

SUSTAINABLE MARKETING CONCEPT

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Marketing is criticized to be inherently controversial to sustainability because of boosting sales in the pursuit of profits. However, it is generally overlooked that marketing theory and practice can support sustainability. The consumption dilemma between the short-term outcomes such as achieving profits and the long-term societal outcomes such as protecting the environment may subsist; on the other hand, a collaboration obtained among the marketers, firms, regulators and the society can support sustainability. This article reviews the literature regarding the sustainability aiming to clarify the related concepts and integrate them with the theoretical and practical perspectives of marketing.

INTRODUCTION

Sustainability has been one of the core concepts in marketing that has captured the attention of scholars and practitioners in recent years (Chabowski et al., 2011; Lampikoski et al., 2014). Sustainability is often referred to as “the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (World Commission of Environment and Development, 1987). Meeting the needs of the present is inherently and closely related with marketing, because it necessitates the creation, communication, delivery and exchange of value; which is mentioned in the definition of marketing approved by the American Marketing Association: “Marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large” (www.ama.org.). In this context, sustainability is a broad concept that intersects with marketing activities and the other activities of an organization in its value chain (Porter, 1985), such as procurement, production, marketing, selling, and after sales services. Despite this, sustainability concept in marketing may be poorly understood as being only limited with corporate social responsibility activities. This situation not only underestimates the capabilities of marketing practice to improve sustainability (Gordon et al, 2011), but also limits the potential of new ideas and applications in marketing that could contribute to environmental protection and sustainability. Therefore, sustainability concept in marketing must be elaborated and clarified within a holistic perspective, including and explaining all of the relevant concepts that are stated in the literature such as anti-consumption, ethical consumption, and simplification. As pointed out by the review of academic work that is published in 36 journals in 1958-2008 period, researchers have focused on distinct aspects of sustainability (Chabowski et al., 2011). Thus, clarifying the relevant concepts of sustainability

will enhance our understanding and contribute to the construction of innovative and contemporary foci by marketing academicians and practitioners, who want to shape the future of the marketing discipline by implementing sustainable approaches in the theory and the practice of marketing.

SUSTAINABILITY AND SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION

Sustainability is defined by OECD as “the consumption of goods and services that meet basic needs and quality of life without jeopardizing the needs of future generations” (OECD, 2002). Sustainability is also defined as a long-term vision that shapes human actions according to ethical and moral principles (Kumar et al., 2012). The term “sustainability” often couples with the term “sustainable development” (Aras and Crowther, 2009) and World Commission on Economic Development defines sustainable development as “a practice to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (WCED, 1987, p. 43, as cited in Lee 2009; Chabowski et al. 2011 and Hunt 2012). Since these definitions have somewhat ignored the ecological system by putting human beings in the main focus (Löbler, 2017), so a refined definition has been developed by the UNEP (United Nations Environment Program), the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources), and the WWF (World Wide Fund For Nature) such as “improving the quality of human life while living within the carrying capacity of supporting eco-systems” (Löbler, 2017).

Some authors argue that supporting sustainability is perceived contrary to the Western consumerism and capitalist economics, which are based upon infinite economic growth theory (Gordon et al., 2011). Since we live on a planet with finite resources, each one of the consumption activity, namely the purchase of a product, includes ethical, community and waste-producing dimensions (McDonald et al., 2006). Consumption causes harms to our planet and the living beings, in many ways. One of the harms is the production process itself; such as the extraction of precious stones like diamonds, the extraction of coltan mineral for usage in computer and cell phone production and the manufacturing of clothing (Lawford-Smith, 2015). Another type of harm is the output of consumption such as fuel oil and body sprays. The accumulation of excess waste is another consequence of the consumption of packaged products. Marketing is accused of deteriorating the environment because of its relation with increased consumption of people.

