



Uluslararası Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi

The Journal of International Social Research

Cilt: 8 Sayı: 41 Volume: 8 Issue: 41

Aralık 2015 December 2015

www.sosyalarastirmalar.com ISSN: 1307-9581

USING CASE METHODS IN THE STUDY OF GREEN MARKETING STRATEGIES OF SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES (SMEs): A PROSPECTIVE CASE STUDY DESIGN FOR SMEs IN A NEWLY INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRY, TURKEY

Mertcan TAŞÇIOĞLU**

Abstract

The marketing literature lacks qualitative studies that seek to understand emerging concepts. The article provides a prospective case study design in exploring green marketing strategies of SMEs in Turkey with the aim of providing a detailed understanding of green marketing concept. First, green marketing is defined and possible green marketing strategies are identified. Second, case study methodology, challenges and how to achieve validity and reliability are presented. Finally, implications of the case study and conclusion are provided.

Keywords: Case Study Design, Green Marketing, Green Marketing Strategies, Small and Medium Enterprises.

1. INTRODUCTION

Green marketing is one of the hottest issues in business world today. Many companies began to realize the impact of the green marketing on their competitive position, and it has also become academic fields of considerable interest. Academic researchers attempted to define and understand the green marketing strategies over the years.

The existing studies of green marketing have focused mainly on the multi-national corporations (MNCs). Although the green marketing literature on small and medium enterprises (SEMs) has been growing over the last years, the knowledge on them is still limited. Exploring green marketing strategies in Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) is important for at least three reasons. First, SMEs are accounting for 99% of the all companies and they are providing 77% of all jobs in Turkey (OECD, 2006). Second, green marketing strategies and their implementation in SMEs are significantly different than MNCs specifically on resources, capabilities and ownership (Ciliberti et al., 2008: 1579; Lepoutre and Heene, 2006: 257-258). Third, SMEs trigger economic growth in many countries (Collins et al., 2007: 729); focusing on just large firms and underestimating their importance is inappropriate (Spence and Lozano, 2000: 43-44).

In the marketing literature there is a dominance of quantitative studies over the much-neglected qualitative research. An analysis of the marketing journals revealed that just 7.1% of the articles were of the qualitative methodology (AlShebil, 2007: 434). There is a need for more qualitative studies to have a detailed understanding of emerging concepts such as green marketing.

The purpose of this study is to give perspectives on how to conduct case research for exploring green marketing strategies. The main aim of the case study is to explore green marketing strategies of SMEs in a newly industrialized country, Turkey. Thus, there are three case study questions in this study: How do you perceive green marketing strategy? Why did you apply a green marketing strategy? Which green marketing strategy do you apply?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Green marketing is defined as "The holistic management process responsible for identifying, anticipating and satisfying the needs of customers and society, in a profitable and sustainable way" (Baker and Hart, 2008: 727). Triple bottom line is a similar concept that provides a framework that contains economic, social, and environmental goals of a company (Elkington 1997). More recently green marketing has been described as using traditional marketing mix (i.e. product, price, promotion and place) and triple bottom line objectives together to satisfy green consumers (Liu et al., 2012: 582).

Ginsberg et al. (2004) presented four green marketing strategies: lean green, defensive green, shaded

* Dr., Muğla Sıtkı Koçman Üniversitesi.

green, and extreme green. They further discussed how the traditional marketing mix elements are utilized in each strategy. The relationship between marketing mix elements and green marketing strategies is displayed in Table 1.

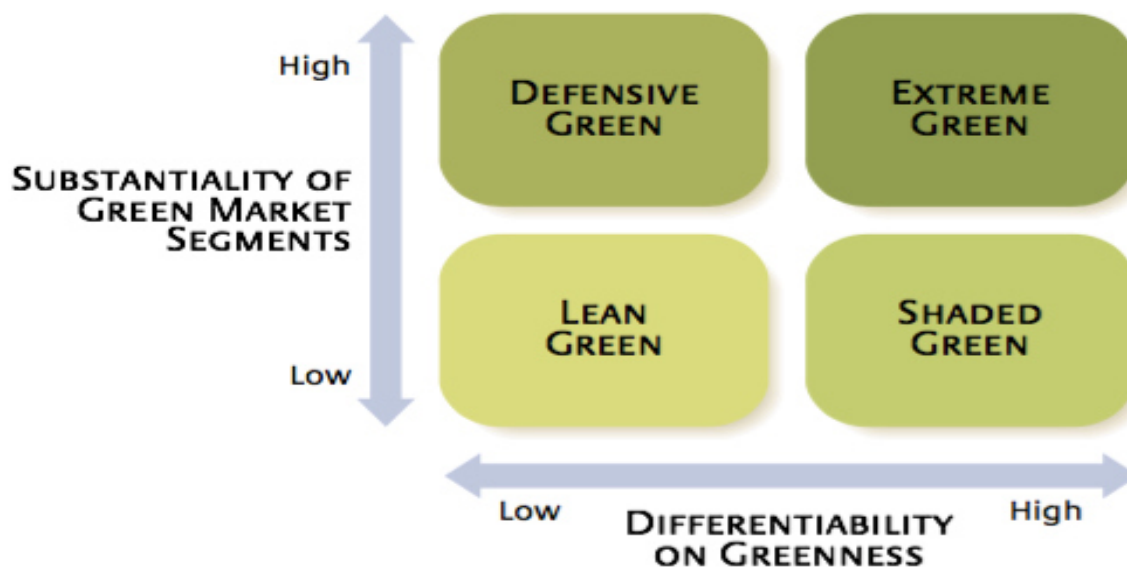
Table 1. Marketing-Mix Tools in Green Strategy

