

GREEN MARKETING AND E-COMMERCE MANAGEMENT FEATURES DURING COVID-19

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Abstract. The article presents a literature review of green marketing and e-commerce during the pandemic. The purpose is to investigate green marketing and e-commerce management features during Covid-19. The method of scientific literature analysis helps to get acquainted with the works of other scientists, and research methods, to find material that confirms or contradicts the research facts, and to plan the work. E-commerce and green marketing during Covid-19 allow companies to increase sales and achieve strong market positions. Green marketing and e-commerce are very effective tools in Covid-19 period. These tools help the company to achieve income and profit. E-commerce helps to increase the number of customers, sales, and profit. Companies are struggling to make progress on the sustainable development agenda while facing higher commodity prices, rising production costs, energy shortages, and inflationary pressures that are reducing real household incomes. Sustainability is perceived as a competitive advantage that helps to improve the brand's reputation in search of more profitable business opportunities. The Covid-19 pandemic has facilitated the implementation of sustainability programs, as well as the adoption of targeted initiatives, particularly related to green marketing and e-commerce management.

Keywords: green marketing, e-commerce, green marketing, and e-commerce during Covid-19.

JEL Classification: M30, M31.

Introduction

Recently, green marketing has been increasingly used both in Lithuania and globally, although business companies started using green marketing tools in the end of 20th century. Research in recent years shows that customers are concerned about environmental issues, and they prefer organic, green products, even if they cost more. Green marketing becomes a challenge for every organization that wants to successfully develop its activities in the field of sustainability. Organizations using green marketing face a problem: some consumers who are concerned about environmental issues are not inclined to contribute to its conservation by purchasing green products. Although those users who choose green products, tend to pay more for them. Therefore, it is important to find out the motives that encourage the consumption of green products and to analyse in more detail the buying habits of such products.

Promoting online stores and reaching new customers is much easier. It gives you the opportunity to trade not

only in city or its surroundings, but throughout Lithuania and other countries. Only a certain limited number of people visit local stores, while a product sold on the internet will quickly and conveniently reach customers several hundreds of kilometres away. E-store infrastructure development opportunities are greater than physical stores. Entering new markets and innovating becomes easier. It's also easier to communicate with customers, implement loyalty programs, and collect feedback. E-shops have been actively operated especially in terms of Covid-19. Even in non-quarantine conditions, e-shop owners are affected by external factors much less. They are not afraid of epidemics, natural disasters or physical robberies. The Covid-19 crisis has forced these habits to change. Opening an online store is about adapting to the new needs of your customers.

The problematic question is what is green marketing and e-commerce management features during Covid-19.

Purpose is to investigate green marketing and e-commerce management features during Covid-19.

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Objectives of the study: to evaluate e-commerce concept, to investigate green marketing and e-commerce management features during Covid-19.

Research methodology – The paper used scientific literature analysis. The method of scientific literature analysis helps to get acquainted with the works of other scientists, research methods, to find material that confirms or contradicts the research facts, and to plan the work. The literature review realizes several goals: it “shares” with the reader the results of other studies that are closely related to the specific study being conducted, it encourages dialogue with already published material, it fills in the gaps, and it expands the conducted studies. The analysis of scientific literature makes it possible to structure the basis of the relevance of the research and the criteria according to which it will be possible to compare the results of the research with the results of other researches.

Findings – e-commerce and green marketing are very important during Covid-19. E-commerce and green marketing during Covid-19 allows companies to increase sales and achieve strong market positions.

Practical implications. Green marketing and e-commerce are very effective tools in Covid-19 period. These tools help company to achieve income and profit.

Originality/value – green marketing and e-commerce during Covid-19 were very important. E-commerce helps to increase number of customers, sales and profit. This article analysis how company behaviour in Covid-19 in field of green marketing and e-commerce.