Over 40 years, scholars have examined the drivers of sustainable consumption (Antonetti and Maklan, 2014). Sustainable consumption practices that are stated in the literature can be listed as purchasing ethical alternatives, recycling, reducing personal consumption and saving energy (Antonetti and Maklan, 2014). In conformity with the existing psychological theories, consumers are more likely to act in favor of sustainability if they believe that their actions will make a difference (Antonetti and Maklan, 2014). Regardless of the perceived effectiveness of their effort, contemporary consumers are more active in their consumption choices. For instance in the UK, consumer boycotts have increased substantially over the past years, which are driven by environmental and moral concerns (Moraes et al., 2012) and ignoring the reputational issue is not a good option for companies because companies may face substantial consumer boycotts, public protests and unpleasant media coverage if their unsustainable business activities are revealed (Lampikoski et al., 2014).

ETHICAL CONSUMPTION AND GREEN CONSUMPTION

The increasing expectations of consumers regarding environmental concerns have led to the widening of product and service offerings with green alternatives (Moraes et al., 2012). Green consumption, or in other words, environmentally friendly consumption refers to the consumer behavior to decrease environmental pollution and footprints through recycling, reusing, and reducing consumer goods (Moraes et al., 2012). Ethical consumption concept is also mentioned in the literature but it is important to note that ethical consumption is a wider term, which includes moral and political aspects such as fair trade, animal welfare, labor practices, environmental degradation and market practices (Moraes et al., 2012). For example reducing the consumption of coffee because of the deficiencies in fair trade conditions may

be an example of ethical consumption, whereas purchasing bigger coffee packages from supermarkets to reduce the number of package wastes can be an example of environmentally friendly (or green) consumption.

VOLUNTARY SIMPLIFICATION AND ANTI-CONSUMPTION

After the emergence and the increased importance of mass production, the piling of excess products at homes and accordingly accelerated accumulation of wastes especially in the USA, have led the emergence of “simplification” concept and led to the definition of voluntary simplifiers in the beginning of 1970s (McDonald et al., 2006). Voluntary simplifiers are the people who choose to limit their consumption with their free will, without being restricted by legal, political or economic constraints (McDonald et al., 2006). Voluntary simplifiers can be described as people who give importance to having more nonmaterial things rather than material things, to a more family-oriented life, and to have an adequate amount of personal free time (McDonald et al., 2006). They consider simplification as relieving from the burden of having and purchasing material possessions. Accordingly they increase their time devoted to loved activities and loved persons rather than working for long hours in order to finance their excessive consumption.

Elgin and Mithcell (1977) have categorized voluntary simplifiers in four categories such as full voluntary simplifiers, partial voluntary simplifiers, sympathizers, and the indifferent, unaware, or opposed group. Full voluntary simplifiers are the most dedicated group, who engage in organic gardening, recycling, biking to work and engage in personal development such as mediation (Elgin and Mithcell, 1977). Partial voluntary simplifiers consist of people who apply the simple life rules partly, such as biking to work but not limiting their consumption of packaged goods. Sympathizers are people, who share” the simple life idea but have not changed their behavior and existing habits yet (Elgin and Mithcell, 1977). The fourth group is named as the indifferent, unaware or opposed group, which consists of people who give importance to material possessions and may even see voluntary simplifiers as a threat (Elgin and Mithcell, 1977).

Voluntary simplicity has gained momentum in 2000s in both the Western Europe and the United States (McDonald et al., 2006). This increased trend can be explained by the meaning of consumption in Western societies, because some people in Western societies may consume more than they need in order to achieve comfort and to benefit from the meanings of consumption (Richins, 1994). Since consumption behavior of consumers is strongly related with the personal values (Richins, 1994), this phenomenon may be perceived as “overconsumption” by other people and trigger their effort of simplifying their own consumption choices. In other words, where personal values may lead some people to consume some specific brands or just consume as much as possible, personal values can limit consumption activity for some people such as voluntary simplifiers. As indicated by their limited consumption activity, the key values of voluntary simplifiers can be listed as consuming less amount of products to have a smaller ecological impact on our planet; working and living in environments that are relatively small, less complex and decentralized; focusing on self-realization and personal growth through intellectual, practical or creative activities; self-sufficiency efforts such as food production at home; refusing to be driven by the advertisement efforts of big corporations and media; and ecological awareness that is supported by creating less amount of waste, social responsibility, protection of nature and caring for others in the society (McDonald et al., 2006). Although there are many classifications about voluntary simplifiers; perhaps the simplest classification can be stated as separation into two groups; the first group as the highly committed simplifiers and the second group as the less committed simplifiers who make relatively fewer behavioral changes (McDonald et al., 2006).

