FACULTY OF MACHINE BUILDING

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ABSTRACT

OF THE DOCTORAL THESIS

RESEARCH ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF ECOLOGIC MARKETING IN ROMANIAN ORGANIZATIONS

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I. **Content of the Doctoral Thesis**

**Introduction**

**PART I. THE CURRENT STATE OF THE ECOCLOGIC MARKETING ISSUE AND CONCEPTS APPROACH. COMPARATIVE STUDY ECOCLOGIC MARKETING TRADITIONAL MARKETING**

Chapter 1 – Ecologic marketing versus marketing

Chapter 2 – The market and the purchase behavior of the ecologic consumer

Chapter 3 – The marketing and ecologic marketing mix

**PART II. OWN RESEARCH, CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS**

Chapter 4 – Considerations on the relationship between ecologic marketing and corporative social responsibility

Chapter 5 – Research related to ecologic marketing development in Romanian ecologic agricultural organizations

Chapter 6 – Conclusions, theoretical and practical contributions, recommendations, future research directions

Bibliography

Annexes

II. **Key words and key phrases**

- Ecologic marketing
- Ecologic consumer
- Ecologic product
- Social responsibility
- Sustainability
III. General considerations

3.1 The motivation of choosing the doctoral subject

Marketing is necessary for all organizations, the argument referring to giving considerable attention to the customer, complying with his/her needs, even if its theory has not achieved a completed form.

The emphasis laid on sustainability within the current society, triggered by the increase of pollution, makes ecologic marketing develop, become meaningful and also convincing as to the fact that it is more than an option, that it is a necessity. Organizations and consumers agree upon the idea that their actions need to be in accordance with the new environmental concerns, and aim at guiding their behavior towards a greater range of positive actions for environment.

Ecologic marketing adds current tendencies in the field of marketing as a result of ecologic orientation in the answer provided by consumers and the market.

3.2 Importance of the research subject

Considering that the interest in environment protection displayed both by international commissions, governments, national or international organizations is manifest, the research subject of the thesis is highly present and extremely relevant both for consumers and organizations operating in this field, concerned with “environmentally friendly products” and environmental and consumer protection, their number at a global scale being considerable enough to justify the need for research in this field.

The current research, having as main point the ecologic marketing development in Romanian organizations is fully justified by the fact that in Romania, the production in ecologic system is growing every year, which constitutes a viable development alternative and thus, more thorough information in this field is absolutely necessary. Subsequently, the results of this research will permit the organizations involved in the production and commercialization of ecologic products (from ecologic agriculture) to identify the degree of understanding the ecologic marketing concept and the means by which this knowledge is used in each of the product, distribution price and promotion strategies. Therefore, the research study seeks to be an indicator for these organizations so as to learn to what extent they are concerned about environment, through their production and commercialization processes, and not the least, it would be useful for society, consumer, with the aim of greater awareness and increased consumption of ecologic products.

3.3 Purpose and goals of the thesis

Purpose of the thesis:

The purpose of the research is the identification of the ecologic marketing development stage, the highlighting from a theoretical and practical perspective of the influence aspects and the achievement of a diagnosis concerning its development stage in the organizations in which the Romanian ecologic agriculture activates.

Main goals of the thesis:

- Underlying the various outlooks as to defining the concepts
- Acknowledging the relevance of: segmentation, ecologic positioning, the purchase ecologic behavior factors
- Identifying the barriers in the ecologic purchase process
- Setting the significance of the elements of the marketing and ecologic marketing mix: product, (along with its attributes-package, ecologic label, lifecycle etc.), price, placement, ecologic promotion versus classical concepts
• Emphasizing the strategies in accordance with the mix elements
• Understanding the development premises of ecologic marketing: the corporative social responsibility and acquiring business sustainability
• Formulating the research objectives and hypotheses concerning ecologic marketing development in the organizations which operate in the Romanian ecologic agriculture
• Describing the research methodology
• Analyzing the marketing data regarding ecologic marketing development
• Drafting the diagnosis with regard to ecologic marketing development in the organizations which operate in the Romanian ecologic agriculture