	Product	Price	Place	Promotion
Lean	X			
Defensive	X			X
Shaded	X	X		X
Extreme	X	X	X	X

Source: Ginsberg, J. M., & Bloom, P. N. (2004). Choosing the right green-marketing strategy. MIT Sloan Management Review, 46(1), 79.

According to Ginsberg et al. (2004) lean green strategy focuses on reducing costs and improving efficiencies rather than marketing green initiatives. Lean greens are not able to differentiate themselves from competitors and greenness is usually exhibited in product development, design and manufacturing. In short, lean greens mainly covers only the product aspect of the marketing mix. Defensive greens are similar to lean greens in the sense that they also don't have the capability to differentiate themselves from on greenness. However, they are different than lean greens on involving promotion aspect of the marketing mix in addition to the product aspect. Defensive greens also recognize the importance of green market segments and their environmental initiatives are generally sincere and sustained. The shaded greens have the ability to differentiate themselves from competitors on being green. However, they choose to focus on other attributes so environmental benefits are promoted as a secondary factor. In addition to product and promotion, shaded greens covers price aspect of marketing mix too. Finally the extreme green strategy involves all aspects of marketing mix elements. Being green is a major driving force for extreme green companies. They differentiate themselves on being green and integrate environmental issues into business processes. Figure 1 depicts the Green Marketing Strategy Matrix. This study uses Ginsberg et al. (2004) framework to determine which green marketing strategy SMEs apply.

Figure 1. Green Marketing Strategy Matrix



Source:

Ginsberg, J. M., & Bloom, P. N. (2004). Choosing the right green-marketing strategy. MIT Sloan Management Review, 46(1), 79.

As SMEs begin to feel pressures to improve green performance, managers are trying to develop an understanding of the conditions that influence the success of promoting and implementing organizational changes (Cordano et al., 2009: 463). As these conditions related with company size, they may differ in a different country context. For example, in Newly Industrialized Countries (NIC) SMEs may lack good legal systems, governmental policies and efficient regulation, which are some of the main drivers for green marketing strategies (Mesquita and Lazzarini, 2008: 359-360). Small and large companies do differ in an ethical manner depending on particular issues and situational differences (Lahdesmaki, 2005: 56-57). The larger the company the more likely it would find environmental issues important (Hutchinson and Chaston, 1994: 20). Similarly, in

developed countries where most of the research has been done to date the attitudes are associated with a more ethical stance (Auger et al., 2003: 296-299). Economic growth of Newly Industrialized Countries, such as Brazil, China, India and Turkey will be the main driver of global economic expansion (Goldstone, 2010: 33). It is interesting to conduct this study in one of these countries since SMEs dominate Newly Industrialized Country economies.

A lot of green marketing research has been done in developed countries especially in the USA, England and Germany due to their big economic size. One of the gaps in green marketing research includes: SMEs in other countries different than developed ones (Moore and Spence, 2006: 220). So as a newly industrialized economy, Turkey offers a very interesting context for investigating SMEs' green marketing strategies. In addition, according to a lot of research, newly industrialized countries (NIC) including Turkey will be the economic leaders of the world in a few decades (Hawthornthwaite, 2006: 40; Wilson and Stupnytska, 2007: 4; Goldstone, 2010: 42).