DEMARKETING AND ANTI-CONSUMPTION

As a seemingly relevant but in fact divergent concept, Kotler and Levy have pointed out demarketing in 1971 as a framework applied by companies to reduce consumption in order to promote the brand image in favor of sustainability (Soule and Reich, 2015). Brands that pursued green demarketing strategy used ads with slogans such as “*Don’t Buy!*” to emphasize their environment-friendly perspective (Soule and Reich, 2015). Demarketing strategy seems counterintuitive since marketing strategies are traditionally used for creating demand for a product, but demarketing is a wise marketing strategy when there is shortage in the supply of a product or when marketers want to limit the usage of a product with a specific market segment, or to signal an ostensible scarcity in a product (Soule and Reich, 2015). In this aspect, although simplification and demarketing concepts seem to have very similar meanings, demarketing strategies diverge from simplification in the sense that demarketing is still a tool of marketers to build up or support a desired brand image. On the other hand, simplification is an attitude or behavior of consumers, which develops upon “*less is more*” (Soule and Reich, 2015) motto, against the contemporary trend of consuming more and more.

In addition to the demarketing concept that is explained in the literature in 1970s and voluntary simplification concept that gained momentum in the recent years, anti-consumption must also be taken into consideration in order to synthesize the sustainability phenomenon in marketing. Anti-consumption term is used for stating a wide array of ideas like green consumerism and life simplification but the common point of the definitions in the literature is the consumers’ resistance to the forces of mass marketing and mass-produced meanings (Soule and Reich, 2015). Anti-consumption can be driven by personal or social motivations; can be stemmed from ecological considerations; and may be simply preferring one product rather than the other, or an actual resistance to the idea of consumption in general (Soule and Reich, 2015).

In order to summarize and combine the concepts, Table 1 illustrates the relevant concepts of sustainable marketing.

TABLE 1
A SUMMARY OF THE CONCEPTS RELATED WITH SUSTAINABLE MARKETING

Concept	Main Focus	Brief Definition
Green consumption	Environment	Decreasing environmental pollution and footprints through recycling, reusing, and reducing consumer goods (Moraes et al., 2012).
Sustainable consumption	Environment and the marketing system	Purchasing ethical alternatives, recycling, reducing personal consumption and saving energy (Antonetti and Maklan, 2014).
Ethical consumption		Includes moral and political aspects such as fair trade, animal welfare, labor practices, environmental degradation and market practices (Moraes et al., 2012).
Voluntary simplification	Environment, the marketing system and the personal meaning of consumption	Limiting one's own consumption with his or her free will, without being restricted by legal, political or economical constraints (McDonald et al., 2006; Elgin and Mithcell, 1977).
Anti-consumption		The consumers’ resistance to the forces of mass marketing and mass-produced meanings (Soule and Reich, 2015).

SUSTAINABLE MARKETING AND GREEN MARKETING

The need for sustainable marketing approaches has been realized by the academia since 1970s. Meeting the needs of the society inevitably leads to production efforts of companies, the output of which must turn into consumption by the help of marketing. Therefore, marketing is an inseparable element in the management of sustainability both in the micro perspective of the firm and the consumer, and also in the macro perspective of the society and the environment.

