, et al., 2013).

The specific literature views the green brand equity concept as a multi-dimensional concept (Aaker, 2005; Keller, 2013), an aspect that is also reflected in the green marketing literature (Chen, 2010; Ng et al., 2014; Kang and Hur, 2012; Misra and Panda, 2017; Akturan, 2018).

In the following, the four dimensions of brand equity (brand loyalty, brand awareness, brand associations, perceived quality), proposed by Aaker (2005), will be presented from the perspective of green marketing.

Green brand loyalty

Referring to the topic, Chang and Fong (2010, p. 2837) propose a new construction - green customer loyalty, a concept that is particularly relevant to environmental commitments and concerns, and which describes "the intention to repurchase, the desire to recommend, show tolerance for a higher price, and purchase other products with (from) an institute". Also, Martínez (2015, p. 901), starting from the definition formulated by Dick and Basu (1994), defines green brand loyalty as "a consumer commitment to repurchase or otherwise continue using a green brand".

Belz and Peattie (2009, cited in Muposhi and Dhurup, 2017, p. 79) believe that the ultimate goal of green brand is to create brand loyalty by positioning eco-friendly products in line with environmental concerns and the ecological values of the target market. In this sense, Lin et al. (2017, p. 435) believe that the immediate benefits of a green product or a green brand have a direct influence on brand loyalty. Therefore, in order to increase brand loyalty, organizations should allocate more resources to increase immediate environmental benefits.

Ottman and Reilly (1998, cited in Banytè, et al., 2010, p. 377) identified five segments of consumers based on their desire to contribute to environmental protection and willingness to buy green products (loyal green consumers, less devoted green consumers, consumers developing towards green, conservative consumers unwilling to change, consumers completely unwilling to change). Of these segments, loyal green consumers strongly believe that it is necessary to have an ecological awareness and try to make a significant contribution to environmental conservation. They try to buy green products and are willing to pay more for them compared to identical but conventional products. Being politically and socially active, these consumers try to convince other people to contribute more to environmental conservation and to buy more or only green products.

It should also be noted that a low level of green brand loyalty on the part of environmentally conscious consumers may be the result of traders' inability to provide quality eco-friendly products and convey attractive messages. In other words, green consumers may give preference to products that are the first to meet their environmental needs (Shrum, et al., 1995).

Green brand awareness

Consumers' awareness of products marketed in green marketing is important in guiding their purchasing decision (Suki, 2013, p. 49), so the integration of green philosophy in the concept of brand awareness can lead to increased efforts of organizations in this direction.

Green brand awareness is defined as "the ability for a buyer to recognize and to recall that a brand is environmentally friendly" (Tseng, 2013, cited in Doszhanov and Ahmad, 2015, p. 2). Thus, recognition allows the inclusion of the brand in its category, in our case in the area of green products, so that the consumer can then continue the evaluation and differentiation of other brands in the same category (Calomarde, 2000).

The Landor Agency, the research firm Penn Schoen Berland and the journal Newsweek investigated in the study "Green Brands 2012" the consumer's perception of green brand and environmental practices of organizations. The report highlights a significant gap between consumer recognition of the green brand and the actual performance of companies concerning environmental protection. In this sense, brands are grouped into four categories based on their reputation and performance

in terms of ecological practices: winners, brands with strong green practices that are publicly recognized; unsung heroes, brands with strong environmental practices, but which do not enjoy a significant degree of public recognition; "Free passers", brands with limited green practices, but with a generally positive perception that is reflected in the green reputation; and "losers", brands with limited green practices, which are publicly recognized for those limitations (AdAge, 2012).

In this context, it should be noted that in the green marketing literature, there are used two concepts between which a distinction must be made: "environmental/green awareness" and "green brand awareness". The basic concept is the same, but the area of application is different. If in the case of environmental awareness we refer to the market for green products or services as a whole, the concept of brand awareness refers, as indicated by the term used, to an individual brand.

