

## Expression of Green Marketing Developing the Conception of Corporate Social Responsibility

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*Significant changes of business environment that impact not only the activity of companies but the shift of the basic values and attitudes of the society have been observed recently. The changes within the activity of companies are expressed through the increase of competition within the dynamic market and the change of needs and expectations held by consumers and other stakeholders. It has been noticed that consumers more and more often prefer eco-friendly, safe and “clean” products that do not pollute the environment. The changing attitudes of consumers regarding environmental protection, ecology, social responsibility and the change of consumption habits force enterprises to look for new alternatives of activities, where the main principles of corporate social responsibility would be integrated.*

*Recent theoretical as well as practical scientific studies confirm the importance of the development of the corporate social responsibility conception and of its integration into different areas of company activity. In terms of marketing, such changes determine the need to know the new, so called green, consumer and to adapt marketing decisions to the focus on ascertaining the expectations and satisfying the needs of such a consumer.*

*The article assents to the attitude that it is possible to implement corporate social responsibility in the aspect of satisfaction of consumer needs by applying different marketing theories and conceptions. As an increasing amount of attention is given to the questions of green marketing in scientific literature, this area of marketing theory is chosen as the main research object of the article. Based on this it is stated that seeking to fully satisfy the needs of one of the main stakeholders of an enterprise – consumers, it is purposeful to analyse green marketing priorities, which would resound the essential ideas of corporate social responsibility.*

*The main green marketing priorities of an enterprise, analysed in the article, encompass the recognition of expectations and satisfaction of the needs of green consumers, envisagement of the reaction to green marketing decisions, identification of trust in eco-friendly products and prediction of effectiveness of promotion means.*

*The interpretation of quantitative research results, presented in the article, reveals the expression of marketing priorities based on the example of Lithuanian female consumers of eco-friendly food products. It should be noted that although female consumers of eco-friendly food products are resolved to pay more for an eco-friendly product, they are sensitive to price, believe in the high*

*quality of an eco-friendly product and give priority to the needs of environmental protection. It becomes clear that the reliability of an eco-friendly product is associated with the familiarity of a product brand, with safety and environmental consideration; the safety of an eco-friendly product and positive word-of-mouth recommendations are especially significant for the reliability. Summarizing the priorities of the application of promotion means, it was determined that public relations should be treated as the most effective means of promotion.*

*The performed theoretical and empirical research testifies the necessity of green marketing studies and the need for the identification of its priorities and their inclusion in the development of the corporate social responsibility conception.*

**Keywords:** *green marketing, corporate social responsibility, green consumer, Lithuanian market of eco-friendly food products.*

### Introduction

During the last decade as concern for environmental protection and threats, posed by the humanity, has increased, social responsibility is turning from an abstract idea into a conception, and an increasing number of companies seek to integrate it into their activities. Nowadays corporate social responsibility becomes an integral part of the business vocabulary and is regarded as a crucially important issue in management (Ubius, Alas, 2009). Piercy, Lane (2009); Jasinskas, Simanaviciene (2009), Dagiliene (2010), claim that implementation of corporate social responsibility may help company in creating competitive advantage, may have positive influence on its reputation, employee loyalty and employment, activity efficiency and sales volumes.

On the other hand, specific tools and methods that would enable to reach positive results of implementation of the conception of corporate social responsibility are still lacking and the barriers exist to effective implementation of CSR initiatives (Piercy, Lane, 2009). The performed research shows that enterprises usually apply the principles of corporate social responsibility intuitively and fragmentarily (Banyte, Gadeikiene, 2008).

The changing consumer preferences with concern for future generations, environmental protection, and responsibility for the results of human activities require enterprises to have new decisions and new ways for the creation of competitive advantage. Currently, sustainable

development, i.e. a compromise between environmental, economic, and social objectives of society, is inevitably essential in order to reach the well-being of the present and future generations (Ciegis, Ramanauskiene, Startiene, 2009; Baltrenas, Kazlauskiene, 2009).

The changing consumer attitudes also influence the change of marketing topics that dominate in scientific literature (Banyte, Gadeikiene, 2008), when an increasing amount of attention is given to the problems of green marketing (Grundey, Zaharia, 2008). More and more frequently theoretical and empirical studies of green marketing are based on the aim of business enterprises to effectively satisfy the growing needs and expectations of green consumers and to successfully implement the sales goals of eco-friendly products (Banyte, Brazioniene, Gadeikiene, 2010).

The performed studies of scientific literature (Cole, Orman, 2008; Ramanauskiene, 2008; Ottman, Reilly, 1998; Ottman, Stafford, Hartman, 2006; Smoliankina, 2000; Grundey, 2003; Grundey, Zaharia, 2008) enable to state that the phenomenon of green marketing, when developing the conception of corporate social responsibility, has not been sufficiently revealed yet. And empirical researches in the area of green marketing in Lithuania have been started only recently (Liesionis, 2007; Gargasas, Ramanauskiene, Rukuiziene, 2007; Ramanauskiene, 2008; Grundey, 2009; Lynikaite, Liesionis, 2010; Banyte, Brazioniene, Gadeikiene, 2010).

The present investigation level of green marketing shows that as competitiveness increases especially as the factor of social and ecological responsibility of business becomes more important (Juscus, Snieska, 2008), green marketing may become an effective tool for acquiring company's competitive advantage and for strengthening the image. Therefore the analysis and identification of the expression of green marketing priorities in order to make suitable marketing decisions is especially relevant and timely.

With regard to the mentioned aspects the **problem**, tackled in this article, is formulated with the help of the following question: what are the priorities of application of the green marketing in the context of corporate social responsibility implementation?

**Research object:** green marketing priorities.

The **objective of the article:** to perform theoretical studies of the expression of green marketing priorities in the context of corporate social responsibility and to base them empirically on the example of Lithuanian female consumers of eco-friendly food products.

**Research methods:** systematic and comparative analysis of scientific literature; quantitative research – survey.

### **The conception of corporate social responsibility in the aspect of satisfaction of consumer needs**

Precise definition of corporate social responsibility conceptual framework is quite problematic (Piercy, Lane, 2009; Jasinskas, Simanaviciene, 2009). Nevertheless a few aspects exist that dominate in the works of most authors, who analyse the definition of corporate social responsibility.