Critical perspectives have claimed that marketing has an inherent drive toward unsustainability, basing upon the phenomenon that environmental unsustainability results from industrial capitalism, specific patterns of production, consumption and population growth (Kopnina, 2016). On the other hand, stemming from the dilemmas between micro level objectives of increasing consumption and the macro level objectives of the society such as environmental conservation, and from the dilemma between the short-term personal outcomes against long-term societal outcomes regarding consumption (Tadajewski and Brownlie, 2008); the majority of the marketing scholars have elaborated marketing as contributing to sustainable development (van Dam and Apeldoorn, 1996; Desmond and Crane, 2004; Peattie and Peattie, 2009; as cited in Gordon et al., 2011). Sustainable marketing concept is considered within the broader area of sustainable development (Hunt, 2012) and it can be defined as “the marketing within, and supportive of, sustainable economic development” (van Dam and Apeldoorn 1996, pp.46). Another definition of sustainable marketing is “the process of creation, communication and delivery of consumption values to the consumer with a view to meet their needs and observe the requirements of environment preservation without jeopardizing the possibilities of meeting the needs of future generations” (Praude and Bormane, 2013).

Sustainable marketing is not only related with the production and delivery of the firm, but also it is related with the environment, society and economics (Praude and Bormane, 2013). For this reason, sustainability concept in marketing discipline is widely discussed within macromarketing area. Macromarketing is the study of marketing systems and it also focuses on the relationship between the marketing systems and the society and the interaction between the society and the marketing systems (Hunt 1977, p.56). While macromarketing field was institutionalizing in the late 1970s with the series of macromarketing conferences held in the USA and the establishment of the Macromarketing Society in 2004 (Hunt, 2012); green marketing concept that would soon turn into sustainable marketing was also developing. This period was an era in which environmental issues were gaining importance. The evolution of green marketing beginning from 1970s can be categorized into three eras (Peattie, 2001). The first era is the ecological marketing era of 1970s, in which marketing was focused on specific environmental issues like air pollution or the impact of pesticides (Hunt 2011, Hunt 2012). The second era is described as the environmental marketing of 1980s, in which marketing tried to understand the green consumer and advocated green technology in 1980s; and the last era is the sustainable marketing, which refers to creating sustainable development with taking into consideration the full environmental costs of production and consumption (Peattie 2001, Hunt 2011, Hunt 2012). In this context, green marketing can be interpreted as the base of sustainable marketing, which is a broader concept that includes green marketing as a tool of marketing activities such as corporate social responsibility (Praude and Bormane, 2013).

DISCUSSION ON THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF SUSTAINABLE MARKETING

It is undeniable that sustainability is interpreted as one of the most important issues facing marketing today (Fodness, 2015). Consequently, marketing scholars have studied the subject in order to base sustainability phenomenon on a strong theoretical basis. Hunt argues that (2011) the dilemma between marketing and sustainability intersects with the Resource-Advantage Theory (Hunt, 2000). The Resource-Advantage Theory is a general theory of competition, which challenges classical economic approaches. According to the Resource-Advantage Theory, demand is dynamic and heterogeneous across and within industries, consumer information is imperfect and costly, competitive dynamics are disequilibrium

provoking and the firm's resources are various such as financial, physical, legal, human, organizational, informational and relational (Hunt, 2000). Touching to such a wide range of topics regarding business, Resource-Advantage Theory is related not only with marketing, but also with other disciplines like management, economics and ethics; and consequently the Resource-Advantage Theory intersects with sustainable marketing in several ways: (1) the Resource-Advantage Theory maintains that competition is not industry wide but segment-wide, so this will help the management in handling green consumer segment more easily, (2) the Resource-Advantage Theory explains consumers as seeking their self-interest within their own moral codes, consequently green consumers can be understood better within this perspective, (3) the owners, managers and employees of profit-firms also behave in alignment with their moral codes, so they can sacrifice some financial benefits for the purpose of supporting sustainability, (4) green positioning of companies may become a resource for firms that will give them competitive advantage, and finally, (5) firms can achieve competitive advantage by hiring employees whose moral codes are consistent with sustainable marketing (Hunt, 2011).

