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GREEN MARKETING APPROACHES TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF SUSTAINABLE RURAL TOURISM ACTIVITIES

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Abstract: Rapid urbanization and industrialization caused individuals to have a city-centered life. Urbanization trends lead to reductions in welfare and income levels of rural residents. In many territories and countries, rural areas are less developed and have specific situations.

The stress and pressure of urban life have caused people to become more involved in rural areas. One of the essential characteristics of modern society is to focus on sustainable development. Sustainable development is a multidimensional concept that targets the development of rural areas. Rural tourism, one of the major tools for rural development, has the potential for growth in the future.

The key to the development of rural tourism is to create tourism products using natural resources and to present them to tourists, benefiting from the local people who produce cultural and historical values. It leads to the rethinking of the basic principles of marketing regarding increases the environmental issues, need for environmental protection and sustainable development. Green marketing concept was born as a result. Briefly, green marketing is the whole set of activities aimed at meeting human needs or demands, aiming at satisfying these needs and desires in such a way as to create the least harmful effect on nature. In practice, it is based on strategies such as creating and developing environmentally sensitive market segments, creating new environmental standards and launching new environmental initiatives, adopting environmental forms of product labeling and evaluating all market activities based on the latest environmental conditions and standards.

In this study, combining rural tourism with green marketing approaches aiming at the rational use of natural resources, which is one of the tools of rural development is examined.

Keywords: sustainability, rural tourism, green marketing.

INTRODUCTION

Between the rural regions of the World the issues of population decrease, economic change is widely common. A strong tendency of industrialization and urbanization have always changed the economic and political position of rural society. Agricultural incomes have fallen in real terms, and with this decline, technological changes have led to a decrease in agricultural employment. Nevertheless, there has been a decline in rural services: stores, schools, churches, professional services and transport facilities have declined in number and vitality. Typically, the rural population is getting older and becomes less of the total population (Lane, 1994).

Today, tourism is still focused on beaches, lakes, mountainous areas and important cultural centers. Tourism has proved that economic growth is a powerful engine in terms of transferring capital, income and employment from industrialized, urbanized and developed regions to non-industrial regions (Lane, 1994).

RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND SUSTAINABLE RURAL TOURISM

Generally, the population density of rural areas is low: this is the result of small settlements placed at wide distances. The environment is dominated by natural and / or farm / forest (Lane, 1994).

Rural tourism can be defined as the whole of events and relations arising from temporary accommodation by visiting the rural areas outside the places where people are permanently resident, demanding the goods and services produced by agricultural producers in the places suitable for the natural pattern of the area and minimizing their desire to raise money in the region (Torun, 2013).

NEW APPROACH TO MARKETING - GREEN MARKETING

In the recent years, various associations and bodies around the world called for conserving the environment to make it a safe place to live for us and for the future generations. In the second half of the eighties of the last century, there appeared a new pattern within the committed marketing, called as green marketing, that is focused on a powerful commitment to the environmental responsibility in exercising all the marketing activities, thus the business organizations adopted the conception of green marketing due to its large benefits (Gupta, 2016).

Green marketing is part of the social marketing concept and can be described as follows: Product, price, promotion, and distribution are the way to understand the customer needs and the reciprocal relationships between the planning, implementation and control policy that simultaneously meet the objectives of the organization and minimize the negative effects on the natural environment (Ayyıldız & Genç, 2008).

Green marketing concept emerged as the concept of "ecological marketing" by the American Marketing Association in 1975, although it entered marketing literature in the late 1980s and early 1990s. There are many definitions in the literature related to the concept of green marketing, such as green marketing, ecological marketing, sustainable marketing, environmentally sensitive marketing, social marketing (Güsan, Aktaş, & Güvendik, 2016).

In order to explain the concept of green product with the 4S formula in the literature; Environment-friendly products can be defined as green products which have some properties such as the ability to meet the needs and desires of consumers (satisfaction), Providing the continuity of the source (sustainability), Globally accepted in terms of not harming the

environment and the living (social acceptability), and not to endanger the health of consumers (safety) (Güsan et al., 2016).

RURAL TOURISM AND GREEN MARKETING

According to Peattie (2001), there are three long phases in the evolution of the green marketing. The first phase is the ecological phase. In this phase, all the marketing activities are implemented to resolve environmental problems and offer solutions. The second phase is the environmental phase, and the main idea is using the cleaner technologies to improve the environment. The last phase is called the sustainable phase of green marketing which is still valid. This phase appears by the late nineties and early twenties (Peattie, 2001).

