



MARKETING STRATEGIES IN INFORMAL BUSINESS: MEDIA OF PROMOTION AND ADVERTISING

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Summary

Social criticism against marketing practices, whose effects on society have been notable due to the overexploitation of natural resources in their search to manufacture and sell products that satisfy consumer needs, without foreseeing their long-term effects on the society. These criticisms have caused marketing academics and practitioners to look for different marketing strategies to alleviate the criticism against them, thus creating new approaches with social concerns such as green or ecological marketing, corporate social responsibility marketing, marketing ethics, social marketing and sustainable marketing. The present research work is a critical essay on the way in which marketing can play an important role in the training of new managers with another mentality that pursues goals that support the sustainability of the planet. However, the new marketing approaches are not articulated to have a substantial effect on the preservation of life on the planet. In 2015, the United Nations agreed on the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) consisting of 17 interconnected objectives and set the goal of completing them by 2030; They refer to more responsible forms of consumption and production to reduce poverty and hunger. Hence the proposal of a new orientation called macromarketing or macromarketing. The purpose of macromarketing is to create and maintain a harmonious relationship between marketing and society, and therefore it has more possibilities of adapting to these sustainable development objectives proposed by the UN.

Keywords: Macromarketing, sustainability, consumers.

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LA MACROMERCADOTECNIA Y SU ROL EN LA SUSTENTABILIDAD DEL PLANETA

Resumen

Las críticas sociales en contra de las prácticas del marketing, cuyos efectos en la sociedad han sido notables debido a la sobreexplotación de recursos naturales en su búsqueda de fabricar y vender productos que satisfagan necesidades de los consumidores, sin prever sus efectos en el largo plazo en la sociedad. Estas críticas han provocado que los académicos y practicantes del marketing busquen diferentes en las estrategias de marketing para paliar las críticas en su contra, creando así nuevos enfoques con preocupaciones sociales como son la mercadotecnia verde o ecológica, la mercadotecnia corporativa de responsabilidad social, la mercadotecnia ética, la mercadotecnia social y la mercadotecnia sustentable. El presente trabajo de investigación es un ensayo crítico sobre la forma en que la mercadotecnia puede tener un papel importante en la formación de nuevos gerentes con otra mentalidad que persiga metas que apoyen la sustentabilidad del planeta. Sin embargo, los nuevos enfoques de mercadotecnia no se encuentran articulados para provocar un efecto sustancial en la preservación de la vida del planeta. En el 2015 las Naciones Unidas acordaron los SDG's (*Sustainable Development Goals*) consistentes en 17 objetivos interconectados entre sí y se fijó la meta de completarlos para el 2030; se refieren a formas más responsables de consumo y producción para reducir la pobreza y el hambre. De ahí la propuesta de una nueva orientación denominada macromarketing o macromercadotecnia, El propósito del macromarketing consiste en crear y mantener una relación armónica entre el marketing y la sociedad, y por ende tiene ms posibilidades de acoplarse a estos objetivos de desarrollo sustentable propuestos por la ONU.

Palabras clave: Macromercadotecnia, sustentabilidad, consumidores.

ESTRATÉGIAS DE MARKETING EM NEGÓCIOS INFORMAIS: MEIOS DE PROMOÇÃO E PUBLICIDADE

Resumo:

Las críticas sociales en contra de las prácticas del marketing, cuyos efectos en la sociedad han sido notables debido a la sobreexplotación de recursos naturales en su búsqueda de fabricar y vender productos que satisfagan necesidades de los consumidores, sin prever sus efectos en el largo plazo en a sociedade. Estas críticas fizeram com que os académicos e profissionais de marketing procurassem diferentes estratégias de marketing para aliviar as críticas contra eles, criando assim novas abordagens com preocupações sociais como o marketing verde ou ecológico, o marketing de responsabilidade social corporativa, o marketing de ética, o marketing social e o marketing sustentável. O presente trabalho de investigação constitui um ensaio crítico sobre a forma como o marketing pode desempenhar um papel importante na formação de novos gestores com outra mentalidade que persiga objetivos que apoiem a sustentabilidade do planeta. No entanto, as novas abordagens de marketing não estão articuladas para ter um efeito substancial na preservação da vida no planeta. Em 2015, as Nações Unidas acordaram nos ODS (Objetivos de Desenvolvimento Sustentável) compostos por 17 objetivos interligados e estabeleceram a meta de os completar até 2030; Referem-se a formas mais responsáveis de consumo e produção para reduzir a pobreza e a fome. Daí a proposta de uma nova orientação chamada macromarketing ou macromarketing. O objetivo do macromarketing é criar e manter uma relação harmoniosa entre marketing e sociedade e, portanto, tem mais possibilidades de adaptação a esses objetivos de desenvolvimento sustentável propostos pela ONU.

Palavras chave: Macromarketing, sustentabilidade, consumidores.

1. INTRODUCTION:

The study of Marketing (we will use the terms Marketing and Mercadotecnia interchangeably) has undergone a long process since its contemporary beginnings at the start of the last century. Its theoretical foundation has been enriched by various disciplines such as Economics, Sociology, Psychology, Statistics, and more recently, Neuroscience. Therefore, we could consider Marketing an "eclectic" discipline, meaning it takes the best from other fields to form its own body of theoretical knowledge.

During this time, Marketing has faced criticism regarding its methods of operation to achieve economic benefits for businesses without regard for social concerns. Among other criticisms, it has been blamed for "consumerism," a term that refers to making people buy products they do not actually need, or for planned obsolescence, causing consumers to discard their products and purchase new versions. Brand advertising is criticized for manipulating consumer needs.

Marketing is part of the commercial system whose goal is to achieve profits, without concern for the harmful effects caused on the environment due to polluting production processes or selling unhealthy consumer products that promote obesity and diabetes, such as sugary soft drinks and many packaged products high in sodium and calories. These social criticisms have led marketing academics and researchers to develop, over time, new approaches to this discipline to try to prevent social and/or ecological problems using the same tools of commercial marketing to sell products on a large scale. Now, approaches to marketing with social purposes are proposed (all kinds of campaigns supporting causes like altruistic blood donation, healthy consumption, fund collections for various causes, etc.) or campaigns for environmental care or social responsibility in marketing. This is why new approaches such as "Social Marketing," "Ecological Marketing," "Green Marketing," "Ethical or Responsible Marketing," and more recently, "Sustainable Marketing," have been created.

For students studying marketing for the first time in their university courses, they always ask the professor whether marketing has good or bad purposes. When explained that these approaches are somewhat contradictory (for example, selling more cola drinks

while simultaneously promoting that cola is harmful) and that both are marketing approaches using the same tools of the marketing mix of the 4 P's (price, product, place or distribution, and promotion/advertising strategies), but with entirely different purposes. The explanation for this dichotomy is that Marketing is an "AMORAL" discipline, meaning it does not have a particular moral or ethic, not in the pejorative sense of "without morals," because it depends on who uses it (organizations or advertising agencies) and the ends they each pursue, whether morally correct or not. In a broad sense, we can say that marketing can hinder the planet's sustainable development or help improve it. Its effects can be that divergent, but it is not the fault of marketing, but of those who take advantage of it to achieve their personal economic goals.

The purpose of this research work is to analyze the contributions of the different marketing approaches that have emerged due to criticisms of this discipline and how macromarketing can be the answer to an integrated, long-term vision for the sustainability of the planet.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

SUSTAINABILITY AND THE ROLE OF MARKETING

Today, issues such as climate change have jeopardized the planet's future, in addition to increasing poverty and other unresolved social problems, raising a global alarm in society.