1. Green marketing and e-commerce in Covid-19: literature review

1.1. Green marketing

Ktisti et al. (2022) stated that green marketing seeks to satisfy the needs of the consumer who prefers green products and services. Ktisti et al. (2022) notice that the customer is more demanding and constantly evaluates the company's reputation.

Kaur et al. (2022) examined the relationship between green marketing strategies and consumers' green purchase intentions in emerging economies. Emphasis is placed on green purchasing and green marketing impact strategies. Kaur et al. (2022) study results showed that green products, green place and green advertising strategies have a significant influence on green purchase intentions. According to the researchers mentioned above, income and education played an important role in the green purchase intentions of various customers.

García-Salirrosas and Rondon-Eusebio (2022) mentioned that green marketing practices were related to key variables in consumer purchasing behavior with an emphasis on green purchasing. Machová et al. (2022) mentioned that green marketing is closely related to sustainability and sustainable marketing. Machová et al. (2022) note that sustainability considers not only environmental but also social and economic issues. These problems addressed by the aforementioned authors will allow us to

preserve limited resources and create conditions for life on the planet for future generations.

Majeed et al. (2022) stated that intention to purchase organic products was examined in terms of factors such as eco-labelling, organic packaging and branding, and organic products, premium quality and pricing. Mendleson and Polonsky (1995) mentioned that producers face three problems when they attempt to utilize environmental marketing: a lack of credibility; consumer cynicism; consumer confusion over claims.

Skackauskiene and Vilkaite-Vaitone (2023) provide a comprehensive and systematic review of green marketing and its impact on consumer purchasing behaviour. Understanding consumer behaviour enables understanding and predicting consumer behaviour at the point of purchase, and also provides an opportunity to understand the impact consumption has on the life of each individual. Consumer behaviour is extremely important in designing and developing a green marketing strategy. Consumer behaviour affects the type of product or service provided, their sponsorship, the place of sale and the price of this product or service.

A company claiming to be environmentally friendly, but not specifying specific measures, may be a sign that consumers are being misled. Not only words, but also videos and illustrations on websites that refer to green policies can create a misleading image of the brand.

Yang and Chai (2022) mentioned that the theory of green marketing contributes to the solution of environmental problems, so the public has become more aware of environmental problems due to green marketing messages. Yang and Chai (2022) argued that consumer needs, social issues and long-term business success are factors that green marketers need to consider. It is important to promote the consumption of green services and goods, to share information about it in social networks that attract large target audiences. Using green marketing aims to increase the value of the brand, goods, services related to environmental aspects and social responsibility for the environment. Environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues are analysed in scientific literature. This includes the inclusion of environmentally friendly products, services, as well as practices that promote environmental conservation. These policies evolve as consumers become aware of the environmental impact of producing goods and services. Companies use green marketing to meet these social and environmental needs.

Huang et al. (2021) note that green and sustainable development has become a hot topic of concern for governments, business and academia as it determines the preservation of a green environment for future generations. Interest in sustainable sustainability, according to Huang et al. (2021) bring new challenges to the company's production management and operations, focusing on a green supply chain management model that fully considers resource consumption and environmental impact based on the supply chain.

Shabbir et al. (2020) mentioned that green marketing is a management process that involves identifying, anticipating and satisfying consumer needs and wants. Green marketing refers to the inclusion of environmentally friendly products and services, as well as practices that promote environmental conservation. This trend is developing rapidly as consumers become aware of the environmental impact of producing goods and services. In this sense, companies, enterprises and organizations adjust their green marketing to meet these social needs, to achieve the goals of sustainable development.

Vilkaite-Vaitone et al. (2022) mentioned that green marketing is how an organization carries out green marketing activities and processes to create, communicate and present products with minimal environmental impact, create products from renewable resources.

Grebmer and Diefenbach (2020) argued that green consumers are the main target group for organic products. They are ready to pay more for environmental protection, so they must be informed about the ecological properties of the product. It is very important for these green consumers to share information about environmentally friendly products on social networks such as Facebook, Tiktok.