Most often this encompasses the provision that enterprises should be interested not only in profit, but should also get involved in activities that would provide social value to stakeholders (Lingreen, Swaen, Johnston, 2009; Susniene, Sargunas, 2009). The researchers Jonker, Marberg (2007) claim that the disputes within the area of social responsibility are related with the behaviour that consolidates corporate social responsibility to various groups of stakeholders. The differences while interpreting the conception of CSR within the literature of management and marketing were comprehensively examined by Maignan, Ralston (2002) and Maignan, Swaen (2004) that provided an integrated assessment of conception of corporate social responsibility (CSR). The authors state that the content of CSR conceptual framework is determined by three constituents, containing *principles, processes and their impact on stakeholder groups*, the interconnection of which proves the dynamic character of CSR. Therefore, the definition of corporate social responsibility should be perceived as *equilibrium of corporate social responsibilities, principles and marketing activities (processes), allowing to satisfy or surpass expectations of stakeholders, their groups and the society* (Banyte, Gadeikiene, 2008).

The concept of stakeholders is thus central to CSR (Lingreen, Swaen, Johnston, 2009). There exist different ways of distribution of stakeholders, but most often employees, customers, shareholders, and suppliers (Ferrel, 2004) are considered to be the most important stakeholders. In the context of corporate social responsibility satisfaction of their needs and recognition of their expectations are essential aspects of successful company activity. Susniene, Sargunas (2009) state that different areas and different needs dominate when talking about separate stakeholder groups. For example, from the point of view of consumers the most important needs are oriented towards the product and aspects, related to it. When talking about employees, their most important needs are related with the safety, appeal, etc. of their workplace. Society's needs are often oriented towards the aspects of environmental protection, etc.

Enterprises apply various management methods, implementing the conception of social responsibility and seeking to satisfy the needs of stakeholder groups. What concerns consumers as one of the most important stakeholder groups of a company, management decisions are associated with the company's marketing activities. Precisely for this reason lately different marketing theories and conceptions are used for implementation of the corporate social responsibility conception. Although essentially they reflect the same underlying ideas, they may be called differently. It is green marketing (e.g., Polonsky, 1994; Ottman, 1992; Smoliankina, 2000; Prakash, 2002; Ottman et al., 2006; Cole, Orman, 2008; Liesionis, 2007; Bakanauskas, Liesionis, 2002), ecological marketing (e.g., Tamuliene, 2005; Belousova, 2005; Ramanauskiene, 2008), environmental marketing (e.g., Coddington, 1993; Polonsky, Mintu-Wimsatt, 1995), sustainable marketing (e.g., Fuller, 1999), and other theories. Prakash (2002) states that although green marketing has different names, it does not change the

essence of its treatment as a phenomenon, and currently the concept of "green" marketing is becoming more and more established in scientific literature.

Discussing the conception of green marketing, Ramanauskiene (2008) notices that, when applying green marketing, companies not only make decisions, oriented towards sales, but also assess social responsibility and environmental impact. Many authors (Ottman, Reilly, 1998; Ottman, Stafford, Hartman, 2006; Ramanauskiene, 2008) notice that often it is mistakenly thought that green marketing is based on advertisement and popularization of products with environmental characteristics. In fact green marketing encompasses a much wider area, related to products of personal and industrial use as well as to services. Having reviewed scientific literature, it may be stated that green marketing joins many activities – product modification, changes of manufacturing processes, packaging decisions, application of advertising, etc., therefore it is not easy to create its unambiguous definition. Evaluating various interpretation of the conception of green marketing, also with regard to the novelty and topicality of definitions of green marketing and to the systemic approach to the phenomenon of green marketing, the article agrees with the definition, proposed by Liesionis (2007): *green marketing is a marketing activity, which seeks to make the existence of the company acceptable or even useful for the environment and the society.*

A company seeks for certain goals when applying the principles and technologies of green marketing in its activities. Ottman, Stafford, Hartman (2006) note that there are two main objectives of green marketing: to improve the quality of the environment and to increase the satisfaction of consumers. Prakash (2002) states that green marketing is closely related with the eco-industry and public harmony, therefore the goals of companies, working in such a way, are oriented towards the implementation of the increase of corporate responsibility for the manufacture of eco-friendly products, the use of material substances and equipment, harmless for the environment, and of ecological efficiency. This substantiates the need to identify the expression of the priorities of green marketing in the context of implementing corporate social responsibility.

### **Green marketing priorities within the concept of corporate social responsibility**

All above mentioned proves that only the firm's ability to adapt to changing stakeholder needs and expectations may be a factor of success in competition in a dynamic market. Corporate social responsibility has recently become increasingly topical, its integration into different areas of activities, including the marketing, is becoming a necessity and a priority task for many companies.

More and more often the consumers' needs to buy eco-friendly, safe, "clean" products can be identified. This determines the necessity of green marketing application in the implementation of corporate social responsibility. With regards to the fact that there is a lack of studies in the field of green marketing, the identification of its priorities in the context of green consumer decision making to purchase eco-friendly products is especially relevant. Scientific studies (Ottman, Reilly, 1998; Alston, Prince Roberts,

1999; Bakanauskas, Liesionis, 2002; Pickett-Baker, Ozaki, 2008; Ramanauskiene, 2008) show that properties of an eco-friendly product have a big influence on consumers' decision making regarding the buying of this product.

With regard to theoretical studies and empirical research that testify the influence of the properties of eco-friendly products on consumers' decisions, Pickett-Baker, Ozaki (2008) distinguish four priorities of green marketing as researchable.

### **The recognition of expectations and the satisfaction of needs of a green consumer.**

Hoyer, MacInnis (2004) note that green consumers, when making decisions regarding the buying of an eco-friendly product, already have certain expectations regarding the properties, quality and other aspects of the eco-friendly product. Such consumers expect to receive a higher value when buying an eco-friendly product. According to Ramanauskiene (2008), assessment and satisfaction of ecological expectations of consumers is an important factor, when seeking for the application of green marketing. Ecological expectations of consumers influence their behaviour, the result of which is a positive decision, made by consumers, regarding the buying of an eco-friendly product. On the other hand, Pickett-Baker, Ozaki (2008) emphasize that even if consumers approve of environmental protection, that does not mean that they will necessarily act as green consumers, and their decisions regarding buying will be favourable for eco-friendly products (especially if consumers were disappointed by their previous decisions). But these scientists make a conclusion that there is a connection among expectations and needs of green consumers and their behaviour that determines the level of consumption of eco-friendly products in the market. Therefore it is possible to state that the recognition of expectations of green consumers and satisfaction of their needs regarding eco-friendly products is an essential marketing priority in the context of corporate social responsibility implementation.

