IMPLEMENTING SUSTAINABLE MARKETING THROUGH INTEGRATION OF EMPLOYEES, CUSTOMERS AND TECHNOLOGY

Dr. Bijay Prasad Kushwaha

Assistant Professor for Management
University School of Business, Chandigarh University, Mohali, India
Email: bijayrsm@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Green marketing is the procedure of promoting goods and services produced on environmental benefits. Similarly, sustainable marketing is selling and promotion environmental friendly and socially responsible goods and services which is the need of today. Since last decade, the businesses have started selling and promoting eco-friendly products to save environment, resources, and society. This paper will study the role of employees, customers, and technology for sustainable marketing. It will also identify the contribution of each elements in sustainable marketing. The convenience sampling technique was used to collected responses from 386 respondents of Ludhiana City. The respondents were the customers, employees and owners of departmental stores and malls. The finds shows that technology is the most important contribution of sustainable marketing whereas the role of employees are minimum. The SPSS AMOS 23 version software is used for data analysis and testing of model fit.

Keywords: Sustainable Marketing, Green Marketing, Societal Marketing, Eco-friendly Products.

I. INTRODUCTION

With the change and dynamism in global environment, firms require to adapt and respond to the changes in the market. Sustainability and corporate responsibility are getting more requirements among the forces which are driving the changes. Researches have acknowledged that for the company to survive for long-term existence, addressing sustainability is very critical (Viet, Ian, & Jerry, 2011).

Sustainability concept has gone global and has become an important part every business discipline whether corporate strategy be, university initiatives, consumer selection process, etc. These practices among the business and education have taken them towards sustainable environment by creating an awareness of the social inequities and environmental degradation happening around the world. During the initial years of the new millennium, there was a downfall in the natural systems for the survival and differences between rich and poor were also witnessed between and within the nations (World Watch Institute, 2006). The idea of sustainability was first invented at the UN Conference in 1972 on the Human Environment in Stockholm, Sweden. The definition for sustainable development was quoted

as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (Claudia & Bryce, 2008).

Over the last two decades there has been growing interest in the relationship among sustainability and marketing. Some have observed marketing as an opposite of sustainability while others refer marketing as a driving force of consumption and sustainability as the meeting the requirements of the present compromising the future generation essentials. Marketing and sustainability are believed as different but there are evidences that they both have synergies. To prove this concept of integrating marketing and sustainability, many researchers are shifting to sustainable market concept. Sustainable marketing defined as the marketing practice being done with the constructive contribution to the society in terms of social, environmental and economic development (Shahriar, 2010).

Integrating employees, customers and technology as sub-disciplines in sustainable marketing helps the marketers to contribute to the sustainable marketing practice and through this paper we are going to outline how sustainable marketing could be achieved by the contribution of these three sub-disciplines which are analysed to develop a framework of sustainable marketing practices.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Sustainable Marketing Practices and Sustainable Marketing

Alma, Héctor, & Michael (1994) in their research focus on including the environmental concerns in the marketing curricula. Minette (1994) has focussed on the "green advertising" in its research in Journal of Marketing. The concept of "environmental marketing" was first coined by (Varadarajan, 1992) giving a broader concept to already existing green marketing. Ajay & Anil (1997) in their research contributed to the recommendations for incorporating the sustainable concept into marketing strategy (Claudia & Bryce, 2008). The concept of sustainable development is witnessed to be broader than marketing and can be easily used with the former for more general activities (Shahriar, 2010).

2.2 Sustainable Marketing and Employees

The study on sustainability and HRM is in the starting phase and stated in companies, HR planning strategy and its plan should focus on primarily HR strategy to support business strategies including sustainability frames (Colbert & Kurucz, 2007) aligning with talent management, staffing, training, etc. as important functions of HR. (Jabbour & Santos, 2008) in the research said for the development of sustainable organizations, HRM practices play a very crucial role by promoting innovation, environmental performance and effective diversity management. (Viet, Ian, & Jerry, 2011). Creation of green jobs and greening the existing jobs led to a green economy that will support a sustainable development (Ionela, Claudia, &

Cristina, 2015). The relationship between employee satisfaction and HRM results in higher organizational effectiveness (Hale & Ivan, 2017).