Amaya Rivas et al. (2022) state that, when evaluating the marketing efforts of companies, removing hazardous raw materials from the production process, reducing waste and offering the best prices through green channels and promotions are recognized as one of the main green marketing tools. According to the aforementioned authors, these green measures are useful for future generations and protect the environment.

Nozari et al. (2021) mentioned that sustainable marketing involves the development and promotion of products and services that meet customer needs in terms of quality, efficiency, price, and convenience, without harmful effects on the environment, society, or economy. The mentioned authors note that the use of high technologies promotes a sustainable lifestyle and sustainable development of companies.

1.2. E-commerce concept

According to the statistics department, 81% of Lithuanians use the internet at least once a week. During the quarantine, more and more people tried to shop remotely – not only clothes and shoes, but also food and building materials were bought. E-commerce has grown during the Covid-19 period. In order to maintain a competitive advantage, companies had to react very quickly to changing conditions and try to reorient their business model to the sale of goods and services on the Internet. Promoting online store and reaching new customers is much easier. Electronic trading is possible not only in city, but also in other countries. Only a certain limited number of people visit local stores, while a product sold online will quickly and conveniently reach customers several hundreds of kilometers away. E-store infrastructure development opportunities are greater than physical

stores. Entering new markets and innovating becomes easier. It's also easier to communicate with your customers, implement loyalty programs, and collect feedback and feed-back.

Tofan and Bostan (2022) observed that the term e-commerce refers to shopping in an electronic store and can be described as the process of buying/selling goods remotely. Online shopping is an environmentally friendly process and a very common way of shopping. E-commerce includes all commercial and financial transactions carried out using the internet between business partners, suppliers and customers.

Aulkemeier et al. (2022) stated that e-shops is becoming more and more important in people's daily shopping, and has especially intensified during the Covid-19 pandemic. Aulkemeier et al. (2022) note that retailers who wish to develop an online channel alongside traditional resale must integrate the two supply chains. Electronic commerce has recently been widely used in the world due to the convenience of shopping, the ability to do shopping without leaving home.

Rosário and Raimundo (2021) mentioned that e-commerce is the sale and purchase of goods and services over the Internet in exchange for money and data needed to complete transactions. E-commerce helps implement green marketing strategies that are environmentally friendly. A green marketing strategy helps to better understand the needs of the modern customer in relation to the implementation of a green marketing policy.

Wang et al. (2021) observe that e-commerce is a way of shopping where goods are confirmed to consumers and inquiries are answered in real time. With the help of e-commerce, customers do not waste time looking for products on the shelves. In the online store, products are easy to find and can be delivered to your doorstep in just a few days.

Šaković Jovanović et al. (2020) mentioned that e-commerce provides many new ways for businesses and consumers to communicate, collaborate, buy and sell products or services. One product or hundreds of them can be sold in an electronic store, depending on the business area and the e-business strategy used. Detailed descriptions and photo galleries can be created for each product in the online store. Feedback from satisfied customers can be used to help the customer make a purchase decision.

Attar et al. (2022) mentioned that over the past few decades, e-commerce operations have undergone significant changes in the areas of operations management, service delivery, and customer relationship management.

In summary, it can be noted that green marketing is the creation of environmentally friendly products and their sustainable marketing. Green marketing and e-commerce commerce do many things. This is achieved through organic products, sustainable packaging, recyclables, and e-commerce. Green marketing and e-commerce promote sustainable products in sustainable ways from sustainable businesses.