### **Prediction of green consumers' reaction towards green marketing decisions.**

Although green consumers prefer values that form their attitude towards eco-friendly products and influence their actions regarding the buying of eco-friendly products, they do not follow them all the time (Pickett-Baker, Ozaki, 2008). This happens because consumers make decisions regarding buying under the influence of thoughts (cognitive function) and emotions (emotional function). Consumer behaviour is influenced by a complex effect of thoughts and feelings, and Hoyer, MacInnis (2004) define such behaviour as buying behaviour. According to Pickett-Baker, Ozaki (2008), in order to make decisions regarding the application of influence measures for the decision making of green consumers on time, it is necessary to constantly observe the changes of green consumers' attitudes that are inspired in an integrated way by the change of thoughts and feelings. It is important not only to foresee the reaction of green consumers to green marketing decisions, but also it is important to find means that would enable to affect them in such a way that the final result of decision making (the buying of an eco-friendly product) would be favourable for a certain company. Pickett-Baker,

Ozaki (2008), summarizing opinions of various authors on green consumer reactions to green marketing decisions, conclude that a typical reaction of a green consumer to green marketing decisions is readiness to pay a bigger price for an eco-friendly product than for an analogous simple product.

#### **Identification of green consumers' trust in eco-friendly products.**

Trust in an eco-friendly product is very important for green consumers. In the article trust in the eco-friendly product is treated as reliability and safety of the eco-friendly product, of which consumers may be persuaded from their own experience of consuming eco-friendly products or from the experience of other consumers (close people, friends, acquaintances, etc.).

Scientists Pickett-Baker, Ozaki (2008) emphasize that word-of-mouth recommendations have an essential influence on the making of the decision to buy food and household products. Empirical research, performed by Hoyer, MacInnis (2004), proves that it is possible to receive a positive consumer decision four times more often if s/he is effectively persuaded by sales managers or other operating personnel. On the other hand negative verbal responses about a product may cause great damage to the company. According to Pickett-Baker, Ozaki (2008), consumers evaluate properties of eco-friendly products extra carefully. Ottman, Reilly (1998) notice, that if previous variants of eco-friendly products were not of very good quality, and if negative verbal responses were widespread among consumers, it is very likely that even later alternatives of eco-friendly products of better quality would not be saleable. This may be explained by consumer mistrust in the above-mentioned products, which is based on their own negative experience of consuming or on the experience of other consumers.

Safety of an eco-friendly product is important for consumers' trust in it. This aspect is especially emphasized by Ramanauskiene (2008), who states that effectiveness of green marketing mostly depends on the abilities of a company to ensure ecological safety of their products. If a company's activity does not guarantee complete ecological safety due to its particularity, social activities, which must be oriented towards the identification of public interests and formation of public opinion, is an important factor. Also coordination of profit-seeking or shareholders' interests with public requirements regarding environmental protection is also related to it. Ramanauskiene (2008) notes that the business environment in most cases is oriented towards the seeking of profit during a long or short period of time, but in this case it is important to assess a company's ecological obligations and means and ways of seeking profit. It is important for them not to contradict each other.

Summarizing opinions of various authors on trust of green consumers in eco-friendly products, Pickett-Baker, Ozaki (2008) conclude that consumers place more trust in well-known and safe products and are a lot more demanding regarding eco-friendly products, the use of which is based on previous consumer experience, going from lip to lip.

#### **Efficiency of promotion means on the decision making of green consumers.**

Seeking for a green consumer's decision regarding the buying of an eco-friendly product that would be favourable for the company, intensive communication is especially important. Ramanauskiene (2008) states, that communication is understood as a "process, during which a company presents its ecological attitudes to consumers and the public". Performed research shows that average consumers have clearer attitudes regarding the buying of a traditional product when compared with attitudes regarding eco-friendly products. Therefore when seeking to form a favourable attitude with regard to eco-friendly products, more intensive marketing communications should be applied. Theoretical studies have proved that various reference groups have a big influence on consumption of eco-friendly products (Hoyer, MacInnis, 2004). Therefore, according to Pickett-Baker, Ozaki (2008), associations of reference groups using or suggesting to use eco-friendly products are often used in advertising. Seeking for a green consumer's decision, favourable for the company, promotion is actively used, the main function of which is to emphasize the exceptional nature and uniqueness of the company and the product and advantages of the product when compared with competitors (Ramanauskiene, 2008).

The main aims of ecological promotion are the following (Bakanauskas, Liesionis, 2002):

- To inform consumers about the company and the product, so that the target audience would in time and qualitatively get acquainted with the company's products, their operation, environmental and other advantages and benefit, received by consumers when buying environmentally friendly products.
- To convince consumers to choose a type of product that is harmless for the environment, to change their preconception towards the product, to stimulate, to get them interested in the product.
- To remind consumers that soon they will need the product, to indicate, where and how they can obtain it, to thank them for their choice and for buying.

Seeking for the implementation of the aims of ecological promotion, it is recommended to use various promotion means: advertising, sales promotion, public relations, and personal selling. According to Ramanauskiene (2008), the following promotion means are used most widely for the implementation of the aims of ecological promotion:

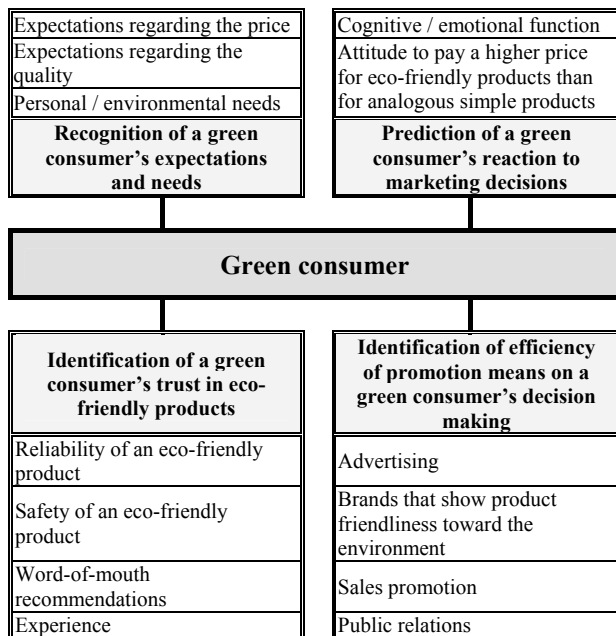
- *Announcement.* Since 1990 many companies have started to offer "eco", "bio", "organic", and similar products, but without a supporting environmental protection strategy only few products have become successful. Companies should direct their announcements to the target market segment, emphasizing environmental advantages of products, for example, the practicality of smaller packages of concentrated products or the financial aspect when buying replenishments.
- *The use of logos and brands that show the product's friendliness towards the environment.* Currently various ecological logos and brands are used in the whole world seeking to guarantee that the manufacture and consumption of the purchased product correspond to certain social or environmental criteria. These

brands act also as a marketing means that can stimulate buyers to choose a certain product.