3. METHODOLOGY

Yin (2003) presents three conditions to identify appropriate research strategy. The three conditions consist of:

- a) The type of research question created
- b) The degree of control a researcher has over actual behavioral events
- c) The extent of focus on contemporary as opposed to historical events

Identification of the research question type is the most important criteria to differentiate among various research strategies. "Where" and "Who" questions are more appropriate for surveys and archival analysis. On the other hand, "How" and "Why" questions are more suitable for experiments, histories and case studies (Yin, 2003: 5). Experiments require control of behavioral events and histories do not focus on contemporary events. In contrast, case studies use a contemporary set of events and the researcher has little or no control of behavioral events (Yin, 2003: 7). This study uses the case study approach to focus on understanding the present dynamics of contemporary real-life events in which we need a detailed understanding through in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (Creswell, 2012: 73; Eisenhardt, 1989: 546).

In this study multiple-case studies will be used. In a single case, the researcher has to put all the eggs in one basket. On the other hand multiple cases are often more compelling, more robust and less vulnerable (Yin, 2003: 52-53). In case studies and other qualitative research sample selection is generally purposive (Ellram, 1996: 103). Twelve SMEs that implemented green marketing strategy will be chosen for the case study. For the analysis, cross case tactic will be used (Eisenhardt, 1989: 540). Pairs of cases will be selected and similarities and differences between each pair will be listed. As a result, new categories and concepts will be gotten.

Multiple sources of evidence such as documentation, archival records and interviews will be used. Each source has its own specific strength. Documentations are exact, stable and can be reviewed repeatedly in this case a certificate will be looked for. Archival records are precise and quantitative; financial reports of SMEs will be checked. Interviews are insightful, targeted and focused directly on case study topic. Open-ended questions will be asked to key respondents about the facts and also their opinions (Yin, 2003: 90). An interview protocol (see Appendix A) will also be used. Interviews will be tape-recorded and multiple researchers will be assigned in teams to case study sites. This will help the case to be viewed from different perspectives of multiple researchers (Eisenhardt, 1989: 538).

3.1. Challenges and Limitations

Novice researchers may face with many challenges. Forms of data collection problems can be accessibility of financial reports of SMEs due to privacy reasons and reflexivity of interviewee are challenges that may be encountered. One challenge with the case study approach is that multiple-case study requires extensive resources and time (Yin, 2003: 47). There will be also some limitations in this research. The results may not be generalizable beyond newly industrialized economies. Green marketing strategy perception may be different in highly developed countries. In addition, the results can be affected by a bias due to the criteria used to select companies.

3.2. Achieving Validity and Reliability

Case study tactics that Yin (2003: 34) suggested is applied to achieve validity and reliability. In order to meet the construct validity, multiple sources of evidence is used, also as suggested key informants will review the case study report. Our study is not concerned with making causal claims. Internal validity is a concern for explanatory or causal studies only, and not for descriptive or exploratory studies (Yin 2003: 36). However, external validity is a major problem in case studies. Critics usually emphasize that single cases offer a poor basis

for generalizability. In order to increase external validity, multiple-case study will be conducted by using replication logic (Yin 2003: 37). Finally, for reliability concerns, a case-study protocol (see Appendix B) is used, which is a major way of increasing the reliability of a case study research.

4. IMPLICATIONS

The prospective case study on green marketing strategies of SMEs would provide researchers and managers some practical guidelines and insights. Although some previous studies examined green marketing concept, just a few examined these strategies by a qualitative study. The exploratory design of the research helps researchers and practitioners better understand the green marketing concept and green marketing strategies of SMEs. This research also highlights the importance of green marketing strategies for companies. Managers need to formulate contingent strategies based on the substantiality and differentiability of greenness in the industry in which they operate. This study reveals the most common green marketing strategies of SMEs.

5. CONCLUSION

This paper offers a prospective case study design to explore green marketing strategies of SMEs in Turkey. Unlike most case studies that concentrate on MNCs in developed countries, the proposed case study of this paper attempts to investigate SMEs' green marketing strategies in Newly Industrialized Countries. Ginsberg et al. (2004) framework is used to determine which green marketing strategy SMEs apply. This research opens up opportunities for further studies. Future research can use the case study design that is provided in this study to explore green marketing strategies of SMEs. Given the lack of a theoretical framework in green marketing, another qualitative method, grounded theory can be used to originate theoretical constructs from qualitative data (Corbin and Strauss 2008).