Environmental/green awareness influences human behavior in several ways, for example, in reducing consumption, changing wasteful and/or harmful consumption patterns, and increasing preferences for environmentally friendly products, selective waste collection, or various forms of protest that may represent ecological sensibility (Suki, 2013).

In order to purchase green products, consumers should know about traded products in green marketing, so it is very important that they develop this green awareness (Suki, 2013). These consumers can assess the presence of natural resources, their cost of use, as well as the impact that the consumption or the use of the product has on the environment and on them (Boztepe, 2012).

Tariq (2014, p. 277) believes that the responsibility for providing information on green products belongs to both the directly concerned companies and the governmental and non-governmental authorities. Thus, "if companies create brand awareness among environmental conscious customers through brand equity and green advertising campaigns, customers will then get familiar with these brands and it will have influence on their purchasing decision". Also, the choice of a green positioning increases the ecological knowledge of consumers which, in turn, influences the purchase intention regarding green products and brands (Lin, et al., 2017).

Furthermore, green brand awareness can be stimulated through eco-labels, which make eco-friendly products/brands clearly recognized by customers. Instead, creating credibility through eco-labels or certifications will require strict internal, scientific and systematic processes to integrate and measure the impact of the product on the environment at every stage of the life cycle (Dangelico and Pujari, 2010).

Ng et al. (2013) believe that increasing awareness of environmental threats has prompted companies to incorporate green attributes into their products to meet consumers' environmental expectations.

However, despite increasing environmental awareness in contemporary market economies, it is generally acknowledged that there are still considerable obstacles to the spread of more ecologically oriented consumption styles (Braithwaite and Tweneboah-Koduah, 2011).

In this regard, "organizations should create awareness regarding environmental protection and sustainability among existing and potential customers, by developing strong expanding awareness strategies to create and maintain the green brand image for targeted customers" (Tariq, 2014, p. 284).

Green brand associations

The associations between green attributes and the brand can contribute to brand differentiation, which will be viable as long as the communicated green benefits are considered relevant by the target audience receptive to environmental issues.

Products with clear ecological advantages, accompanied by efficient communication channels, will better survive the attacks of competition (Kassarjian, 1971, cited in Montoro Rios, et al., 2006). In this context, "green branding communication strategies should aim at associating the brand with pleasant, emotional imagery of nature, while presenting information on environmentally sound product attributes" (Hartmann, et al., 2005, p. 21).

The research results conducted by Montoro Rios et al. (2006, p. 26) show that the use of "environmental associations should not be interpreted as a panacea that will increase brand capital for all products, but rather the potential to add value to a brand should be analyzed on a case-by-case basis". However, "these types of associations are more useful when the brand is well known by the individual and when he has a high involvement in the purchase decision" (Montoro-Rios, et al., 2008, p. 549).

Green perceived quality

The quality of green products is assessed on the basis of product characteristics, product design and packaging, which are involved in energy saving, pollution prevention, waste recycling and environmental protection (Chang and Fong, 2010).

Ng et al. (2013) mention that no research so far has been carried out on the influence of the perceived quality regarding green products on the green brand image.

Perceived quality is a general, intangible feeling about a brand. But usually, the perceived quality will be based on important dimensions that include product characteristics to which the brand is attached, such as trust and performance (Aaker, 2005, p. 122).

Green trust means "the willingness to depend upon a product, service, or brand based on the belief or expectation resulting from its credibility, benevolence, and ability regarding environmental performance" (Chen, 2010, p. 309).

Studies (Mourad and Serag Eldin Ahmed, 2012) have shown that trust is the most important factor in creating green brand equity, which shows that the public is most in need of a transparent green brand that does not promote false statements about the green character of the products and services.

The general perception is that green products do not work as well as conventional ones. Improving the belief in the environmental performance of the green brand is achieved by including in the communication approaches the information regarding the environmental certification (Montoro-Rios, et al., 2008), which requires strict internal processes to integrate and measure the impact of the product on the environment at each stage of the life cycle (Dangelico and Pujari, 2010).