- *Sales promotion.* In this case a positive company image is created; consumer interest in environmental questions and ecological products is increased by various means, for example, by using ecological packages and signs to show that the product has been manufactured from recyclable material.
- *Public relations.* This is an especially important aspect of corporate ecological promotion. As experience shows it is useless and sometimes even harmless not to pay attention to public concern for environmental protection.

According to some authors, although companies seek to apply various promotion means intensively, eco-friendly products are only products that fill a certain niche, therefore mass media, used for communication with consumers, does not influence much the increase of their demand. Pooley, O'Connor (2000) emphasize that a wide presentation of information about environmental problems on mass media does not necessarily stimulate bigger consumption of eco-friendly products. On the other hand, ecological sophistication of consumers is an important factor that influences their decision making (Pickett-Baker, Ozaki, 2008). According to Hoyer, MacInnis (2004), information about eco-friendly products is important, when consumers make decisions regarding the buying of a certain eco-friendly product.

Figure 1 presents a summarized view on green marketing priorities, undoubtedly related to the implementation of the conception of corporate social responsibility.



**Figure 1.** Priorities of green marketing in the context of development of corporate social responsibility

Summarizing it is possible to conclude that the assessment of the mentioned priorities is characteristic of those companies, which, by integrating the main provisions of corporate social responsibility into their activities, seek for competitive advantage and orient themselves towards the stimulation of green consumer to buy. The logical

structure of the expression of green marketing priorities in the context of implementation of corporate social responsibility, shown in Figure 1, is used for the empirical research.

In summary it is possible to conclude that assessment of the mentioned priorities is characteristic of those companies, which, by integrating the main provisions of corporate social responsibility into their activities, seek for competitive advantage and orient themselves towards the stimulation of green consumer to buy. The logical structure of the expression of green marketing priorities in the context of the implementation of corporate social responsibility, shown in Figure 1, is used for the empirical research.

### Research design

Empirical researches conducted by Lithuanian scientists show that the supply of eco-friendly products has increased by about 10 percent during the last 10 years in Lithuania (Ramanauskiene, Gargasas, 2007). Approximately, general demand for eco-friendly products in Lithuania will exceed the supply for at least 5 to 10 years (Ramanauskiene, Gargasas, 2007; Rutkoviene, Garliauskiene, 2007; Rutkoviene, Ribasauskiene, 2003). Therefore, Lithuania may be attributed to the countries with developing market for eco-friendly products.

Studies undertaken by many Lithuanian scientists (Ksivickiene, 2003; Eidukeviciene, Buciene, 2005; Ceponyte, 2006; Rutkoviene, Garliauskiene, 2007; Ramanauskiene, Gargasas, 2007; Gargasas, Ramanauskiene, Rukuiziene, 2007) and the analysis of their findings reveal that eco-friendly food products are most often purchased in Lithuania and women are generally the ones who purchase them. The most important motives for choosing eco-friendly food products are safety, quality, better taste and environmental sustainability.

Considering the results of theoretical studies performed in the article and seeing that food products constitute the majority of purchased eco-friendly products and they are more often obtained by women than men (Chitra, 2007; Mostafa, 2007), the **aim of the empirical research** is formulated as follows: *to reveal the expression of green marketing priorities based on the example of Lithuanian female consumers of eco-friendly food products and to ground the necessity of their inclusion in the development of the corporate social responsibility conception in the company.*

The following hypotheses have been tested in the study:

H1: The interviewed female consumers are not sensitive to the price of eco-friendly food products and think that the products are of high quality.

H2: Emotions dominate in the acquisition process of eco-friendly food products.

H3: Personal experience is more important than positive word-of-mouth communications when choosing eco-friendly food products.

H4: The promotion means that has the biggest influence on Lithuanian consumers of eco-friendly food products is advertising.

In pursuance of the study aim, quantitative research method is chosen to perform empirical study in the article,

i.e. survey using a questionnaire. The questionnaires with close-end questions were presented to respondents selected using the method of non-probability convenience sampling. The survey was pursued in the stores of one of the largest network of Lithuanian retail trade. All women, who were buying eco-friendly food products and who agreed to participate in the study, were surveyed. 111 respondents were interrogated, yet only 105 questionnaires were chosen to be relevant when analyzing data.

## Research results

With regard to the aim of the research, presented in this article, which is oriented towards the analysis of the expression of green marketing priorities in the case of Lithuanian female consumers of eco-friendly food products, firstly it is purposeful to divide respondents into certain groups according to eco-friendly food product consumption habits. Green consumers' profile is analyzed in the article by Banyte, Brazioniene, Gadeikienė (2010). It presents research with the results that allow distinguishing green consumer segments according to different psychographic-behavioural and demographic characteristics. Based on the results of the mentioned research, this article will analyse the expression of marketing priorities on the whole as well as with regard to consumers' tendency to contribute to environmental protection and showing differences between various consumer types.

### Recognition of Lithuanian female consumers' of eco-friendly food products expectations and satisfaction of their needs.

Summarizing dominating expectations and needs of Lithuanian female consumers of eco-friendly food products, we notice that *they are sensitive to price of eco-friendly food products, they believe in the high quality of eco-friendly products and prioritize the needs of environmental protection*. So the hypothesis H1 cannot be rejected.

Elaborating on the research results, it should be distinguished that respondents have the biggest need to receive as much information as possible about eco-friendly food products when choosing them ( $M = 7.34$ ;  $M$  – mean of respondents' evaluation in 10 points scale). Besides, respondents almost always think over their needs and possibilities before deciding to buy eco-friendly food products ( $M = 6.42$ ). On the other hand, although most respondents constantly feel the need to buy eco-friendly food products ( $M = 6.04$ ), only about half of them buy eco-friendly food products at least once a week ( $M = 5.50$ ).

While revealing personal and environmental needs of Lithuanian female consumers of eco-friendly food products, who participated in the research, it should be noted that most respondents choose eco-friendly food products because they care for their health ( $M = 7.18$ ), because this reveals their lifestyle ( $M = 7.08$ ), and because consumption of eco-friendly products determines longevity ( $M = 6.40$ ). Quantitative research showed that environmental needs were more important than personal needs for most respondents when choosing eco-friendly food products ( $M = 6.38$ ); they approved of activities of organisations that cared for the protection of important natural resources ( $M = 7.34$ ).

While revealing expectations of Lithuanian female consumers of eco-friendly food products for the quality of eco-friendly food products, attention should be drawn to the fact that most respondents are convinced that eco-friendly products are of high quality ( $M = 7.24$ ). They relate the quality of these products with their healthiness ( $M = 7.44$ ) and reliability ( $M = 7.24$ ). The mentioned aspects are more expressed in the answers of those respondents, who are more inclined to contribute to environmental protection.

