

Green Marketing in Textile and Clothing Sector: Turkish Case

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Abstract

Enterprises' self-determinations and even their survivals are getting harder within today's globalizing structure. As a result of this, the average life cycles of enterprises are decreasing rapidly. This new paradigm requires functional relationships with consumers and environment, differentiation within rivals and renewal of all enterprise functions. Therefore, production focused strategies, which have appeared with industrialization, rapidly give place to marketing and market focused strategies due to the competition, consumer awareness, environmental issues and responsibilities. In its entirety, traditional marketing strategies give place to environment friendly green marketing strategies within twenty years.

This study aims to determine the green marketing implementations in Turkish textile and clothing sector. In accordance with the aim of the research Turkish textile and clothing enterprises, which implement green marketing successfully, are determined. After that their green marketing implementations are analyzed according to marketing mix.

This study indicates that; textile and clothing sector, which is one of the most competitive sectors of Turkey within international markets, gives great importance to green marketing during the recent years. Besides, the sector attaches particular importance to green products and green promotion activities within green marketing mix.

Key words: Green marketing, environment, textile and clothing sector, Turkey

1. Green Marketing Concept

Although the green marketing concept began to be discussed in the 1960s, it was in the late 1980s and early 1990s that the concept begins to be formalized and generalized. Green marketing consists of all planned activities to generate and facilitate exchanges in order to satisfy human needs and desires with the least impact possible on the environment. Green marketing is the holistic management process responsible for identifying, anticipating and satisfying customer needs and society in a profitable and sustainable perspective [1]. Green marketing is the holistic process of marketing activities within the firm that are aimed at reducing the environmental impact of products and services and their manufacturing processes in a way that is profitable to the firm. Green marketing is characterized as reducing the long-term impact on the natural environment from the combination of inputs (sources of supply, resource consumption and production processes), outputs (finished products, product end-of-life and waste) and consumer preferences [2].

Since consumers pay more attention to the rise of environmental protection activities and the impact of pollutions, consumer environmentalism becomes more popular in the world. As a result, consumers are more willing to purchase green products that are not harmful to the environment. Due to the prevalence of the environmentalism and the emergence of the strict environmental regulations, companies need to change their business models that can seize the green opportunities. Green marketing that has been widely developed to satisfy green needs of consumers is a new area in the marketing field [3]. An increasing number of green companies reflect both a change in traditional corporate behavior and the emergence of new green sectors like energy conservation and the recycling of waste [4].

Green marketing is a process which includes all marketing activities that are developed to trigger and to sustain consumers' environmental attitudes and behaviors. Besides, companies can adopt the concept of green marketing to implement green differentiation strategies to satisfy customers' environmental needs or desires [3]. Companies should undertake green marketing strategies to find out customers' green needs, to launch green products, to divide the green market into different segments, to target one or several segments, to formulate green positioning strategies and to implement a green marketing mix program [3,5]. Since the society has become more worried about the environment there are more customers with environmental beliefs who are more willing to purchase green products which have a less detrimental impact on the environment. Companies should develop green marketing strategies to obtain competitive advantages in the environmental era nowadays. As consumers are forced to make trade-offs between product attributes and product greenness, most of the consumers wouldn't sacrifice their needs just to be green [3].

Green marketing is considered as one of the major trends in modern business [1,6]. The demand for ecological products and sustainable business activities was determined by an increase in the customers' awareness concerning environmental issues, as well as by stricter regulations introduced by national governments, especially in industrially developed countries. On the other hand, various environmental groups, as well as the media, are carefully monitoring the firms' compliance with ecological principles, creating increased pressure and awareness in the business environment [6].

Most of the people believe that green marketing means only promoting products with environmental characteristics such as recyclable, ozone-friendly, eco-friendly, while those are just green claims. Green marketing is a broader concept that covers much more aspects such as consumer goods, industrial goods and services as well. The ultimate goal for green marketing is to create two bottom lines; the first is for profit and the second for social responsibility. However, it's not easy for all companies to market their green products; they should integrate the environmental concepts into all the marketing aspects in order to apply it successfully. There are five reasons for the companies to apply green marketing practices; it is an opportunity to achieve their objectives, social responsibility, governmental pressure, competitiveness and cutting costs [5]. Another five reasons for companies to adopt green marketing are; utilizing green opportunities, increasing corporate images, raising product value, enhancing competitive advantages and complying with environmental trends [3].