However, many green products are now designed to work better than conventional ones, which gives them the right to charge a higher price. Thus, "high performance positioning" can broaden green product appeal (Ottman, et al., 2006).

As more and more consumers choose to focus on sustainable consumption, companies are deciding to follow this trend and develop options as close as possible

to their needs and desires. These directions of development must be harmonized with the decisions at the level of the portfolio brands, and it is necessary to make a clear distinction between green products and services, in order to obtain the best results in an increasingly attractive green market for a large number of players.

4. Green brand development strategies

In order to penetrate the market of green products, companies have the possibility to create a new brand, to designate this category of products or services, or they can resort to a brand extension, in the situation where they consider that such a strategy is more advantageous.

The creation of a new brand that represents only the products from the green category is a strategic alternative to which the companies that have as main field of activity the development of environmentally friendly products or services call on. Through the new brand, companies want to attract in particular a market segment with strong concerns and beliefs in the direction of environmental protection. Therefore, the ecological principles and values are integrated from the beginning in the identity and positioning of the green brand, the company concentrating all its efforts in this direction. This strategy is adopted mainly by newly established companies which mainly target the market for green products, and less by companies that have in their portfolio brands that already enjoy a capital image among a large audience.

In this sense, Mooth (2009) points out that in the first stage most of the launches on the market of green products were built around new brands, for organizations to succeed in a credibly competing. However, awareness of environmental issues and increasing consumer interest in environmental protection has led to the situation in which mainstream brands have begun to appear on the green market. This has led to the situation where many existing companies and brands enter the green markets with brand extensions, instead of launching a completely new brand (Korpela, 2016).

A brand extension is one of the alternatives available to a company that has not owned green products in its portfolio, but wants to enter this market segment (Nasution, et al., 2011). The brand extension involves „the use of the established brand name for a product category in order to launch another product category” (Aaker, 2005, p. 274). When a new brand is combined with an existing brand, the brand extension can be a sub-brand. An existing brand that gives rise to a brand extension is a parent brand (Keller, 2013, p. 405).

These strategic options can also be applied by an organization that wants to enter the market of green products and services, in order to satisfy the segments of consumers receptive to environmental problems. Thus, there is a common situation in which companies operating on the market of conventional products decide to attract other categories of public, such as consumers interested in green. This strategic alternative is a long-recognized practice among companies that have capitalized on established brand names to help support portfolio development and reduce the costs and risk of launching a new product (Aaker and Keller, 1990).

Thus, a company, depending on the portfolio structure and the chosen development strategy, has at its disposal the following strategic options (Chatterjee, 2009, pp. 367 - 368):

a. Green line extensions: involves the development of a sub-brand within the same product category by using organic ingredients, to appeal to the desire of

current customers to take care of the environment and aim for a new market segment represented by the green consumer;

b. Green category extensions: involves the use of the parent brand to introduce another product category - which offers a natural or green alternative to meet the same functional need.

However, the lack of an analysis or an improper assessment to extend a green brand can dilute and damage the base brand, thus damaging the equity of the parent brand. This may be especially true for organic products, which may be perceived as less effective by consumers compared to conventional products. Therefore, „it is imperative to analyze how the greening of a product portfolio strategy affects the value of a company's brand” (Chatterjee, 2009, p. 368).

Although it seems surprising, the results of a study (Mooth, 2009) showed that most consumers show a clear preference for purchasing green products from brands that have a strong position in the market for conventional products. Even the LOHAS segment (Ottman, 2011) showed openness in buying green products from well-known brands. The results of the study conducted by Borin et al. (2013) are in the same line, concluding that for eco-consumers the green nature of the product is much more important than the brand's name. Also, Nasution et al. (2011) found that the attitude of consumers towards brand expansion was not significantly influenced by the association they made with organic or non-organic parent brand. The study indicates that there are more important attributes for consumers than the brand name, including taste, price, product benefits and brand image.