Green marketing strategies can be the crucial element in adapting to new consumer requirements and can be a source of competitive advantage at national or regional levels in the long term. Short-term investments can be seen in technology costs, staff qualifications, and monitoring of production processes, but by reducing consumption of energy and raw materials, green marketing strategies can help firms to become competitive in the long term by providing economic benefits. We, therefore, reach a win-win situation in which both environmental benefits and increased competitiveness are obtained concurrently;

- (1) Obtaining/producing the product has to preserve the environment (no pollution and pesticides);
- (2) Price is usually higher, but green consumers accept it;
- (3) Placement (distribution) includes ecological packaging, but also longer-term storage of goods;
- (4) Promotion focuses on environmental issues (Aceleanu, 2016).

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GREEN MARKETING AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The products those are manufactured through green technology, and that caused no environmental hazards are called green products. Promotion of green technology and green products is necessary for the conservation of natural resources and sustainable development. We can define green products by following measures:

- Products those are originally grown,
 - Products those are recyclable, reusable and biodegradable,
 - Products with natural ingredients,
 - Products containing recycled contents, non-toxic chemical,
 - Products contents under approved chemical,
 - Products that do not harm or pollute the environment,
 - Products that will not be tested on animals,
 - Products that have eco-friendly packaging i.e. reusable, refillable containers, etc
- (Rajasekeran R. & Gnanapandithan N., 2013).

Green marketing has a wide variety of impacts on the development of rural areas:

1. Reduction of waste with recycled and renewable energy source.
2. Redesigning the product concept as a green product.
3. To produce environmentally friendly products.
4. More use of agricultural and natural ingredients in products.
5. Strengthening rural areas and creating additional income sources.
6. Promotion of rural and urban ties.
7. Creating employment for rural areas (Gupta, 2016).

GREEN PROMOTION AND RURAL TOURISM

Green Promotion involves the introduction of products and services that do not harm the environment and creates minimal harmful on the health of consumers. Promotion of rural tourism can be achieved through eco-labeling and eco-sponsorship (Indal Kumar, 2014).

Eco-labelling is only a type of environmental performance, and in particular means, that information about consumers is provided about the relative environmental quality of a product. Labels usually indicate collection and protection systems offered to consumers, the meaning of the markings on the packaging, and the consumer's role in recovery and recycling (Punitha et al., 2015).

Reduction of the attractiveness of rural areas should be prevented by avoiding natural pollution of promotional materials. Stand areas on the side of the road, messages, and brochures painted on the buildings create visual and physical pollution. Presentation techniques (presentation of objects, stories, and themes, and all image formats provided for sighting) can be a vital element in creating more sustainable forms of tourism. Sustainable promotion should be planned by reflecting the unique characteristics of a rural tourism area (Kimani, 2015).

CONCLUSION

Green marketing strategies can be a determining factor in meeting new consumer needs and can be a source of competitive advantage at the national or regional level in the long run. Short-term investments can be seen in technology costs, personnel quality and production processes. But by reducing energy and raw material consumption, green marketing strategies can help firms compete in the long run by providing economic benefits. This can be achieved in a win-win situation where both environmental benefits and increased competitiveness are achieved at the same time.

Just as in other market segments, targeted consumers need to be identified, so that they can be effectively addressed and their needs are satisfied based on specifically designed marketing programs.

In addition, it is important to ensure that such information is accessible through the most appropriate communication channels, depending on the different information needs of the defined market segments, and ensure that all participants are able to grow up to green tourism and the public.

Another important role of green marketing is to find new approaches and mechanisms to finance educational programs and conservation activities from income generated by rural tourism. As a business philosophy, green marketing offers a special way to implement marketing activities and marketing strategies, tools and models to achieve rural tourism goals.

Rural tourists have critical attitudes towards environmentally unsound consumption practices and wish to incorporate this awareness into the way they travel.

Green marketing should ensure that decision maker at the national, regional and local level, but also at the level of individual supplier of ecotourism products, are systematically and continuously provided with information, guidelines and tools based on the latest research, especially in the area of market segmentation and segment profiling according to the level of environmental awareness and environmental actions taken in reality.

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