The present operationalization of green marketing concept is based on the following actions of strategic marketing management; an analysis of the potential of green markets, actions oriented towards satisfying green market needs and an analysis of competitors' green behavior. These three actions are key steps in the process of developing and implementing a marketing strategy. In addition, analysis of green consumer behavior is included because it is a crucial factor in industrial policy and consumer demand for goods ultimately leads to environmental problems. At the operative level of marketing management, the green marketing concept was operationalized using the following marketing-mix actions; politics of green product design, distribution with green criteria, pricing of green products and green publicity and green sponsoring [7].

Green products are products that respond to environment needs and requirements. As the customer's needs are necessary to improve and develop products, the customer needs in an environment more safe and healthy are also important and should be considered [8].

The green pricing refers to the price specified in the light of company's policies with regard to environmental consideration imposed by rules and company instructions or its initiatives in this regard [8].

The green distribution is related to distribution gates use that deal with green products, which are appropriate for consumers, in terms of facilitating their delivery, and to secure cycling procedures conducting within environmental conditions and requirements [8].

The green promotion refers to providing real information about the products in a way that doesn't hurt the materialistic and moral consumers' interests [8].

2. The Purpose and the Method of the Research

Being an important element of Turkish economy, textile and clothing sector has kept its significance as a locomotive in national development for a long time. Also it is still one of the most competitive sectors of the country. The sector provides the 19% of the export, 8% of the gross national product, %15 of the employment in manufacturing industry, and 15% of investment incentives [9]. Moreover, according to the data of World Trade Organization the sector is the fifth biggest supplier of the world in clothing whereas sixth in textile.

The enterprises that operate in Turkish textile and clothing sector address great importance for marketing activities so that they could protect their competitiveness. Green marketing activities are used with the purpose of achieving their objectives, carrying out social responsibilities, increasing corporate images and raising product and brand values. This study aims to determine the green marketing implementations in Turkish textile and clothing sector.

In accordance with the aim of the research Turkish textile and clothing enterprises, which implement green marketing successfully, are determined. After that their green marketing implementations are analyzed according to marketing mix.

3. Green Marketing Implementations in Turkish Textile and Clothing Sector

3.1 *Yeşim Textile*

Yeşim Textile is based in Bursa and has a daily production capacity of 55 tons of knitted products, 70 tons dyed, 100.000 meters of printed fabric, 150.000 pieces of garment and 60.000 pieces of home textiles [10].

Green Products: Yeşim Textile has been producing environmentally friendly fabrics with yarns obtained from organic cotton, bamboo and soya since 2001, and received international certification for its organic manufacturing. It is one of the few firms internationally to have been granted the sustainable textile certificate. It is also one of the first companies in Turkey to implement recyclability in cotton fabrics and has created its own brand, named Yeşim Recycle, from its work in this field. Yeşim Recycle products have a recyclable rate of up to 50%. Taking into account that cotton is a difficult crop to grow, it aims to reutilize existing resources. For example, Yeşim Recycle's method allows the recycling of thick yarn used in carpets to the thinner yarns used in t-shirts [11]. Its environmentally friendly brands represent the production made in the green factory concept and the vision of the company. The brand Yeşim Organic was patented in 2010 and the brand Yeşim Recycle was patented in 2011 [12].

Green Promotion: Yeşim Textile partnered with TEMA, a highly respected non-governmental organization not just in Turkey but also globally, on a variety of projects on environmental issues. It establishes memorial forests. It plants trees as a new year gift for its customers. Informational handouts on global warming prepared in cooperation with TEMA were distributed to Yeşim employees and to students attending the Bursa Environment Fair. It was also sent to customers and suppliers electronically. Students in the 6 year old age group leave the nursery school as a voluntary member of TEMA since 2011 under the project carried out jointly by TEMA and Yeşim kindergarten. The children receive training on preserving the environment throughout the year in line with curriculum of the nursery school under the scope of this project and participate in activities and events. At the end of the academic year the children in the 6 year old age group are given badges at the graduation ceremony to symbolize the training they have received and they are enrolled with TEMA as members and this membership will continue until they are 18 years old. 60 children who have graduated in 2012 have become junior TEMA members [12].