2.3 Sustainable Marketing and Customers

CSR focuses on the development of long-tern environmental, economic and social goals so as to attract customers and also contributing to the stakeholder needs. This has led to be development of the concept of sustainable marketing (Yang, C., Ian, & Bing, 2018). (Gray & Hooley, 2002) As the needs and the expectations of the existing and emerging customers are changing, MO approach i.e. market-orientation has become an important service-based economy. This has also led to improve the services offered (Brigitte & Louis, 2013). To develop value for the organization and customers, marketing-oriented organizations play a vital role. Shareholder value and profitable long-term customer relationship must be developed by the organizations as required in the marketing. This is also the foundation of long-term success of the firm and the indicator of firm's value (Angella & Eunju, 2012). To meet the demand of the customers, operations management as a part of supply chain management has evolved through providing logistic processes and efficient production (Viet, Ian, & Jerry, 2011).

2.4 Sustainable Marketing and Technology

Information system enables the information exchange across and within firms for the development of sustainability capabilities. These capabilities are the major part of the IT and the technology used in the sustainability (Anandhi, 2000) (Viet, Ian, & Jerry, 2011). For the improvement of the sustainability of marketing assessment, there are various technology-based assessment feedback systems available. These help in increasing the consistency, quality, accuracy, quantity and timeliness of the feedbacks Baillie-de Byl, 2004; Cargill, 2001; Denton, Madden, Roberts, & Rowe, 2008; Paladino, 2008; Stevens & Jamieson, 2002). These help in the increase of effectiveness of the contributors on the communication clarity and provide them timely feedbacks (W & Meredith, 2011).

Figure-1: Proposed Conceptual Model and Hypotheses
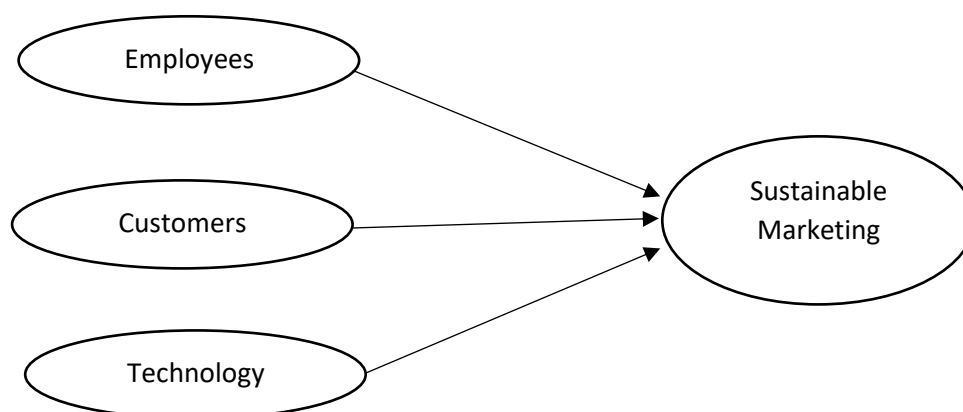
Source: Author's Observations

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
3.1 Sample and procedure

Collecting primary data in the form of questionnaire is the backbone of the study as it helps in the study. In this study data is collected from the common people with a sample survey method where large size of universe and quantitative nature acted as two important considerations. The questionnaire is filled and calculated by 386 respondents with the 99% confidence interval. The respondents are from Ludhiana city of India, using convenience sampling technique.

3.2   Measures

After having a thorough review of literature questionnaire was designed comprising of questions related to Sustainable Marketing. Questions related to employees, customers and technology also added. The items present in the instrument were adapted from the work of Conroy and Narula (2010), Kwak and Kang (2009), and Khan and Mahmood (2012. On a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree', the respondents of this questionnaire were asked to express their agreement or disagreement.

Administration of the instrument

Questionnaires are also circulated in the format of Google form through email to residents of study region and responses were recorded for analysis. Both the process of data collection was conducted from November, 2019 to February, 2020.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS
4.1 Measurement Model: Reliability and Validity
Table-1: Measurement Model Assessment

Latent Variables	Manifest Variables (Measured Variables)	Codes	Standardized Factor loading	Mean	SD
Employees	Involvement in Policy Framing	EMP 1	0.848	3.57	1.151
	Training and Development	EMP 2	0.889	3.69	1.245
	Roles and Responsibility	EMP 3	0.902	3.79	1.291
	Co create substantial practices	EMP 4	0.928	3.70	1.319
	Participation in Decision Making	EMP 5	0.934	3.62	1.305
Customers	Awareness Campaign	CUS 1	0.829	3.68	1.247
	Trust Building	CUS 2	0.851	3.89	1.107
	Making Responsible	CUS	0.857	3.76	1.172