Research results show that expectations regarding the price of eco-friendly food products should be incorporated into marketing decisions, because respondents indicated that price was important when making the decision to buy ( $M = 6.30$ ). Respondents do not trust low prices of eco-friendly products; they believe that a low price of an eco-friendly product shows that this product might be of bad quality ( $M = 6.30$ ). On the other hand, respondents indicated that prices of eco-friendly food products did not always correspond to their possibilities ( $M = 6.18$ ).

It should be noted that differences in expectations regarding price according to the inclination to contribute to environmental protection were indicated during the analysis of the results. They are presented in the Table 1.

It can be seen that loyal green female consumers with the strongest inclination to contribute to environmental protection agree with the statement that prices of eco-friendly food products correspond to their possibilities the most ( $M = 8.05$ ). Consumers, who are completely unwilling to change, think that a low price of an eco-friendly food product may show that this product may be of bad quality ( $M = 6.50$ ). The price of an eco-friendly food product is the most important factor when making the decision to buy for consumers, who are developing towards being green consumers ( $M = 7.15$ ).

Table 1

**Relation between consumer types according to their inclination to contribute to environmental conservation and expectations regarding price of eco-friendly food products, mean**

Expectations of respondents regarding price	Consumer type according to the inclination to contribute to environmental protection				
	Loyal green consumers	Less devoted green consumers	Consumers, developing towards being green	Conservative consumers, unwilling to change	Consumers, completely unwilling to change
Prices of eco-friendly products correspond to my possibilities	8.05	7.35	6.20	5.20	4.10
I believe that a low price of an eco-friendly product shows that this product may be of low quality	6.25	6.35	6.20	6.20	6.50
The price of an eco-friendly food product is very important for me when making a decision to buy	5.90	6.10	7.15	6.20	6.15

### Prediction of Lithuanian female consumers' of eco-friendly food products reaction to green marketing decisions.

Research results show that the interviewed consumers of eco-friendly food products in Lithuania are ruled by emotions in their decision making process of buying eco-friendly food products, i.e. *emotional function is decisive*. This is based on the agreement with statements that emotional disposition has an influence on respondents' purchase ( $M = 7.26$ ), besides, after the acquisition of an eco-friendly product a big emotional elation is felt ( $M = 7.26$ ). So the hypothesis H2 cannot be rejected.

Also respondents have a characteristic attitude to pay a price, higher by approximately 5-10 percent, for eco-friendly food products than for analogous simple products (65 percent of respondents agreed with this statement). It should be noted that domination of all above mentioned aspects directly depends on the level of respondents' inclination to contribute to environmental conservation. Most respondents, who have the strongest need to contribute to environmental conservation (the loyal green consumer type), are ready to pay for eco-friendly products even up to 50 percent more than for analogous simple products.

### Identification of Lithuanian female consumers' of eco-friendly food products trust in eco-friendly products.

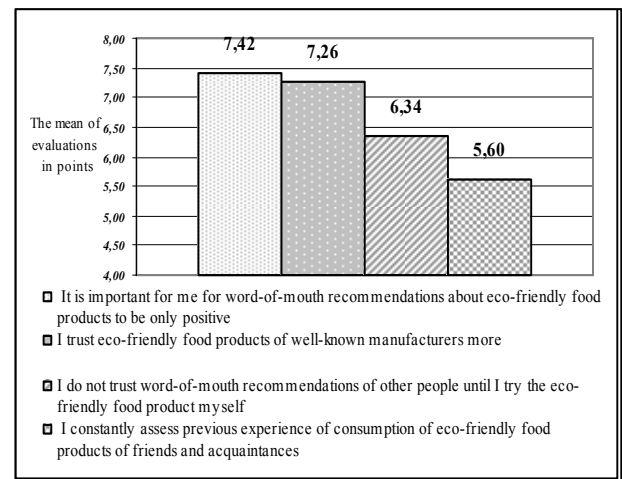
Summarizing it is possible to state that female consumers of eco-friendly food products in Lithuania associate the reliability of these products with the familiarity of the product brand, with safety of an eco-friendly product, and with environmental consideration. Positive word-of-mouth recommendations are especially significant for trust in eco-friendly products.

When elaborating on research results, it should be noted that most respondents trust eco-friendly food products of well-known manufacturers more ( $M = 7.26$ ). Also it is very important for them for the eco-friendly food product to be safe ( $M = 7.68$ ). Eco-friendliness and environmental consideration of such products are a little less important ( $M = 7.60$ ).

The results of the performed research in the aspects of the importance of word-of-mouth recommendations and experience revealed factors that influenced the trust of Lithuanian female consumers of eco-friendly food products in eco-friendly food products (Figure 2). So it is possible to state that positive word-of-mouth recommendations about eco-friendly food products ( $M = 7.42$ ) and familiarity of the manufacturer ( $M = 7.26$ ) are especially important for most respondents.

Besides, results of quantitative research revealed that most respondents never buy eco-friendly food products with negative previous consumption experience ( $M = 7.86$ ). So, when making the decision to buy an eco-friendly food product, positive verbal communications are more important, but negative consumption experience has a decisive influence on consumers' future decisions. Therefore the hypothesis H3 cannot be rejected.

### Effectiveness of promotion means for Lithuanian female consumers' of eco-friendly food products decision making.



**Figure 2.** Evaluation of factors that influence the trust of respondents in word-of-mouth recommendations and experience of consumption of eco-friendly food products, mean

When summarizing research results regarding the effectiveness of promotion means, it is stated that *public relations have the biggest influence on the decision of Lithuanian consumers to buy eco-friendly food products*, i.e. articles in the press and on the Internet, positive recommendations of doctors about the benefit of consumption of eco-friendly food products, and product brands that show product friendliness towards the environment.

In more detail, it is purposeful to mention that most respondents buy only those eco-friendly food products, which are constantly being advertised ( $M = 6.54$ ), but also they notice announcements of eco-friendly food products, they are always interested in them and value them ( $M = 6.76$ ). Besides, most respondents believe that advertisement about the properties of eco-friendly food products is always true. When analysing respondents' attitude towards other promotion means of eco-friendly products during the quantitative research it became clear that respondents quite often pay attention to sales promotion of eco-friendly food products (e.g., discounts, lotteries, etc.) ( $M = 6.08$ ) and choose food products of those product brands, which show product friendliness toward the environment ( $M = 7.54$ ).