3.4 Author’s contribution to the knowledge development in the field

• The achievement of some conceptual delimitations as to marketing and ecologic marketing and the argumentation of own perspective according to which ecologic marketing is a different type of marketing: concerned with “environmentally friendly products”, its protection and consumer’s health state on the long run, aiming at achieving sustainability, and covers both the social field-promoting unconditionally the idea of environment protection, as it is a public asset, and the economic field, implies a holistic approach etc.
• The comparative illustration of marketing and ecologic marketing functions: research of the market and consumers’ needs, the increase of the adjustment skill of the organization to the demands of market changes, the compliance of customers’ needs, the maximization of the profit.
• The analysis of the options which the organizations having to face a permanently changing consumer need to provide in order to be more competitive.
• The shaping of the importance of ecologic market segmentation which has as a central element the ecologic consumer, analyses on the basis of the influence factors of the purchase behavior, among which: the demographic features and the psychographic features very accurately represented in most studies in the specialty literature analyzed in this respect.
• The emphasis and argumentation of the importance of the ecologic positioning for the success of any ecologic business and the key factors in ecologic positioning, such as the features in the product use and benefits (projected in the consumer’s mind by the way his emotional needs are satisfied, besides demonstrating the basic usefulness of the product), labeling, the organization’s environmental policy, price).
• The achievement of a comparative analysis with a view to identifying the most powerful influence factors of the ecologic purchase behavior of the consumer analyzed on the basis of traditional marketing and ecologic marketing. In this respect I have underlined the barriers in the ecologic purchase process. Also, through the analysis of certain studies from the specialty literature unfolded within 2009-2011 in different countries from Europe and the USA, I have practically managed to spot the influence factors of the ecologic purchase behavior of the consumer and the barriers in the ecologic purchase process in general and under the influence of the economic crisis in particular (for example, the cost, eco-labeling, package, the certification mark, price, the diminished availability of the range of ecologic products etc.).
• The adjustment of various outlooks related to the number of marketing instruments and ecologic marketing instruments employed by organizations and their blending in order to be used on the market.
• The foundation and justification of the importance that every component of the marketing promotional mix to ensure the success of ecologic business.
• The assertion of the specificities of the ecologic marketing mix Ps. A significant conclusion drawn as a result of related literature study is that through the greening of the marketing mix, organizations seek to reduce the negative effects upon environment, the greening intensity is dependent on the basic concept of the organization marketing towards environment protection, namely: to a small extent or highly ecologic, as there are organizations that do not wish to have all marketing mix Ps as ecologic, but only some of them.
• The accentuation of the ecologic product and ecologic label significance. On this line, it is laid special stress upon the fact that an ecologic product is a developed product and that terms like “natural” or “traditional” used for food supply do not convey that it is necessarily ecologic. The ecologic aspect is an added value or an additional benefit for the consumer, accepted on a realistic basis.
The averment of the role played by the ecologic price versus “traditional” price and of the importance it bears in the competitive strategy of the company in the marketing mix. It is underscored that the ecologic price reflects the environmental values and the other values like the production costs, and that it is also one of the factors which affects the purchase decision, variable that cuts in as an inhibitor for the ecologic consumers willing to pay an additional amount only if they perceive this value of the product (through its changed aspect, functionality, personalization, taste etc.), usually correlated with its quality.

The underscoring of the aspects necessary for the fulfillment of an efficient distribution channel of ecologic products and for the projection of the converse distribution channels, one of the changes in the traditional distributing channel, extremely important for the achievement of a substantial competitive advantage for certain organizations in anticipating environmental community legislation.

The assertion of the equally significant and difficult role that marketing has in the environmentally friendly product promotion.