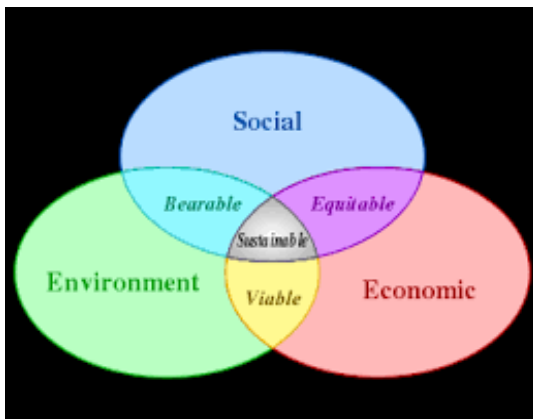
The term "sustainability" or "sustainable development" has had different meanings; we can think that originally, sustainability was not discussed but rather environmental pollution. In a UN Conference on the Human Environment held in Stockholm, Sweden, *the United Nations Environment Programme* (UNEP) was established in 1972 in Nairobi, Kenya as a response to the UN Conference on the Human Environment to promote and support cooperation on environmental issues (United Nations, 1972).

In 1987, the United Nations published the report "Our Common Future," also known as the *Brundtland Report* (La política verde, 2021). This document marks the first occurrence of the concept "sustainable development." The United Nations Environment Commission was

chaired by Gro Harlem Brundtland, Prime Minister of Norway and author of the report that bears her name.

Thus, the economic, social, and environmental issues we have been facing for decades finally gained visibility. Figure No. 1 shows a Venn Diagram illustrating three elements that must be balanced: social, environmental, and economic, along with their mutual intersections. In this Report, sustainable development is defined as "The capability developed by the human system to meet the needs of the present generations without compromising the development of future generations."

Figure 1. Venn Diagram



Source: Brundtland Report (1987)

In 1992, the "Earth Summit" was held in Rio de Janeiro, where 21 principles related to sustainability were agreed upon, better known as "Agenda 21" (United Nations, 1992). In 2015, the **SDG's (Sustainable Development Goals)** were agreed upon, consisting of 17 interconnected objectives with the goal of completing them by 2030. These objectives refer to more responsible forms of consumption and production to reduce poverty and hunger while promoting health, education, and the environment, in order to create a more sustainable and equitable world (UNDP, 2015).

What role does Marketing play in these UN objectives? Due to the importance that sustainability has awakened worldwide, marketing had to integrate this concept. On one hand, it is to address social criticisms arising from the environmental damage caused by production processes, commercial activities, and the overexploitation of natural resources for profit. For example, some of these harmful environmental effects

include non-degradable packaging and plastics used in the industry, aerosol deodorants, or the extraction of water wells to produce soft drinks and beers.

At first glance, it may seem that the concepts of sustainability and marketing are at opposite ends; however, due to the importance that sustainability has garnered internationally in many diverse organizations, marketing had to deal with this issue and address the social criticisms stemming from environmental damage caused by production and commercial processes. For example, polyurethane packaging, plastic bags and paper that do not degrade, deodorants, insecticides, aerosols, etc., are just some of the environmental damages.

Companies responded to these social criticisms by attempting to carry out small actions of social responsibility to project "a good image" to the public, but these did not compensate for the damage to the planet's sustainability. Given the importance of this issue today, marketing has joined this global effort for the planet's survival to contribute in some way. However, in our opinion, these efforts for planetary sustainability should be aligned with the 17 environmental goals set by the UN to create a more sustainable and equitable world in all areas of human life.

Efforts by marketing academics and researchers have taken different paths, but there does not appear to be an apparent area of knowledge that could integrate it to better achieve these sustainable development goals. We briefly describe the main fields developed on this topic:

- Green Marketing aims to prevent products and/or production processes from impacting planetary pollution, attempting to persuade consumers to buy "eco-friendly" or environmentally friendly products, even if these products are more expensive than traditional ones.
- Corporate Social Responsibility Marketing seeks to undertake actions that benefit communities or consumers, including ecological initiatives and various supports for the betterment of society at large.
- Social Marketing uses traditional marketing tools to promote ideas or social causes that

affect society. For example, campaigns to reduce alcoholism, drug addiction, or obesity aim to persuade the population to change unhealthy habits.