Research results show that respondents especially value doctors' recommendations regarding eco-friendly products and their benefit ( $M = 7.34$ ). Most respondents often search the Internet, looking for the information about eco-friendly food products ( $M = 6.66$ ) and read articles in journals and newspapers about eco-friendly food products and the benefit they provide ( $M = 6.54$ ).

The analysis of the link between the types of respondents according to their inclination to contribute to environmental conservation and the effectiveness of advertisement, product brands, sales promotion, and public relations for the decision making process reveals that when deciding which product to buy consumers, who are developing towards being green consumers, most often follow promotional messages ( $M = 7.90$ ). The bigger part of less committed green consumers ( $M = 8.10$ ) analyse and value promotional messages and think that the advertisement of eco-friendly products is always true. Loyal

green consumers agree with the statement, that they choose products of those product brands, which show product friendliness towards the environment, the most ( $M = 8.85$ ).

Having summarized the evaluations of statements, presented to respondents, it may be stated that public relations are the most effective promotion means, followed by advertisement, familiarity of the product brand, and sales promotion. Therefore the hypothesis H4 can be rejected.

### **The use of research results for the development of the conception of corporate social responsibility**

Seeking to present suggestions for the development of the conception of corporate social responsibility, the main research results are used that allow to explain the expectations of green consumers, to improve the satisfaction of needs, to reach the desired consumer reaction with the help of marketing means, to increase the trust in eco-friendly products, and to effectively apply promotion means.

1. With regard to identified expectations and needs of green consumers, it is thought that it is purposeful to apply the following solutions:

- Seeking to divert consumers' attention from the price, high quality of eco-friendly food products and the benefit they provide should be emphasized. It is important that high quality of eco-friendly food products would be clearly understood by consumers and would be emphasized, relating it to their reliability and healthiness.
- When satisfying the needs of consumers of eco-friendly food products, environmental needs should be prioritized, therefore product eco-friendliness and environmental consideration should be fundamental focuses in the actions of manufacture, distribution, and promotion of eco-friendly food products.

2. Having evaluated the distinguished reactions of green consumers to marketing decisions, it is purposeful to present the following suggestions:

- Seeking to arouse positive consumer emotions regarding the purchase of an eco-friendly food product, it is purposeful to emphasize its benefit for a certain consumer, stressing positive results of consumption of eco-friendly food products: good well-being, positive effect on health, and longevity.
- When positioning the product, it is important to show consumers that the product is really eco-friendly, and that consumers would not only satisfy their own personal needs by buying it, but would also contribute to environmental consideration. This should arouse positive consumer emotions and stimulate the consumption of eco-friendly food products.
- It is suggested to stress the high quality of eco-friendly food products and environmental consideration as an added value for a little higher price of an eco-friendly food product when compared with analogous simple products.

3. With regard to factors which have the biggest influence on consumers' trust in eco-friendly food product, the following decisions are suggested:

- Seeking to ensure trust in eco-friendly food products, their manufacturers and sellers should create a strong and reliable brand image of the eco-friendly food product and communicate it, emphasizing safety and environmental consideration.
- Seeking to ensure sales of eco-friendly food products, supermarkets and other tradesmen, when forming the range of their goods, should prioritize eco-friendly food products with well-known product brands, valued by consumers.
- Having assessed that positive word-of-mouth recommendations are especially important for female consumers of eco-friendly food products, it is suggested to create special Internet blogs, where consumption of eco-friendly food products would be popularized, and consumption experience would be shared.

4. Analysis of effectiveness of different promotion means has stipulated the formulation of the following suggestions:

- Seeking for an effective popularization of eco-friendly food products, it is purposeful to do this with the help of public relations. It is purposeful to publish relevant information articles about eco-friendly food products and the benefit they provide in specialized publications and on the Internet. It is suggested to create special Internet websites, where green consumers could find out more about manufacturers of eco-friendly food products, the origin of eco-friendly food products, and peculiarities of their manufacture.
- Seeking to inform consumers of eco-friendly food products about the advantages of consumption of eco-friendly food products correctly and professionally, it is purposeful to organize meetings with doctors, whose recommendations are especially valued. Also positive doctor recommendations should be published in specialized publications or on Internet websites.
- It is important for product brands that show product friendliness toward the environment to be clearly noticeable, understandable, and recognizable.

### **Conclusions**

1. As the tendency of healthy living is becoming more expressed when consumers start to treat environmental consideration as the consideration for oneself, coordination of environmental, economic, and social community goals with company goals becomes relevant for business enterprises. Current theoretical as well as practical scientific researches confirm the topicality of the development of the corporate social responsibility conception and the importance of its integration into various areas of company activities. From the point of view of marketing such changes determine the need for the application and development of the theory of the new, so called green marketing. In this article green marketing is considered to be such marketing activities of an enterprise, which seek to make the existence of the



- enterprise acceptable or even useful for the environment and the society.
2. Analysing green marketing priorities within the concept of corporate social responsibility, four main priorities of marketing activities of an enterprise that applies the conception of corporate social responsibility are distinguished:
    - *The recognition of expectations and the satisfaction of needs of green consumers* encompass the detection of expectations regarding price and quality and distinguishing of dominating personal and environmental consumer needs.
    - *Prediction of green consumers' reaction towards green marketing decisions* is related to consumer attitudes to pay a higher price for an eco-friendly product than for an analogous simple product. Besides, when predicting the behaviour of green consumers, it is purposeful to distinguish, which function – emotional (feelings) or cognitive (thoughts) – dominates when green consumers make the decision to buy an eco-friendly product.
    - *Green consumers' trust in eco-friendly products* is treated as reliability and safety of the eco-friendly product, of which consumers may be persuaded from their own experience of consuming eco-friendly products or from the experience of other consumers (close people, friends, acquaintances, etc.).
  3. Summarizing the results of the empirical research, intended to reveal the expression of green marketing priorities in the case of female consumers of eco-friendly food products, it was determined, that:
    - *Prediction of the efficiency of promotion means – advertising, product brands, sales promotion, public relations – on the decision making of green consumers.*
    - They are sensitive to price of eco-friendly food products; they believe in the high quality of eco-friendly products and prioritize the needs of environmental protection.
    - They are ruled by emotions in their decision making process of buying eco-friendly food products, i.e. emotional function is decisive.
    - They associate the reliability of eco-friendly food products with the familiarity of the product brand, with safety of an eco-friendly product, and with environmental consideration. Positive word-of-mouth recommendations are especially significant for the trust in eco-friendly products.
    - Public relations have the biggest influence on the decision of Lithuanian consumers to buy eco-friendly food products, i.e. articles in the press and on the Internet, positive recommendations of doctors about the benefit of consumption of eco-friendly food products, and product brands that show product friendliness towards the environment.