The achievement of a research study aiming at identifying the development stage of ecologic marketing in Romanian ecologic agricultural organizations, the highlighting of the interesting aspects in its development, based on questionnaires, implying: the identification of this type of organizations (in terms of major features, legal regulations in the field, documentation through similar studies achieved at an internal and international level concerning the impediments they face in the development of their activity), setting the objectives and hypotheses, describing the research methodology, data analysis and conclusion valorization.

The fulfillment of a descriptive analysis and the shaping of the organizations’ profile operating in the Romanian ecologic agriculture.

The unfolding of the ecologic marketing development stage diagnosis within Romanian ecologic agriculture by determining an association between the marketing policy and the variables that define organizations’ development on ecologic bases. In order to achieve this analysis I have used an analysis, bivariate nonparametric test.

The assertion of conclusions concerning the diagnosis of the ecologic marketing development stage in Romanian ecologic agricultural organizations (attitudes and behavior specific of environmentalists, socially responsible which support the ecologic marketing development found at the level of the analyzed organizations):

- The organizations that claim to unfold marketing activities have specialized staff in marketing issues and grant greater budget for the development of these activities than those which state do not perform such activities
- Out of the organizations that claim to unfold marketing activities, the majority have got an acknowledged environmental management system whereas out of the organizations which state do not perform marketing activities, fewer than a half have got an acknowledged environmental management system
- Out of the organizations that claim to unfold marketing activities, the majority have got specialized staff in environmental issues, whereas those which state do not perform such activities rise to a lesser degree to the demand related to this aspect
- The organizations that claim to unfold marketing activities agree upon the assertion according to which: “the elimination of waste resulted from the production/commercialization of products leads to cost reduction” to a greater extent than those which state do not perform such activities
- Among the organizations that claim to unfold marketing activities, the majority consider that product certification is the main argument which conveys the ecologic status, whereas out of those which do not perform marketing activities, fewer than half consider certification as the main criterion in defining products as being ecologic.
- Most of the organizations that claim to unfold marketing activities choose their raw material suppliers on the basis of ecologic certification proof, whereas most of those which do not perform marketing activities choose their suppliers according to the price of raw materials.
IV. **Synthesis of the main parts of the doctoral thesis**

The structure of the thesis is as follows: introduction, background research, the six chapters, bibliography and appendices.

Chapter 1 displays basic marketing and ecologic marketing elements, in a general introduction in the marketing theory, the approach of the general aspects regarding the necessity of marketing and ecologic marketing development, the presentation of the extremely diverse opinions as to defining marketing and ecologic marketing concepts, marketing evolution, its functions etc., and, not in the least, the argumentation of own viewpoint according to which ecologic marketing is a different kind of marketing. The scientific endeavor of the first chapter sums up supportive reasoning in order to demonstrate the necessity of ecologic marketing development in organizations.

Chapter 2 makes reference to the market, segmentation and ecologic positioning, the ecologic consumer and his purchase behavior, also mentioning the fact that a high level of ecologic awareness or care for the environment does not necessarily lead to a considerable action level for buying, out of a wide range of reasons or barriers, such as: the lack of ecologic alternatives, inconveniences, high prices and the lack of information. Furthermore, particularized on the ecologic food products consumption, the influence factors of the Romanian consumer behavior are displayed, as well as the effects of the economic crisis on the ecologic products consumption at a global level.