3.2 *Elvin Textile*

Elvin Textile is a textile company which has its own trademarks and exports 80% of its production. It produces curtains [13].

Green Products: Elvin Textile produces products which are made from organic cotton since 2008. It produces an antibacterial, nature-friendly, patented curtain which is named as Green Guard since 2008. The product uses oxygen and water vapor under daylight or its equivalent in order to clean itself from organic stains such as oil, tea, coffee, wine, fruit juice and cigarette black. The fabric cleans itself and by converting the harmful gases to harmless ones it also cleans

the air. The curtain doesn't require any washing so it provides energy and water saving. Besides it minimizes detergent and softening usage [13].

Green Promotion: Employees' birthdays and marriages are celebrated with tree donation to Tema. The company uses Turkish Education Foundation's fund checks instead of chaplets. The company also plant trees to Bursa every year [13].

3.3 Zorlu Textile Group (Korteks Ve Zorluteks)

Zorlu Textile Group's main field of activity is manufacturing and marketing of yarn, curtains and home textiles [14].

Green Products: Korteks which is one of the main companies of textile group produces environment friendly products. In the garments manufactured from Taç Antimicrobial yarns developed by Korteks, the spread of odor from the dead bacteria is prevented and in this way the fabric remains odorless and smooth for a long time as if it is newly washed and the customer feels the notion of cleanliness. Also they enable to reach the desired cleaning level by washing clothes rarely and by washing them at low temperatures. Taç Flame Retardant is a special kind of yarn developed by use of high technology which functions as a natural flame retardant. By virtue of chemical structures of phosphor compounds in polymer chain, the flame retardant feature may not be affected by repeated washing or dry cleaning process. Dope-dyed polyester yarns are colored during the production process. So there is no need for conventional polyester dyeing process. This provides saving in water and colorant consumption [14].

By using recycled cotton and recycled yarns which are gained from waste fabrics, consumption of natural resources is reduced in Zorluteks which is also one of the main companies of textile group. By manufacturing products from organic cotton it is aimed to encourage organic agriculture, to reduce environmental damage and to contribute to development of organic product market [14].

Green Promotion: Korteks renders continuous training to the employees to raise environmental awareness. Korteks also encourages its suppliers to participate in environment-oriented activities. By granting extra point to the companies holding ISO 14001 in supplier selection and evaluation system it helps expansion of activities [14].

Zorluteks renders continuous training to the employees to raise environmental awareness. It carries out tree planting activities every year. Another activity carried out to raise public awareness is the utilization of handbags manufactured from waste cloth in the factory outlet store instead of plastic handbags. In 2008, 240.000 fabric handbags are used instead of plastic handbags [14].

3.4 Mavi Jeans

Founded in Istanbul in 1991, Mavi designs a full collection of jeans-wear, for young women and men. Turkey's first fashion brand to become global, Mavi has been the leading jeans brand in Turkey since the last 18 years with 11 % market share [15].

Green Products: Mavi presents environment friendly blue jeans with its Mavi Organic collection. The collection is sensitive to human health. Mavi uses 100% first quality organic Aegean cotton in this collection. The cotton is dyed with pure indigo blue. The collection consists of organic indigo stretch denims, organic authentic denims, organic emery denims and organic Aegean denims. All blue jeans have amulet motive at the back pockets [16,17].

Green Promotion: Mavi joined forces with the Community Volunteers Foundation (TOG) in October 2007 for a long-term cooperative venture to conduct sustainable social responsibility projects contributing to the wellbeing of youth throughout Turkey. Within this framework, Mavi has supported 36 TOG Atak events, each reflecting the brand's culture, with the participation of its staff. 2,413 community volunteer university students from various cultures and walks of life have worked shoulder to shoulder as community volunteers in the Mavi-TOG Ataks and they have carried out many social responsibility projects [18]. These social responsibility projects also involve green marketing implementations in terms of green promotion. Two important examples of these implementations are given below.