The green strategy of a brand must be accompanied by an overall ecological strategy of the company, which must be coherent as a whole. The lack of this coherence causes internal contradictions that will cause the organization to lose credibility with the various partners in the exchange relationships it maintains (customers, suppliers, employees, shareholders, social environment, etc.), and in the long run it will be a weak point that can be attacked by competition (Calomarde, 2000, p. 24).

Thus, it seems that organizations face a double challenge: the first one is to produce green products that have similar functional performance if not even superior to conventional products, and the second one to generate a positive perception of green branding initiatives (Ng, et al., 2013).

5. Green brand in economic sectors

Companies have many reasons to invest in green marketing and the development of green brands. Business managers and marketing managers, when creating strategic plans, can consider this. Taking into account the environmental regulations imposed by the government, they may decide to apply these regulations at the level at which they are imposed or they may go beyond these rules and make a deeper commitment to sustainability (Simão and Lisboa, 2017). Such an approach can be considered a response to the fact that many consumers expect a broad orientation towards sustainability (Schleenbecker and Hamm, 2013) from the companies involved in this market.

This strategic alternative can be a way to differentiate in order to improve the market position of the green brand, by clearly highlighting that it exceeds the requirements of the main eco-standards (Padel and Gössinger, 2008). High-quality standards are rather specific to very small producers. They are usually family

businesses and have the ability to personally control production processes. From another perspective, it is very difficult for larger producers to implement certain practices, such as reduction of mechanization, manual pest control, use of traditional recipes, etc., due to the high volume of production. For large producers, it seems rather possible (or a decision with a lower degree of risk) to align with the minimum standard of organic farming, in terms of optimizing production costs (Bozga, 2017).

On the other hand, when a company chooses to become green, it is crucial to properly and actively communicate through its brands and carefully chooses credible and tailored messages to the target audience. In particular, experts in the field recommend that green brands focus on environmental value claims of both functional and emotional nature and that they have an objective ground (Simão and Lisboa, 2017).

Therefore, as sustainability issues have become mainstream in the world, many companies integrate the notions of sustainability in business strategies and marketing practices. Organizations differentiate their products through a green brand, which is a communication vector for the products in their portfolio. The lack of an efficient green brand can lead to the failure of products on the market (Huang, et al., 2014, p. 262-263).

Consequently, the concept of the green brand has penetrated several economic sectors and not only. This can be observed also at the level of the preoccupations manifested by the specialists in the field, which can be noticed at the level of the specialized literature. Some of the activity fields that have been a concern for researchers to integrate a green brand are presented in Table 1.

The integration of a green brand in the business philosophy of an organization stands out in several areas, including: fashion industry, automotive industry, tourism and travel industry, electrical and electronic products, telecom industry, cosmetics and personal care products and many others.

As we can see, some of the areas in which green brands have penetrated are, to a large extent, the same that can be also noted with significant potential in terms of the damage they can cause to the environment. Therefore, due to public pressure, some of the present brands in these markets have had to take certain steps to improve the green image. Such concerns have led to the need to develop green brands or brands that are strongly concerned with the environment.

However, one of the most suitable areas for the development of green brands is that of organic food. The growth of the organic food market has led to the expansion of the number of organic products and, implicitly, of the number of existing green brands on the market. Ecological certification, regulated at the level of the European Union by Regulation no. 834/2007, and starting with the year 2021 by Regulation no. 848/2018, offers the possibility to differentiate organic products from other products. This distinctive feature can offer the possibility to achieve a clear delimitation between the green brands of organic food and the other brands on the mass market. However, in order to deepen the subject of green brand in the field of organic food, we need to move beyond the practice of eco-labeling, which guarantees a number of attributes for this category of products. Personality and identity are essential aspects for building a successful brand; they must be developed in accordance with ecological principles and values.