		3			
	Habitual Change	CUS 4	0.854	3.72	1.189
	Rewarding and Recognition	CUS 5	0.858	3.77	1.185
Technology	Infrastructure Up-gradation	TEC 1	0.845	4.00	1.005
	Biodegradable Packaging	TEC 2	0.853	3.86	.942
	Digital Advertising	TEC 3	0.905	4.06	.971
	Virtual Reality	TEC 4	0.89	4.03	.968
	Digital Service	TEC 5	0.835	3.99	.982
Sustainable Marketing	Social responsibility	SM1	0.909	4.00	1.104
	Green Products	SM2	0.883	3.97	1.070
	Green Marketing	SM3	0.891	3.99	1.067
	Trust Building	SM4	0.903	4.01	1.070
	Paperless Service	SM5	0.928	3.96	1.077

Source: Author's Calculations

The Table no. 1 of measurement model assessment represents factors loading, mean and standard deviation. All factors loading range is from 0.82 to 0.93, while assessing the constructs' internal consistency reliability. All the values are above 0.70 so all the indicators for loading have been retained (Diamantopoulos et al., 2012; Sarstedt and Wilczynski, 2009). To analyse distribution characteristics of data and to avoid any unfairness in interpreting the results, man and standard deviation were calculated where mean is falling in the interval 3.57 to 4.03 and standard deviation in the range from 0.94 to 1.31. These results prove that data is fit for the analysis (Hair et al., 1995).

4.2 Quality Criteria Analysis

Table-2: Measurement Model Assessment

|	Technology	Employees	Customers	Sustainable Marketing
Technology	1			
Employees	0.507	1		
Customers	0.655	0.450	1	
Sustainable Marketing	0.724	0.528	0.601	1
Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	0.937	0.956	0.929	0.957

Composite Reliability (CR)	0.750	0.811	0.722	0.815
Cronbach's Alpha	0.937	0.955	0.928	0.956

Source: Author's Calculations

In this table relationship between the constructs are also established as between dependent and independent variables, correlation coefficient is given and is not so high, so multicollinearity problem does not exist. Inter constructs and the square root average variance are also extracted in the above table. For all the items associated with each construct, Average Variance Extracted (AVE) is used to assess the convergent validity. The AVE value in the above exceeds 0.50 which indicates the mean of the squared loadings is associated with a construct for all the indicators. Convergent validity for all constructs are successfully established as 50% of the variance of its items have been explained on an average by the construct. Discriminants validity is also proven as shared variance with other construct is more than its AVE value as shown by all the constructs in the above table. Composite reliability values for all factors are from the range 0.72 to 0.81 which means it is lying between 0.70 and 0.95. This means constructs' internal consistency reliability is measured to be 'satisfactory to good'. The value for cronbach's alpha is more than 0.70 for all the constructs which means that the data is valid statistically and have proven all reliability tests.