Chapter 3 details each of the marketing and ecologic marketing instruments. At the basis of any business lies the existence of the product or the offer. Any organization wishes to provide the best and most diverse products or offers, in order to achieve its market objective, even at the risk of bigger investments. The ecologic product is considered as a developed product, the ecologic aspect proper is an added value or an extra benefit for the consumer, accepted on a realistic basis. Consequently, in order to define the ecologic product it is not enough to take into consideration only the nature of its features, but also the fulfillment of certain norms and requirements during the production stage, with regard to the employed production means, an analysis “from cradle to grave”, including the functional areas of the organization because the ecologic variable is incorporated in all the activities of the organization and on the other hand, it is necessary that all parts involved in one way or the other should act correctly from an ecologic point of view. In the subchapter entitled “The ecologic price-a significant element in the ecologic marketing policy” there are submitted to the reader’s attention the influence factors or those which determine the decision of establishing the ecologic price, as well as the strategies which organizations use to succeed in selling the products. The subchapter entitled “The ecologic distribution” presents the mission of the marketing instrument of delivering the product to the consumer or buyer in the required amount, at the needed time, in the case its acquisition is requested, and also the diminishing of the negative impact upon environment. Moreover, a series of aspects necessary for the achievement of an efficient ecologic product distributing channel are also described. The subchapter bearing the name “Ecologic communication or promotion” explains the importance of each promotional mix instrument in communicating the ecologic message and the organization image to the mind of the consumer, because often the means of promotion used by organizations is highly criticized mainly by mass media and certain pressing ecologic groups, as, by promoting certain products or brands, one aims to encourage acquisition, using false, incomplete or confuse information for consumers, ranging from the product’s label to the publicity by means of television. As a result, it is very important that organizations should achieve socially responsible promotion campaigns, respecting the regulations in force.

Chapter 4 emphasizes the necessity of unfolding by organizations of ecologic marketing research including the following aspects: gathering information about the target audience (usually made up of all interested parts that the organization is supposed to influence with a view to solving environmental problems), market, products etc., and also generating solutions with regard to ecologic products, ethical sale, ecologic requirements, advertising and promotion, labeling, packaging, distributing channels. Furthermore, it is minutely explained why social responsibility and sustainability achievement are premises in ecologic marketing development. At present, the
environment commitment is not an alternative, but a necessity, situation in which organizations need to consider this outlook to a greater extent.

A combination of theory and practical reality of Romanian organizations is externalized in an analysis meant to identify the variables which influence ecologic marketing development. The global purpose specific to this analysis is the drafting of a diagnosis concerning its development stage within organizations activating in Romanian ecologic agriculture, by emphasizing the existence of social responsibility attitudes displayed by managers, a holistic approach at an organizational level, a management concerned about product sustainability assurance (in terms of reducing resource consumption and generating waste and pollutants), the production processes or other activities by developing some loop production procedures, that are supposed to eliminate the negative effects upon the environment and achieve a balance between the economic, environmental and social needs. The general objective and the specific goals, the justification of the problem, the research methodology, planning and assessing the hypotheses of a minute research of ecologic marketing development in the Romanian ecologic agriculture organizations are detailed in chapter 5 “Research and contributions to ecologic marketing development in Romanian organizations”. Consequently, the aspects emphasized as statistically outstanding favor ecologic marketing development in the analyzed organizations within the Romanian ecologic agriculture which assert to unfold marketing activities as compared to those which do not perform such activities, are as follows:

- The organizations which assert to unfold marketing activities as compared to those which do not perform such activities have a greater number of employees specialized in the marketing field and allot higher percentages from the budget to develop these activities. Most of them have a certified environmental management system and at an initial stage their interest in having specialized staff in environmental issues is evidently more considerable.
- Concurrently, the organizations unfolding marketing activities totally agree to an even larger extent with the statement according to which: “waste disposal resulted from production/commercialization triggers cost adjustment”.
- Furthermore, most of the organizations which assert to unfold marketing activities consider that product certification is the main argument which confers the ecologic status to a product and most of them select their raw material suppliers on the basis of the ecologic certification.

The conclusions, the theoretical and practical contributions, the recommendations and the future research directions, representing the final part of the paper, focus in chapter 6 upon what may be considered as significant results of the research, as well as certain research directions likely to analyze in the future, such as: working out an ecologic marketing or an ecologic planning guide, or drafting a research paper on climate change influence upon the decisions concerning ecologic acquisitions.