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#### **Žaliojo marketingo raiška plėtojant įmonių socialinės atsakomybės koncepciją**

Santrauka

Pastaruoju metu stebimi reikšmingi verslo aplinkos pokyčiai turi įtakos ne tik įmonių veiklai, bet lemia pagrindinių visuomenės vertybių kaitą. Besikeičiančios suinteresuotųjų grupių preferencijos ir nuostatos dėl aplinkosaugos, ekologijos ir socialinės atsakomybės, vartojimo įpročių kaita verčia įmones ieškoti naujų veiklos alternatyvų, į kurias būtų įtraukti pagrindiniai įmonių socialinės atsakomybės (toliau – ISA) principai. Tiek teorinėse, tiek praktinėse pastarojo meto mokslinėse studijose patvirtinta, kad ISA iš abstrakčios idėjos tampa koncepcija, kurią vis daugiau įmonių siekia įtraukti į savo

veikla. Kita vertus, pasigendama konkrečių priemonių ir būdų, kurie įgalintų pasiekti teigiamų ĮSA koncepcijos taikymo rezultatų. Atlikti tyrimai rodo, kad įmonės dažnai intuityviai ir fragmentuotai taiko ĮSA principus (Banyte, Gadeikiene, 2008; Piercy, Lane, 2009).

Mokslinėse studijose atskleidžiama, kad marketingo požiūriu ĮSA koncepcijos plėtotė neatsiejama nuo naujojo, vadinamojo žaliajo, vartotojo pažinimo būtinybės ir marketingo sprendimų pritaikymo tenkinant tokio vartotojo poreikius. Taigi mokslinėje literatūroje taip pat keičiasi ir marketingo tematikos (Banyte, Gadeikiene, 2008), kuriose vis didesnis dėmesys skiriamas žaliajo marketingo problematikai (Grundey, Zaharia, 2008). Atlikus mokslinių studijų analizę galima teigti, kad žaliajo marketingo fenomenas plėtojant ĮSA koncepciją dar nėra pakankamai išnagrinėtas. Be to, praktiniai šios srities tyrimai Lietuvoje pradėti atlikti tik pastaruoju metu. Esamas žaliajo marketingo ištyrimo lygis rodo, kad stiprėjančioje konkurencijoje, juolab aktualizuojantis verslo socialinės bei ekologinės atsakomybės veiksniai (Juscusis, Snieska, 2008), savo laiku nustatyti žaliajo marketingo prioritetus ir juos analizuoti tampa ypač aktualu. Atsižvelgiant į minėtus aspektus, šiame straipsnyje sprendžiama **problema** formuluojama klausimu: kokie yra žaliajo marketingo prioritetai įmonių socialinės atsakomybės plėtojimo kontekste?

**Darbo objektas** – žaliajo marketingo prioritetai.

**Darbo tikslas** – nustatyti žaliajo marketingo prioritetų raišką įmonių socialinės atsakomybės kontekste ir ją empiriškai patikrinti Lietuvos ekologiškų maisto prekių vartotojų (moterų) pavyzdžiu.

**Tyrimo metodai:** sisteminė ir lyginamoji mokslinės literatūros analizė; kiekybinis tyrimas – apklausa raštu.

Straipsnyje teigiama, kad nors tiksliai apibrėžti ĮSA gana sudėtinga (Piercy, Lane, 2009), vis dėlto keletas aspektų dominuoja daugumos autorių darbuose. Pritariama, kad ĮSA turi būti suprantama kaip įmonės socialinių išpareigojimų, principų ir marketingo veiklų (procesų), leidžiančių patenkinti ar viršyti suinteresuotųjų asmenų, jų grupių ir visos visuomenės lūkesčius, pusiausvyrą (Maignan, Ralston, 2002; Maignan, Swaen, 2004; Lingreen, Swaen, Johnston, 2009; Susnienė, Sargūnas, 2009). Taigi suinteresuotųjų grupių idėja neatsiejama nuo ĮSA (Lingreen, Swaen, Johnston, 2009).

Suinteresuotųjų grupių skirstymo būdai yra skirtingi, tačiau dažniausiai svarbiausiomis suinteresuotosiomis grupėmis įvardijami darbuotojai, vartotojai, akcininkai ir tiekėjai (Ferre, 2004). Įgyvendindamos socialinės atsakomybės koncepciją ir siekdamas patenkinti suinteresuotųjų grupių poreikius, įmonės taiko įvairius vadybos metodus. Kalbant apie vartotojus kaip apie vieną iš svarbiausių įmonės suinteresuotųjų grupių, tokie vadybos sprendimai asocijuojami su įmonės marketingo veikla. Būtent todėl pastaruoju metu ĮSA koncepcijai įgyvendinti remiamasi skirtingomis marketingo teorijomis ir koncepcijomis. Jos, nors iš esmės atspindi tas pačias pagrindines idėjas, gali būti vadinamos skirtingai. Tai žalio marketingas, ekologinis marketingas, aplinkosauginis marketingas, darnusis marketingas ir kitos teorijos. Prakash (2002) tvirtina, kad skirtingai įvardijamas žalio marketingas nekeičia jo kaip fenomeno traktavimo esmės ir šiuo metu mokslinėje literatūroje vis labiau įsigali žaliajo marketingo sąvoka. Įvertinant įvairias žaliajo marketingo sampratos interpretacijas, taip pat remiantis žaliajo marketingo apibrėžimų naujumu, aktualumu ir sisteminiu požiūriu į žaliajo marketingo fenomeną, straipsnyje pritariama Liesionio (2006) siūlomam apibrėžimui: žalio marketingas – tai marketingo veikla, kuria siekiama, kad įmonės egzistuoti kaip aplinkai ir visuomenei priimtinos ar net naudingos.

Siekiant patenkinti žaliųjų vartotojų poreikius, aktualu nustatyti žaliajo marketingo prioritetus, taikytinus ĮSA plėtojimo kontekste. Remiantis Pickett-Baker, Ozaki (2008) studijų rezultatais, skiriami keturi tirtini žaliajo marketingo prioritetai:

1. Žaliajo vartotojo lūkesčių pažinimas ir poreikių patenkinimas apima lūkesčių dėl kainos ir kokybės išsiaiškinimą ir dominuojančių asmeninių bei aplinkosauginių vartotojo poreikių išskyrimą.