4.3 Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Figure 2: Confirmatory Factor Analysis
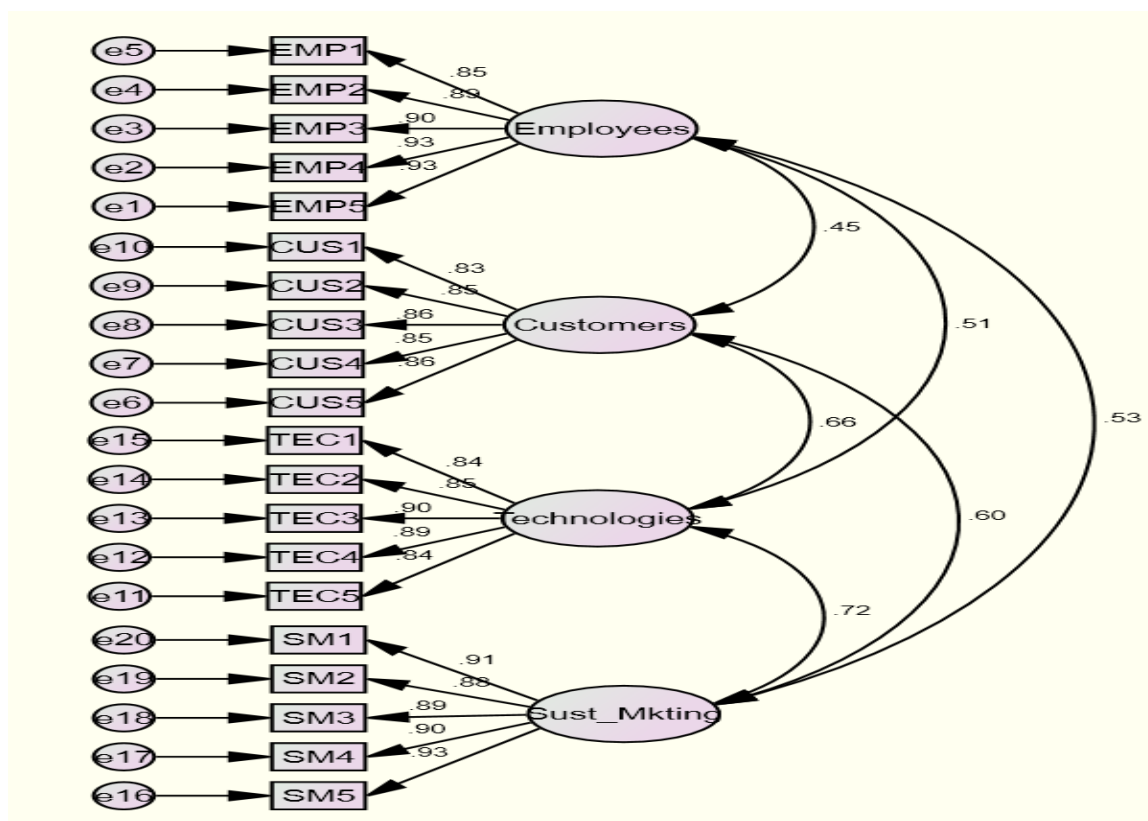
Source: Author's Calculations

Table-3: Model Fit Indices

Fit Indices	Calculated Value	Threshold Range	Decision
GFI	0.916	>0.90	Accepted
CFI	0.918	>0.90	Accepted
NFI	0.901	>0.90	Accepted
RFI	0.908	>0.90	Accepted
IFI	0.919	>0.90	Accepted
TLI	0.905	>0.90	Accepted
RMSEA	0.104	<0.10	Accepted
CMIN/df	4.313	Between 2 and 5	Accepted

Source: Author's Calculations

The Model Fit above indices good model fit. The calculated values for Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Normed Fit Index (NFI), Relative Fit Index (RFI), Incremental Fit Index (IFI) and Tucker Lewis Index (TLI) are 0.916, 0.918, 0.901, 0.908, 0.919 and 0.905 respectively. These values are accepted as the values are above 0.90 recommended level. The calculated value for (RMSEA) Root Mean Square Error of Approximation, is 0.10. This value is less than the recommended level of 0.10 (Hu and Bentler, 1999). The value for (CMIN/ df) Relative/ Normed chi-square is 4.313 and this value is acceptable as it lies between range 2 to 5 (Kline, 2005). Therefore, model depicts an overall good model fit and the confirmatory factor analysis also showed an acceptable model fit overall using the practical data. From this it is summarized- hypothesised four factor CFA model fits into the sample data easily.

