

Editorial

Editorial for the Special Issue “Green Marketing”

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Up until quite recently, our contemporary society has faced various challenges and issues related to accelerated urbanization and industrialization, consumers, and organizations' rather limited range of possibilities to completely satisfy needs and wants regarding environmental pollution, the capacity of our planet to regenerate its used goods annually and ensuring that the living conditions of future generations are considered alongside those of the current generations. The past year brought along a major sanitary crisis because of the sustained proliferation of the SARS COVID-19 virus. Most of the global, regional, and national designated agencies introduced enforcement rules for the quarantined population to prevent the uncontrolled outspread of the new pandemic. In addition to the restrictive sanitary measures instituted by the authorities, the specialists listed wearing a mask, social distancing, a vitamin and mineral-based meal plan, practicing sports and maintaining a balanced life as appropriate solutions for strengthening individual health.

In this context, green marketing significantly contributes to fostering human health as green products are gaining widespread awareness various consumer generations (Generation Z, Millennials, Generation X, etc.) who acknowledge both their role in protecting the environment through sustainable consumption and in helping organizations meet their sustainable goals.

The Special Issue on “Green Marketing” features seven papers dedicated to exploring “green marketing” from different social and industrial perspectives. The first article entitled “Nutrient Profiling of Romanian Traditional Dishes: Prerequisite for Supporting the Flexitarian Eating Style” explores various aspects through the profiling method “based on the Nutri-Score algorithm” [1]. The authors examine three central elements for distinguishing eating styles; namely, acceptance, adaptation, and transformation. These point to consumer awareness of the changes that occur in the globalized world and contribute to enhancing the uniformity of eating habits, while highlighting the importance of embracing a healthy diet. Consumers need to be able to invest their efforts in identifying the diet deemed suitable to respond to improving their wellbeing and to reducing the risk for disease. The development of a proper mindset that promotes a green, balanced, nutrient-dense diet based on the “consumption of local seasonal vegetables and fruits” and on a “sustainable way of obtaining food” is considered important in supporting a “better environmental preservation”.

The second paper examines the complex issue of digitalization and its impact on Green Tourism in European Countries. Tourism is seen as a “catalyst for economic growth” and digitalization as a major contributor to boosting its efficiency [2]. What makes the authors' approach interesting is precisely the green, sustainable perspective; digital technologies help increase the attractiveness and importance of green tourism products and market them to the “eco-friendly” clients of the accommodation units adopting such sustainable strategies. The results confirm the role of digital technology in selecting tourist destinations that do no harm to the environment and in minimizing the environmental impact through non-invasive tourism activities. Moreover, the article discusses the importance of adequate destination management dedicated to the inclusion of such tourist destinations on the truly “eco-friendly” map of the European Union.

The third article reports on the findings of the original research on “Decision-Making Process Regarding the Use of Mobile Phones in Romania Taking into Consideration Sus-



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tainability and Circular Economy” [3]. Members of Generation Z and the Millennials are the subjects of this illustrative study on the relevance of recycling and/or reusing old mobile devices as means to help organizations meet their sustainable goals and to adopt circular behavior. As the results show, younger people are more inclined towards the acquisition of a new smart device that is produced in accordance with environmental protection provisions, that is part of a buy-back program, or one they might repair for longer use.

Featuring a carefully detailed topic, “Social Media Goes Green—The Impact of Social Media on Green Cosmetics Purchase Motivation and Intention” is, to date (February 2021), the most widely quoted article of the Special Issue. Based on the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), the authors explore the role of social media in enhancing “consumers’ purchase intention and motivation” [4]. The authors elaborate an original model, which is tested with the Partial Least Squares structural equations modelling method. The results emphasize the role of social media in determining consumers’ preference for purchasing green cosmetics. The paper advances significant theoretical contributions to the field of TPB-based studies, as well as to the area of management. Consumers’ growing interest in green cosmetics and a successful inclusion of these products on the commercial offer seem to be conditioned by their sustained advertising on social media.

“Is Green Marketing a Label for Ecotourism? The Romanian Experience” investigates the field of tourism from a green point of view. The case study presented under this title shows that green marketing has been an important debate issue on the “agenda of local authorities” and is becoming a focal point of interest among the field researchers. The paper investigates the role and importance of ecotourism and of mapping out a green marketing strategy in supporting Romanian tourist destinations, against the backdrop of a relative void in regulating the activities of a potentially major contributor to the economic development of a country. Moreover, the authors sustain the idea that green tourism might attract a greater number of tourists who are genuinely concerned with the effects and manifestation of a green behavior. Finally, the paper explores the concept of “eco-label” in tourism and in relation to “websites of ECO Romania Association, TripAdvisor platform and several accommodation units” [5].

“Analyzing Service Quality Evaluation Indexes of Rural Last Mile Delivery Using FCE and ISM Approach” [6] presents a different perspective on green marketing. The authors pinpoint the link between green marketing, e-commerce and “rural logistics development in China” through a detailed analysis of the “relationship between the service quality evaluation indexes of the rural last mile delivery” in China, using a fuzzy integrated methodology. The study—based on the analysis of 18 logistics providers—shows that, for the sample chosen, service quality can be considerably improved, thus contributing to a better development of the “rural last mile delivery”. Furthermore, these sustainable, green strategies help logistics providers register better results in the services perceived as more attractive by the clients.

Two additional authors discuss the importance of “consumption of natural, green, organic products” for the “contemporary society, organizations, consumers and researchers” in an interesting case study entitled “The Transition from Natural/Traditional Goods to Organic Products in an Emerging Market”. Their analysis is grounded on “cultural factors, traditions and consumption habits” [7], as well as on the behavior patterns promoting and supporting the “principles of sustainability and environmental protection” in choosing green products. Through this case study on the emerging market in Romania, the authors point out that Romanians have developed an attitude that favors the consumption of ecological foods and green products, mainly due to the fact they have acquired a taste for traditional, natural, or local goods produced in the personal households of their parents and relatives since communist times. Romanian consumers demonstrated a relatively quick understanding of the positive impacts these green products have on both their health and on their overall development.

While the thematic issue on green marketing does not delve into the consequences and effects of the COVID-19 global pandemic on consumers and organizations, these are the focus of future investigations dedicated to the preservation of human health and natural lifestyle. We believe that, following the COVID-19 pandemic, green marketing strategies will gain momentum and leverage in the decision-making process of consumers and managers alike. However, the ultimate success of a green marketing approach largely depends on our ability to change/adapt our lifestyle and on our respect for nature.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

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