Table 1

Studies on the specialization of the green brand concept in different economic sectors

Economic sectors	Studies
<i>Administration („green city brand“)</i>	Chan & Marafa, 2014; Chan & Marafa, 2017; Anguelovski, et al., 2018; Wang, 2019;
<i>Automotive</i>	Huang, Yang and Wang, 2014; Hartmann, et al., 2005; Simão & Lisboa, 2017; Sarkar, et al., 2019;
<i>Cosmetics & personal care</i>	Aulina & Yuliati, 2017; Lin, et al., 2017; Wu, et al., 2018; Papista & Dimitriadis, 2019;
<i>Energy</i>	Guo, et al., 2017;
<i>Electrical & electronic</i>	Chen, 2010; Kang & Hur, 2012; Ng, et al., 2013; Chang & Chen, 2014; Pechyiam & Jaroenwanit, 2014; Delafrooz & Goli, 2015; Lin, et al., 2017; Chen, et al., 2020;
<i>Fashion</i>	Kim & Hall, 2015; Hill & Lee, 2015;
<i>Organic farming & organic food</i>	Doszhanov & Ahmad, 2015; Willer & Lernoud, 2019; Liu, 2020;
<i>Telecom</i>	Mourad și Serag Eldin Ahmed, 2012
<i>Tourism & travel</i>	Darnall, 2008; Namkung & Jang, 2013;

Source: Developed by the author

The entry of large retail companies into the organic products market has improved the marketing and distribution of organic foods. In fact, one of the most important elements for increasing the importance of organic food is represented by marketing policies and advertising realised by public branding (EU, member states, regional authorities), collective branding (associations, consortia) and private branding (retailer's brand, manufacturer's brand, certification body's brand) (Haas, et al., 2010).

As a consequence, environmental issues represent a priority and urgency, therefore, consumers' concerns about green products and green brands are increasing. While committing themselves to promote the functional benefits of organic products, businesses must not neglect the brand value. Most businesses face the challenge of balancing environmental protection and profitability issues. Accordingly, businesses need to focus on positioning the brand instead of attracting consumers through beautiful packaging. Thus, green brand marketing should start from the core value of green consumers and focus on the core value of the brand (Chen, et al., 2017).

6. Conclusions

The need to design green brands will increase as efforts are made to ensure sustainable development. But it remains to be seen whether green brands will succeed in being consistent in their endeavors and strictly keeping their promises. In this context, it becomes essential to understand the concept of green brands and to learn the features that make it different from the rest of the brands present on the market.

The concept of green brand has started to appear in the specialized literature, especially in the last two decades. However, the research of this subject remains as current today, the specialists being concerned with highlighting the particularities that can be associated with the concept of green brand.

Also, the integration of ecological principles is necessary to be achieved at the level of other concepts and tools specific to brand management. In this direction, the specialists focused on studying green brand equity and its dimensions. The green brand positioning, as well as the brand extension to the field of green products and services, represent other research topics that have aroused the interest of researchers and practitioners.

However, the entry into the market of green products for companies that until recently targeted the mass market, brings with it a number of other questions and challenges. In this context, it becomes essential to research the aspects related to the brand portfolio, in the context in which the company is present on both the conventional and green products market. In addition, attention should be paid to the situation of achieving a brand extension from a parent brand of conventional products to a sub-brand of organic products. All these decisions must be weighted by analyzing the impact they can have on consumers' perceptions of the brand.

Managing a complex portfolio of brands, which also includes green brands, can create problems even for companies with a vast experience if they fail to successfully apply green marketing and make a clear difference between the two approaches at the organizational level.

Researching the particularities of a green brand remains a priority, especially in the situation where we are aware that within each sector of activity a green brand must be viewed in a different way. Highlighting those attributes and benefits that consumers expect from a green brand helps to differentiate it on the market, both from mass brands and other green brands that fail to relate to the needs of consumers and society as a whole.

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