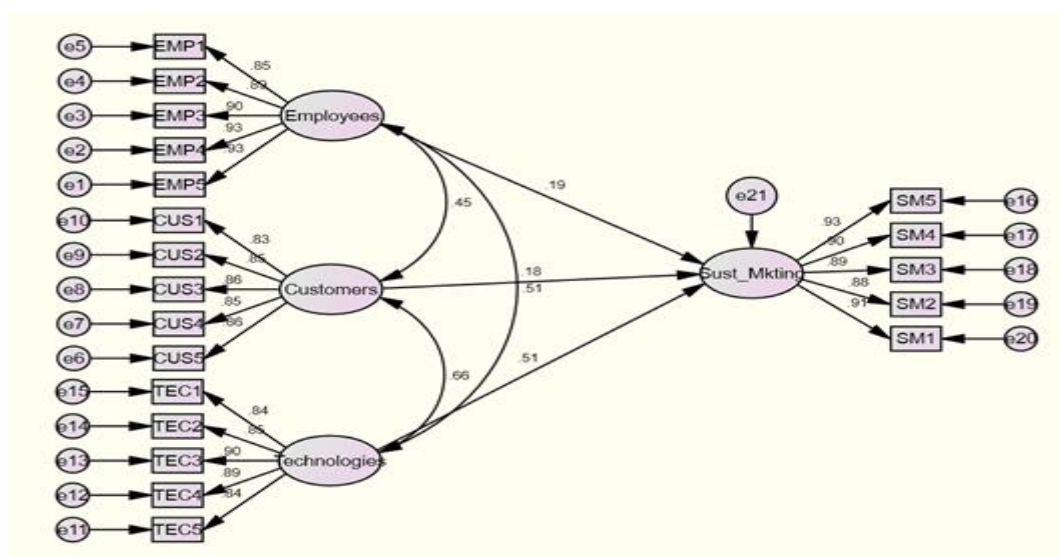## 4.4 Structural Equation Model

Figure-3: Path Relationship Diagram

Table 4: Structural Model Assessments

Hypotheses				Beta Estimate	S.E.	t-values	Final Decision
H1	Employees	→	Sustainable Marketing	.153	.035	4.323***	Accepted
H2	Customers	→	Sustainable Marketing	.181	.051	3.554***	Accepted
H3	Technologies	→	Sustainable Marketing	.621	.069	9.063***	Accepted

***p<0.001; **p<0.05; *p<0.10   Source: Author's Calculations

The Structural Model Assessment table above depicts the hypothesis H1, H2 and H3 are statistically significant as the significance value for each is either less than 0.001 or 0.05 (Barber and Odean, 2001; Dorn and Huberman, 2005; Hair et al., 2014). As confirmed by Davis (1989) in his initial study, the paths among the constructs as shown in the above table are meaningful. It can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between Employees and Sustainable Marketing, Customers and Sustainable Marketing, Technologies and Sustainable Marketing. Thus, the model proposed is valid on demanding statistical ground.

V.   RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The framework designed is to define the sustainable marketing being practiced by the companies. Through this study we have focused on the integration of employees, customers and technology in the sustainable marketing practices that is employees, customers and technology contribute towards the sustainable marketing. The sustainable marketing contributes towards the social responsibility of the company towards the society including the citizens and the environment. Green Marketing and Green Products are also the contributors of sustainable marketing which includes the marketing of products to be environmental safe like sustainable packaging, production. These products are designed to mitigate the impact on environment during its manufacture and even after its use. Paperless services are also included in them.

In this study, Employees, customers and technology are the constructs in sustainable marketing practices. Employees contribute in this practice by involving in policy framing for the environment, training and development given to them, co-creation of substantial practices and participation in decision making. The customers also play a vital role towards the society by contributing in the sustainable marketing practices by awareness campaign, trust building of the customers, making them responsible towards the society, habitual change in their buying pattern and rewards and recognitions given on achieving them. With the advancement in the technology, it also integrates in sustainable marketing practices by having biodegradable packaging for the products, up-grading the infrastructure, digital advertising helps in protecting environment by paper less advertising and providing virtual reality and digital service.

From the analysis done in this study, it is clear that all these contributors contribute equally towards the sustainable marketing practices.

VI. PRACTICAL IMPLICATION

The finding from this study reveals several practical implications for the marketers. In the recent, Mc Donald's took the initiate of providing paper straws that can be easily recycled. Many marketers are going against plastic and use of environmental friendly polybags are used. Digital advertising is also gripping up the society as it contributes towards the environment by banning the paper advertising which means less use of paper and less tree cutting. Many companies promote the green aspects of their company by the use of websites, blogs, e-mail, social media, cold calls, etc as all these are the customers contact in sustainable marketing practices. Most reputed brands like amazon, nestle, BMW, etc contributes towards the sustainable marketing practices. Last but not the least, most of the companies are also practicing CSR that is corporate social responsibility in which the companies contribute towards the society goals.

VII. CONCLUSION

With the depletion of environment and problem towards the society, companies have initiated to help in sustaining the environment by incorporating the sustainable marketing practices in their marketing. In this practice, employees, customers and technology is also contributing and helping the companies. With the sustainable marketing practices, companies will be able to use the resources in the present without compromising in the future. This helps the environment and the society also. Each contributor should know its role and responsibility and then wisely help the companies. For this completion employees to be given a proper training and development and involve them in the policy framing. Customers to be made aware about the green marketing and habitual buying to be suggested to them. Technology is giving a new horizon to digital advertising, up-grading the infrastructure and virtual response. These constructs ultimately integrate with sustainable marketing and results in the sustainable marketing practices. These practices help in the responsibility towards the society, green marketing and green products. The sustainable marketing practice is being implemented around the globe with its advantages. Through this study we have tried to cover the major considerations of these factors but there may be some which are not being covered and can be considered for future study in this area.

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