Another theory that can be related with sustainable marketing is Santos and Laczniak's (2009) Integrative Justice Model. Integrative Justice Model is a normative ethical framework, which aims to define the just market situations to ensure the ethical marketing to especially poor and disadvantaged customers (Santos and Laczniak, 2009). This normative model states that firms must (1) build relationships with customers without exploitation intent, (2) co-create value with customers, (3) invest for the future consumption without harming the environment, (4) represent the interest of all stakeholders, and (5) pay attention to long-term profit management rather than short-term profit maximization (Santos and Laczniak, 2009). Investing to the future needs by supporting the environment is the main idea of The Integrative Justice Model, which makes it an appropriate approach for sustainable marketing. Moreover, the model is in alignment with the existing marketing frameworks such as Service-Dominant Logic of Vargo and Lusch (2004) and value co-creation of Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004); so it can be used as a valid model for sustainable marketing especially in impoverished markets (Facca-Miess and Santos 2014).

Following these discussions, it is stated that sustainability in the field of marketing has three dimensions: Environmental, social and economic (Kumar et al., 2012). In accordance, Gordon et al. (2011) have proposed another theoretical framework for sustainable marketing. The authors claim that the interaction between green marketing, social marketing and critical marketing can create a potential for sustainable marketing (Gordon et al., 2011). Social marketing, critical marketing and green marketing are considered as complementary and interdependent elements of the proposed framework (Gordon et al., 2011). As an example; social marketing can promote the usage of public transport, and green marketing can be used to introduce sustainable products to the market, while critical marketing triggers the required regulatory and policy changes (Gordon et al., 2011). Positioning sustainability at the core of this new marketing paradigm requires breaking away from the traditional managerial and functionalist perspectives in marketing (Gordon et al., 2011).

In accordance, Mitchell et al. (2010) have defined *sustainable market orientation* by combining the market orientation (Narver and Slater, 1990; Jaworski and Kohli, 1993) with macromarketing systems management approach (Fisk and Nason, 1982; van Dam and Apeldoorn, 1996) and claimed that firms can use three key sustainable development objectives in their corporate marketing strategies; economic, social, and ecological sustainability. The authors argued that within this macromarketing perspective, firms can act in sustainable market orientation by balancing economic, social and environmental corporate governance even in a highly competitive market and achieve benefits such as a higher level of corporate confidence among key internal and external stakeholders, sustainable consumption and brand management, and superior long-term market performance (Mitchell et al., 2010). Another approach to sustainability is an integrated relationship network in which product conceptions, material flows through the production process and the supply chain activities are conducted by the collaboration of companies and consumers in order to ensure the ecological cycling of wastes, which in turn contributes to the harmony of human beings with nature (Löbner, 2017).

Although there are authors who have proposed models and frameworks for solving sustainability problem in marketing; Fodness claims that sustainability is a “wicked” problem, so it cannot be resolved by traditional problem-solving methods (Fodness, 2015). According to this view, sustainability in marketing is a complex problem that cannot be defined by traditional linear reasoning, because it involves many stakeholders with different expectations and a high level of social complexity but “marketing managers often make decisions and take actions as if they were facing a simple or tame problem” (Fodness, 2015). Therefore, Fodness states that marketing managers and relevant decision makers must determine the perspective of each stakeholder and try to reach an optimum solution or common understanding without targeting a full consensus among all stakeholders (Fodness, 2015). Research shows that there is a gap between the sustainability initiatives of firms and the firms’ reputation regarding sustainability among their stakeholders (Peloza et al, 2012). Previous studies also have shown that sustainable companies can benefit from hiring and retaining top talent employees, from employee productivity, from the cost-cutting advantages of sustainable production, and from the improved company reputation among stakeholders (Lampikoski et al., 2014). Thus supporting the stakeholder relations and enhancing their perception about the company’s sustainability efforts may be effective in order to achieve benefits from sustainability efforts (Peloza et al., 2012). Marketing managers must seek out for such new approaches in order to implement sustainable marketing (Fodness, 2015).

A McKinsey survey conducted in 2008 with more than 2000 executives has reported that more than 80 percent of executives anticipated the emergence of an environmental issue within the next five years in countries where their companies operate, such as climate change (Lee, 2009). In addition, the global sustainability research that is conducted in 2012 by a team from MIT Sloan Management Review and Boston Consulting Group has shown that 70 percent of the 3000 managers have integrated sustainability in their business agendas (Lampikoski et al., 2014). Indeed, approximately one decade ago Berry and Rondinelli (1998) have also stated that many multinational corporations have accepted the internal consistency of the three principles of sustainability: Economic prosperity, environmental integrity, and social equity (Lee, 2009); which is validated by recent studies. All these findings indicate that companies must balance their production and marketing activities with environmental conservation.