2. Green marketing and e-commerce during Covid-19

Baronaitė and Gotautienė (2021) stated that in the past few years, smart devices have definitely changed things ways of communicating, used various electronic services and shared information. Consumer buying habits have also changed over time. Advances in modern technology have led to greater emergence of online stores. The Covid-19 crisis has accelerated the development of e-commerce with the entry of new companies, consumers and product types. It gave users an option to buy many different products, because it was more convenient and safer to do it at home, and at the same time it provided companies the opportunity to continue their activities despite contact restrictions and quarantine. According Baronaitė and Gotautienė (2021) the Covid-19 crisis has widened e-commerce market including new businesses, consumer segments (e.g. seniors) and products (e.g. food products).

Puidokaitė-Savickienė and Širvelė (2021) noticed that the Covid-19 pandemic has affected trade and service sectors the most, industry and construction to a lesser extent sector, e-commerce has grown dramatically. The results of the survey conducted by the Department of Statistics showed that there has been a change buyer behaviour, purchasing habits, the use of the Internet increased not only in general, but also among older people.

Mikelevič and Činčikaitė (2021) stated that in the report, Covid-19 and e-commerce: a world overview (United Nations, 2021) provides information that the global gross domestic product (GDP) in 2020 decreased 4.3%, global trade in goods decreased by 9%, and global trade in services by 15%, although electronic trade share in global retail trade as of 2019 until 2020 increased from 14% up to 17%. According to the Mikelevič and Činčikaitė (2021) due to the strict quarantine restrictions imposed in many countries, the Covid-19 pandemic electronic trade of goods and services increased during, for example, in 2020 the volume of e-commerce at the end grew by 27.6% globally, with growth exceeding 30% in certain regions.

Ilieva et al. (2022) analyze the characteristics of online sales during Covid-19 integrating classical and modern data analysis methods. The above-mentioned authors sought to identify the main factors that determine consumer behaviour and investigate their impact on the customer satisfaction with e-commerce. The determinants indicated and described in the article affect perceived value differently customers, a reliable system has been developed for the assessment of e-commerce factors.

Roževič (2021) stated that in December 2019, the European Commission presented a new action plan "Green Deal". The guidelines in this plan encourage change in established practices that, as the Covid-19 pandemic has revealed, are fragile and particularly unsustainable. "The Covid-19 crisis has shown how vulnerable we all are and how important it is to restore the balance between human activity and nature", said Frans Timmermans, Vice-President of the Green Course programme. The main idea of

the green course is the circular economy. According to this model, economic growth is not only linked to the use of resources, but also to the sustainability of fiscal and financial instruments, the aim of maintaining a neutral impact on the climate and the preservation of biological diversity.

According to Roževič (2021), in order to realize the objectives of the green course, European institutions have provided different guidelines that must help the private sector, as well as corporations, to change their established operating practices to a more sustainable and green business model. In the spring of 2021, the European Parliament issued a resolution, a report in which it presented recommendations on how a sustainable business leadership and management system could work.

Guan et al. (2022) analyze that the production and trade of fresh produce has increased significantly due to Covid-19. Iordache Platis et al. (2022) mentioned that online sales of many products increased during the Covid-19 pandemic. The aforementioned authors showed a relationship between sustainable online product sales and online marketing costs in Romania over a three-year period. The study revealed the development of online transactions for sustainable products.

Warganegara and Babolian Hendijani (2022) stated that sustainability is not a selling point for online stores, especially in the context of Covid-19.

Ho et al. (2021) observed that green marketing issues received more attention, i.e. in a green environment, customers are now more aware of their needs, which is closely related to green products. Ho et al. (2021) argue that some green buyers are gradually choosing environmentally friendly products over substitutes, even at higher costs.

Zhang et al. (2022) investigate the impact of awareness of organic products on organic product washing, green consumer confusion, and its impact on organic product experience during Covid-19. Zhang et al. (2022) study found that greenwashing is negatively related to the consumer experience of green products, leading to negative WOM and lower purchase intention. Greenwashing has a negative effect on the reputation of marketers because customers avoid repeat purchases of the product.