2. Žaliajo vartotojo reakcijos į žaliajo marketingo sprendimus numatymas siejamas su vartotojų nuostatomis mokėti už ekologišką prekę didesnę kainą nei būtų mokama už analogišką paprastą prekę. Be to, numatant žaliajo vartotojo elgseną, tikslinga išsiaiškinti, ar emocinė (jausmai), ar kognityvinė (mintys) funkcija svarbi žaliajam vartotojui priimančiam sprendimą pirkti ekologišką prekę.

3. Žaliajo vartotojo pasitikėjimo ekologiškais prekėmis nustatymas. Straipsnyje pasitikėjimas ekologiška preke traktuojamas kaip ekologiškos prekės patikimumas ir saugumas. Kad prekė patikima ir saugi, vartotojas gali įsitikinti remdamasis savo arba kitų vartotojų (artimųjų, draugų, pažįstamų ir t.t.) ekologiškų prekių vartojimo patirtimi.

4. Rėmimo priemonių veiksmingumas žaliajo vartotojo sprendimams priimti. Atlikti tyrimai rodo, kad žalio vartotojas dažniausiai yra susiformavęs aiškesnes nuostatas dėl tradicinės prekės pirkimo, palyginti su nuostatomis dėl ekologiškų prekių. Todėl siekiant suformuoti palankią vartotojo nuostatą dėl ekologiškų prekių, reikia taikyti intensyvesnes marketingo komunikacijas. Pagrindiniai ekologinio rėmimo tikslai yra šie (Bakanauskas, Liesionis, 2002): informuoti vartotojus apie įmonę ir prekę; įtikinti vartotojus pasirinkti nekenksmingą aplinkai prekę rūšį, pakeisti jų išankstinį nusiteikimą dėl prekės, paskatinti, sudominti preke; priminti vartotojams, kad jiems greitu laiku reikės prekės, nurodyti, kur ir kaip jie gali ją įsigyti, padėkoti už pasirinkimą ir pirkimą. Ramanauskienės (2008) teigimu, labiausiai ekologinio rėmimo tikslams įgyvendinti naudojamos šios rėmimo priemonės: skelbimas; logotipai ir ženklai, rodantys prekės draugiškumą aplinkai; pardavimų skatinimas; viešieji ryšiai.

Atsižvelgiant į šiame straipsnyje atliktų teorinių studijų rezultatus ir įvertinant tai, kad Lietuvoje didžiausią perkamų ekologiškų prekių dalį sudaro maisto prekės, be to, jas dažniau perka moterys nei vyrai (Chitra, 2007; Mostafa, 2007), **empirinio tyrimo tikslas** formuluojamas taip: Lietuvos ekologiškų maisto prekių vartotojų moterų pavyzdžiu atskleisti žaliajo marketingo prioritetus ir pagrįsti jų įtraukimą į įmonių socialinės atsakomybės koncepcijos plėtojimą tikslingumą. Tyrimui atlikti pasirinktas kiekybinis tyrimo metodas – apklausa, naudojant anketą. Klausimynai, kuriuose pateikiami uždaro tipo klausimai, buvo pateikti respondentams, atrinktiems netikimybės patirties būdu. Apklausa vyko vieno iš didžiausių Lietuvos mažmeninės prekybos tinklo parduotuvėse. Apklaustos visos tyrimo dalyvauti moterys, kurios pirkė ekologiškas maisto prekes. Apklausti 111 respondentai, tačiau analizuojant duomenis 105 anketos buvo atrinktos kaip tinkamos.

Pagal išskirtus žaliajo marketingo prioritetus, analizuojant empirinio tyrimo rezultatus, suformuluoti tokie apibendrinimai:

1. Nustačius dominuojančius Lietuvos ekologiškų maisto prekių vartotojų moterų lūkesčius ir poreikius, paaiškėjo, kad jos yra jautrios ekologiškų maisto prekių kainai, tiki aukšta ekologiškų maisto prekių kokybe ir teikia pirmumą aplinkosauginių poreikių tenkinimui.

2. Priimdamos sprendimą pirkti ekologiškas maisto prekes, apklaustos ekologiškų maisto prekių vartotojos Lietuvoje vadovaujasi emocijomis, t. y. emocinė funkcija yra pagrindinė. Be to, respondentėms būdinga nuostata už ekologiškas maisto prekes mokėti vidutiniškai nuo 5 iki 10 proc. daugiau nei už analogiškas paprastas prekes. Pažymėtina, kad kuo didesnis vartotojų polinkis prisidėti prie aplinkosaugos, tuo daugiau jos pasiryžusios mokėti. Dauguma respondentė, kurių poreikis prisidėti prie aplinkosaugos yra stipriausias (lojalijų žaliųjų vartotojų tipas), už ekologiškas prekes pasiryžusios mokėti net iki 50 proc. brangiau nei už analogiškas paprastas prekes.

3. Ekologiškų maisto prekių vartotojos Lietuvoje šių prekių patikimumą sieja su prekės ženklo žinomumu, ekologiškos maisto prekės saugumu ir aplinkos tausojimu. Pasitikėjimą ekologiška maisto preke ypač lemia teigiamos žodinės rekomendacijos.

4. Didžiausią įtaką Lietuvos ekologiškų maisto prekių vartotojų sprendimui pirkti darantį rėmimo priemonė yra viešieji ryšiai, t. y. straipsniai spaudoje, internete, teigiamos gydytojų rekomendacijos apie ekologiškų maisto prekių vartojimo naudą, taip pat prekių ženklai, rodantys prekės draugiškumą aplinkai.

Atlikto tyrimo rezultatai pagrindžia tai, kad svarbu žaliajo marketingo prioritetus įtraukti į įmonės marketingo veiklą svarbą plėtojant įmonių socialinės atsakomybės koncepciją.

Apibendrinant galima teigti, kad tik įmonės gebėjimai prisitaikyti prie besikeičiančių suinteresuotųjų grupių poreikių ir lūkesčių gali būti sėkmės veiksnys konkuruojant dinamiškoje ir sunkiai prognozuojamoje rinkoje. Pastaruoju metu įmonių socialinei atsakomybei tampant vis labiau aktualiai, ją įtraukti į skirtingas įmonės veiklos sritis, tarp jų ir į marketingą, tampa būtina. Tai yra viena svarbiausių daugelio įmonių uždutis. Tolesnius įmonių socialinės atsakomybės koncepcijos tyrimus iš marketingo mokslo perspektyvos tikslinga sieti su vertės, kurią teikia ĮSA įgyvendinimas skirtingoms suinteresuotosioms grupėms, nagrinėjimu.

Raktažodžiai: *žalio marketingas, įmonių socialinė atsakomybė, žalio vartotojas, Lietuvos ekologiškų maisto prekių rinka.*

The article has been reviewed.

Received in September, 2010; accepted in December, 2010