As a simple and first step, companies generally ensure their conformity with the environmental regulations. As a second step, some companies engage in various corporate social responsibility (CSR) projects in the context of sustainability and communicate them to the people with public relationship events and marketing activities. Although the simplification trend among environmentally-sensitive consumers and the increasing importance of environmental concerns necessitate more detailed and integrated actions in favor of sustainability rather than temporary or superficial CSR projects; research shows that CSR practices have a positive effect on shareholder value creation, either undertaken with a reputational purpose or not (Gallego-Alvarez, 2010). All CSR practices undertaken by companies create value for stakeholders because investors are able to detect the level of corporate commitment to sustainable development (Gallego-Alvarez, 2010). Therefore, companies must be committed sincerely to sustainability, in order to increase the value obtained from their CSR projects in favor of sustainability. This can be possible by implementing additional steps in the existing production and value delivery systems or taking solid actions towards conservation. Companies must support their communication regarding environmental conservation with concrete actions that can be perceived by their customers and publics.

Besides the CSR activities and the content of corporate communication, companies must be able to detect the share of environmentally-sensitive consumers in their customer portfolios and try to define their expectations and perceptions regarding sustainability issues. For example, voluntary simplifiers cannot be ignored in marketing and sociological perspective (McDonald et al., 2006). In accordance with the Resource Advantage Theory (Hunt, 2000), marketing-oriented companies cannot ignore this change in the consumer profile. Managers must adjust their product and service offerings by taking these consumers into consideration. An option for this is *green innovation* concept, which can be defined as the development of new products, processes, marketing methods, and managerial practices that reduce the impact of business on environment while creating value for the consumers and business (Lampikoski et

al., 2014). Connecting corporate sustainability with green innovation and internalizing this perspective as a corporate culture may constitute a competitive advantage for companies (Lampikoski et al., 2014) by attracting and retaining a substantial segment of consumers.

It is sometimes argued that sustainability has many objections to marketing such as taking the satisfaction of future generations into consideration as well as the current generation, encouraging the fair distribution of costs and benefits across global nations, and meeting the basic needs of poor nations instead of satisfying the wants of wealthy nations (Peattie, 2001). Contrary to this, meeting the basic needs of poor nations has grabbed the interest of multinational corporations in the recent years. Multinational companies have realized the profit potential of marketing to the low-income group in recent years; not only because of the emerging sales potential to these markets but also because of the excess production capacity of the companies (Santos and Lacznik, 2009). In addition, targeting the low-income segment has provided the multinational companies the chance to contribute to poverty alleviation, which could help in gaining public trust and improving corporate reputation (Santos and Lacznik, 2009) through CSR by emphasizing the phenomena of meeting the needs of under-served consumers and making the daily life easier for them.

It must not be ignored that marketing is one of the basics of the society and it can be used as a tool for responsible consumption, i.e. recycling, promoting fair trade items and save energy (Gordon et al., 2011). Research has revealed that companies that have internalized sustainability as an integral part of their business rather than seeing it as a compliance issue, that have formed alliances with other companies and stakeholders in the pursuit of targeted sustainability issues, and that have integrated sustainability in their corporate stories, vision, mission and consumer brand propositions are the leaders of sustainability (Peloza et al., 2012; Lampikoski et al., 2014). To position marketing as a tool to promote responsible consumption, companies may benefit from advanced digital technologies in communicating their sustainability focus to consumers and the public. Marketers are focusing on delivering specialized contents to smaller groups of consumers who are categorized in small and highly focused sub-segments. Companies that succeed in segmenting their customers according to the extent of their environmental sensitivity may communicate with them via personalized content in digital channels. Combining the personalization trend in digital marketing with the increasing emphasis on sustainability will be a key competitive strength for companies. Therefore, digital platforms will shift to a more proactive nature rather than positioning consumers as only the users of the Internet. Distant consumers from around the globe have become connected via sustainability applications on their mobile phones to share their ideas and knowledge about products and to visualize the environmental consequences of their purchases (Nghiem and Carrasco, 2016). By the help of developments in digital technology, consumers may be part of the new and sustainable consumption styles and join creating ideas with the companies in favor of the environment.