The Karaelmas Environment Atak involved 39 young people from 22 universities and 20 cities, with the participation of a 15-person organizational crew, two office workers and two field supervisors. During the 4-day event, many activities designed to raise the young attendees' environmental awareness and to encourage them to work to improve their home environment were conducted. The first day was spent with the participants' arrival, introductions and briefings about Atak. On the second day, the participants had breakfast with the city mayor before starting work on physical improvements to a primary school in Kozlu, a town neighboring Zonguldak. The young people painted the school walls and planted saplings in the grounds. Following dinner with local people, they went to their accommodations and an evening of entertainment. On the morning of the third day, after breakfast with the rector of Bülent Ecevit University, they gathered with young people from the Graffiti Club and drew nature-themed graffiti before building bird nesting boxes and placing them throughout the city. On the final day of this Atak, after sightseeing in Ereğli, they were seen off by participants from other cities [18].

This environmental TOG Atak was hosted by Trakya University's Community Volunteers Association and held in Musabeyli village in Edirne. It had 78 participants, including a 31-member organizational crew and 47 volunteers from 29 provinces. 44 of the participants were women and 34 were men. Energy conservation was the first topic covered at the Atak. In the workshop that followed, a brochure was designed. These brochures were circulated to the people of Edirne in an event held on the last day. Information about energy-saving light bulbs was disseminated in Musabeyli and in Edirne city center as part of the Atak. Presentations on environmental awareness emphasizing the importance of planting trees and energy conservation were given and activities such as a cloth bag workshop to reduce the use of plastic bags were

held. The film “An Inconvenient Truth” was screen in the village to call attention to global warming. A Romani Night was organized for the youth who came from various cultures. This event was an opportunity for youth unfamiliar with Romani culture to taste a different culture from that in their home environment. The sightseeing on the final day showcased the cultural wealth of Edirne, which has been home to many different cultures [18].

4. Results and Evaluation

The mankind has mishandled the natural resources for long years. Therefore the resources, which will be handed down the next generations, are decreased in terms of quantity and quality. As a consequence, scientists and developed countries have started working for sustainability strategy and concomitantly the enterprises are focused on green marketing implementations. Thus, nowadays, the enterprises use the green marketing efficiently as a part of competitiveness and as a reason for sustainability. Textile and clothing sector, which is affiliated with natural resources, must fulfill its duty. Our research indicates that Turkish textile enterprises (approximately forty thousand enterprises), which are the fifth biggest supplier in clothing and sixth in textile, seriously become conscious about green marketing.

Table 1: Green marketing activities of Turkish textile and clothing enterprises

	Green Product	Green Price	Green Place	Green Promotion
Yeşim Textile	Yeşim Recycle Yeşim Organic	-	-	Memorial forests Tree instead of new year gift Information about global warming Cooperation with TEMA
Elvin Textile	Green Guard	-	-	Tree donation Forests Cooperation with TEMA
Zorlu Textile Group	Taç Antimicrobial Taç Flame Retardant Dope-dyed polyester yarns Recycled cotton and recycled yarn usage Organic cotton usage	-	-	Continuous employee training for raising environmental awareness Forests Green supplier selection Fabric handbags instead of plastics
Mavi Jeans	Mavi Organic collection	-	-	Community Volunteers Foundation's green activities

It can be said that, plenty of Turkish textile and clothing enterprises have worked on green marketing processes for the last decade besides the textile and clothing enterprises which are particularly analyzed in our research. When the enterprises within our research are analyzed, it can be seen that green marketing implementations are especially focused on green products and green promotion (Table 1). On the other hand, the enterprises are nontransparent in terms of green pricing and they don't keep the consumers advised of this subject. Besides, the enterprises don't have any serious activity in terms of green place. According to the results of our research, the enterprises produce organic goods, recycled goods and the goods which are eco-credential during manufacturing and usage, as green products. Green promotion activities are maintained

within the scope of social responsibility projects (planting trees, memorial forests, cooperation with TEMA, increasing environmental awareness).

Awareness of the consumers, sustainability oriented legal and bureaucratic regulations of public institutions and improvement in enterprises' awareness in terms of social responsibility have made great contributions to the development and proliferation of green marketing implementations. Also, green marketing constitutes a perspective in terms of innovative products and differentiation under intensive rivalry. Thus, on the one hand the enterprise increases its brand value and corporate image and on the other hand it protects its profitability. As it can be seen, green marketing is a significant strategic implementation which serves for internal and external purposes of textile and clothing enterprises as well as other enterprises. Developed countries constitute a significant part of Turkish textile and clothing enterprises' market (approximately 55%). Thus, the green marketing implementations have improved and became widespread.

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