Rossolov et al. (2022) notice that an analysis of anti-Covid-19 and purchasing behaviour found significant changes in consumer behaviour for emerging and developed economies. Food, clothes, and shoes were revealed with the highest percentage of new customers home delivery services. Internet-centric shopping behaviour has been very important in developing countries, especially for food (23.07% increase in new customers) and first-priority goods (20.51% growth in new customers), showing the rapid development of e-commerce due to Covid-19. The findings of this survey proved the emergence of such behaviour due to the pandemic crisis.

Buraczynska et al. (2022) conducted a statistical analysis that shows that the Covid-19 pandemic has affected consumer behaviour. According to Buraczynska et al. (2022), the majority of respondents changed how often they paid attention to prices (63% of respondents), the frequency of

online shopping (60%), and the frequency of purchasing larger quantities of goods (55%). 45% of respondents indicated a change in the frequency of purchasing Polish products, 44% reported a change in the frequency with which they ask others to shop, and 39% reported a change in the frequency of purchasing organic products.

In conclusion, it can be said that Covid-19 has led to the development of e-commerce and green marketing. Global e-commerce grew by about 20% during the pandemic. This promoted the development of e-business and green marketing in the context of sustainable development.

3. Discussion

The results of theoretical analysis presented above confirms the obvious impact of sustainability. Kaur et al. (2022), Huang et al. (2021), Iordache Platis et al. (2022) mentioned that majority of scientists instigating the future trends of business development highlights, that the status of sustainability as of an increasingly important driver of the future of the economy makes main business companies willing to get a better understanding of new alternative investment opportunities in the market. Although the concept of sustainability had often been discussed more as a risk than as an opportunity, nowadays, mainly, due to Covid-19 consequences, many business leaders tend to tailor strategy with a clear focus on evolving customer behavior, main market trends, and potential growth of sales through it, including an overall assessment of the full potential of sustainability in business. Therefore, the importance of concepts of green marketing and e-commerce management has sufficiently increased.

As the theoretical study has shown (Ilieva et al., 2022; Ho et al., 2021; Baronaitė & Gotautienė, 2021) the Covid-19 had a global effect, however, different companies and industries are very different in selecting various sustainability-oriented initiatives. In other words, often companies need to understand what the term means for the whole industry, the company itself and its stakeholders. It indicates the main point for further discussion. Stakeholders' demand for information disclosure is becoming especially specific and technical: science-based targets, and standardised frameworks and metrics are widely used to meet these expectations. Therefore, businesses are expected to do more and faster to improve their programs, sadly, this urgency to act is creating a disconnect between commitments and actions. However, more informed and empowered consumers seek reliable information on how companies plan to achieve their commercial goals in rapidly changing environment. Therefore, businesses need to move faster from unclear visions to defined action plans with achievable goals and measurable results.

Conclusions

Environmental, social and governance issues, previously considered as non-financial elements, have become important for many businesses, institutions and shareholders

around the world. As pressure from investors keeps rising, especially, together with tightening environmental regulation, companies are increasingly looking at their business strategies and investments through the lens of the ESG programs.

In terms of current economic and geopolitical situation, businesses are struggling to progress in the sustainable development agenda while dealing with higher commodity prices, increases in production costs, shortages of energy and inflationary pressures, squeezing real household incomes. Companies are increasingly using sustainable business programs as a marketing strategy to improve their position in the market, gain customers preferences and increase own profitability. In sort, sustainability is perceived as a competitive advantage, helping to improve brand reputation for finding more profitable business opportunities.

The Covid-19 pandemic facilitated the implementation of sustainability programs, as well as the adoption of purpose-driven initiatives, especially those related to green marketing and e-commerce management.

Limitations of the research are that the current study has examined the green marketing and e-commerce management features during Covid-19. It is recommended to study consumer shopping in e-space and the importance of green marketing. Although the pandemic has attracted more online shoppers, it has had negative effects that have affected e-commerce activities, so it is recommended to study the positive and negative effects.

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