REFERENCES

- ALSHEBIL, S. (2007). Are "Paradigms Lost" in Marketing? Some Twenty Years Later...: A Content Analysis. *Advances in Consumer Research*, 34, 434.
- AUGER, P., Burke, P., Devinney, T. M., and Louviere, J. J. (2003). What will consumers pay for social product features? *Journal of Business Ethics*, 281-304.
- BAKER, M., and Hart, S. (2008). *The Marketing Book*. Routledge.
- CILIBERTI, F., Pontrandolfo, P., & Scozzi, B. (2008). Investigating corporate social responsibility in supply chains: a SME perspective. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 16(15), 1579-1588.
- COLLINS, E., Lawrence, S., Pavlovich, K., & Ryan, C. (2007). Business networks and the uptake of sustainability practices: the case of New Zealand. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 15(8), 729-740.
- CORBIN, J. and Strauss, A. (2008). *Basics of Qualitative Research*, 3rd edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- CORDANO, M., Marshall, R. S., & Silverman, M. (2009). How do Small and Medium Enterprises Go "Green"? A Study of Environmental Management Programs in the U.S. Wine Industry. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 92(3), 463-478.
- CRESWELL, J. W. (2012). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design Choosing among five approaches*. 3rd edition. SAGE Publications, USA
- EISENHARDT, K. M. (1989). Building theories from case study research. *Academy of management review*, 532-550.
- ELKINGTON, J. (1997). *Cannibals With Forks The Triple Bottom Line of 21st Century Business*. London: Capstone Publishing Limited.
- ELLRAM L. M. (1996). The use of the case study method in logistics research. *Journal of Business Logistics* 17(2) 93-138
- GOLDSTONE, J. A. (2010). The New Population Bomb. *Foreign Affairs* 89 (1), 31-43.
- GINSBERG, J. M., and Bloom, P. N. (2004). Choosing the right green-marketing strategy. *MIT Sloan Management Review*, 46(1), 79.
- HAWKSWORTH, J. (2006). *The World in 2050 how big will the major emerging market economies get and how can the OECD compete?* United Kingdom: PricewaterhouseCoopers.
- HUTCHINSON, A., and Chaston, I. (1994). Environmental management in Devon and Cornwall's small and medium sized enterprise sector. *Business Strategy and the Environment*, 3(1), 15-22.
- LAHDESMÄKI, M. (2005). When ethics matters—interpreting the ethical discourse of small nature-based entrepreneurs. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 61(1), 55-68.
- LEPOUTRE, J., and Heene, A. (2006). Investigating the Impact of Firm Size on Small Business Social Responsibility: A Critical Review. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 67(3), 257-273.
- LIU, S., Kasturiratne, D., & Moizer, J. (2012). A hub-and-spoke model for multi-dimensional integration of green marketing and sustainable supply chain management. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 41(4), 581-588.
- MESQUITA, L. F., and Lazzarini, S. G. (2008). Horizontal and vertical relationships in developing economies: Implications for SMEs' access to global markets. *Academy of Management Journal*, 359-380.
- MOORE, G., and Spence, L. (2006). Editorial: Responsibility and Small Business. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 67(3), 219-226.
- OECD *Türkiye'deki küçük ve orta ölçekli işletmeler mevcut durum ve politikalar*. 2006. <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/37/37/33705673.pdf> (27 June 2014).
- SPENCE, L. J., and Lozano, J. F. (2000). Communicating about ethics with small firms: Experiences from the UK and Spain. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 27(1), 43-53.
- WILSON, D., and Stupnytska, A. (2007). *Global Economics Paper No: 153 The N-11: More Than an Acronym*. Goldman Sachs.
- YIN, R. K. (2003). *Case Study Research Design and Methods 3rd Edition*. SAGE Publications, USA.

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL (Adapted from Creswell 2012)

Green marketing strategies of SMEs in Newly Industrialized Countries

Date/Time:

Place:

Interviewee name:

Interviewee job title:

Interviewee job responsibilities:

Project: This study attempts to explore green marketing strategies of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Newly Industrialized Countries. This research will provide better understanding of SME's green marketing perspective and which green marketing strategy they choose.

Questions:

1. How do you perceive green marketing strategy?
2. Why did you apply a green marketing strategy?
3. Which green marketing strategy do you apply?

APPENDIX B

CASE STUDY PROTOCOL (Adapted from Creswell 2012)

BACKGROUND

This study explores green marketing strategies of SMEs in newly industrialized countries. Questions: How do you perceive green marketing strategy? Why did/did not you apply a green marketing strategy? Which green marketing strategy do you apply?

DESIGN

Multiple case studies will be used.

DATA COLLECTION

Interviews will be main form of data. Documentation, and archival records will also be used.

DATA ANALYSIS

Cross case will be used. Pairs of cases will be selected and similarities and differences between each pair will be listed

LIMITATION

Generalizability issue and bias due to purposive sample selection

REPORTING

Target audience will be researchers and practitioners

SCHEDULE

Estimated time: 6 months