To sum up, studying the public needs and wants, analyzing the market possibilities together with the company's resources and combining them with marketing activities while preserving the environment is the core of sustainable marketing concept (Praude and Bormane, 2013). Although sustainability in marketing is a complex problem (Fodness, 2015), and although some existing management theories may be criticized to have a materialist-individualist moral-point-of-view with a short-term focus (Bell and Dyck, 2012; Ferraro et al., 2005; Giacalone and Thompson, 2006; as cited in Neubert and Dyck, 2015), appropriate marketing management perspectives can help organizations to find sustainable ways, and thus marketing can enhance sustainability. Marketing is supposed to encourage consumption to increase sales and profits, but its potential to deliver sustainability is often ignored (Gordon et al., 2011). In this context, marketers can focus on the perceived value of reduced consumption for consumers and shape their marketing strategies accordingly. Such policies may decrease consumption and the reduced amount of consumption may inevitably decrease sales revenues in the short-run, but companies that succeed in finding profitable and sustainable offerings for their customer, will be the shapers of the future trends in marketing. An example may be reducing the quantity of production while increasing the quality to increase the usage life of products. This approach will decrease consumers' purchasing frequency and waste amount but companies' profit margin can be preserved in the long run. Another alternative may be

including additional steps in production to facilitate the recycling of products and wastes. Löbler proposes an ongoing cyclic thinking by mentioning about two material streams, a technical stream and a biological stream (Löbler, 2017). Technical material stream is the entrance of recycled materials in the manufacturing process of new products, where the biological stream is the return of elements to soil and assuring a required degree of purity in production (Löbler, 2017). By taking such real and sincere actions in favor of environmental sustainability, companies may create real and appealing content for their marketing campaigns; instead of just engaging in well-known and generic corporate social responsibility projects. Moreover, focusing on environmental sensitivity as an element of the organizational culture may provide companies a distinctive competency that will be hardly imitated by their competitors. The transformation of companies towards sustainable marketing is essential because in the future, “sustainability issues will become critically important factors for corporations to consider for their survival and competitiveness” (Lee, 2009).

CONCLUSION

This article aims to summarize and clarify the concepts that are stated in the literature as relevant to sustainability and marketing concepts, while integrating the discussions on the theory and practice of sustainable marketing to construct a holistic base for the sustainable marketing concept. These relevant concepts can be summarized as sustainable consumption, green marketing, ethical marketing, simplification, green consumption and anti-consumption. The nature of consumption has been discussed in the literature and excessive consumption has been interpreted as a threat for sustainability because of the waste, environmental deterioration caused by production efforts, and the diminished meaning of life as the core meaning is attributed to material possessions. In addition, it is also stated that consumption that exceeds needs causes people to work for longer hours and to spend excessive energy and time to take care of the possessions. These unwanted outcomes are sometimes attributed to marketing from a critical perspective; but in fact marketing can be a key driver of sustainability. By triggering the efficient collaboration of individuals, institutions and governments, in the pursuit of optimizing social, economic and ecological objectives (Kopnina, 2016), marketing theorists and practitioners can define and propose efficient ways to preserve our environment. In order to adapt to the changing consumer environment and the increasing importance of sustainability, advertising approaches and marketing perspective can transform into new and different forms. Companies that internalize the sustainability perspective can diffuse this concept to their business activities, company culture and marketing programs. By combining sustainable market orientation and green innovation applications with sincere CSR activities, companies may attain competitive advantage both by improving their reputation and production efficiency. At the end, this transformation in the context of sustainable marketing will be beneficial for the marketers, consumers and the society as a whole.

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