- Ethical Marketing, or rather Ethics in Marketing, involves making morally correct market decisions, considering not only business benefits but also ethical perspectives and the social impacts of actions. More than just a marketing strategy, it's a philosophy.
- Sustainable Marketing incorporates elements from the previous definitions, yet it's challenging to merge them. Moreover, there's no formal theory that encompasses Sustainable Marketing actions due to its recent emergence and limited practical research. There's no consensus on what Sustainable Marketing should encompass. Some businesspeople equate Sustainable Marketing with Green or Ecological Marketing, focusing on creating biodegradable or recyclable products.

While it is an implicit concept in sustainability, the ecological aspect and environmental care, often used solely for advertising purposes and limited to certain products, we believe that sustainable marketing should have a broader conception. This should encompass three dimensions: environmental (likely the most concerning today), economic (concerning the productive and distributive processes of company profits versus economic benefit for the population), and social dimension (related to income disparities, poverty, and hunger in countries).

The objectives of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) are also aligned with sustainable development. The OECD aims to "promote public policies that foster prosperity, equality, opportunities, and well-being for all individuals." <https://www.oecd.org/acerca/>

Therefore, we see that the OECD's objective is closely aligned with the UN's theme of sustainable development, which defines it as "the link between economy, society, and environment." This also relates to the well-being of the current generation without compromising that of future generations (OECD, 2008). The degradation of the planet due to lack of sustainable development is becoming increasingly evident. Voices

from various sectors have united to push for change within organizations so that, in addition to creating economic value, they also contribute ecological and social value in the short term. This underscores the need for a new type of manager within organizations who is conscious of these dimensions in decision-making.

Recent research has identified a causal relationship between consumption practices and the danger posed to the planet's biosphere. For over a decade, marketing researchers and academics have explored ideas to make consumption practices sustainable (Haider, Shannon, and Moschis, 2022). However, a practical solution that is widely accepted is still lacking. It is not only businesses that need to change their production and sales practices; consumers must also change their mindset to recognize the importance of sustainable consumption, which can enhance the quality of life for present and future generations.

The belief that the sole purpose of companies is to achieve consumption of what is produced reflects a purely capitalist criterion of pursuing profits or earnings, which has triggered an exponential growth in the exploitation of resources, driving up the costs of many natural resources such as rivers, forests, minerals, and animal species. This poses a serious risk to humanity's survival by exacerbating global warming.

Indeed, recently, in the summer of 2022, newspapers worldwide have highlighted alarming news of record-breaking temperatures in several European countries including the United Kingdom, France, and Spain, among others, catching residents by surprise. In London, for instance, homes and offices had to endure temperatures of 40 degrees Celsius and above, where air conditioning is not customary. In Seville, temperatures reached 42 degrees Celsius (Pacheco, 2022). The Secretary-General of the UN warned at a meeting in Berlin, Germany, with representatives from 40 countries, "You have in your hands a joint climate action or collective suicide". <https://press.un.org/en/2022/sgsm21376.doc.htm>.

MACROMARKETING

Can macromarketing be a more comprehensive solution to the sustainable development problem than other marketing approaches?

In the early 1960s, there was little concern in the United States about the impact of marketing activities on society. Most marketing activities at that time focused on pricing strategies, the increasing use of advertising, and product promotion to satisfy a growing consumer market, with little consideration for the effects on society at large. Issues such as pollution from production processes, the use of deceptive advertising, and a lack of interest in environmental conservation prevailed, driven primarily by short-term profit motives. Satisfying current consumers at all costs and reaping high profits were prioritized over considering the consequences for future generations.

As society began to critique corporate practices and the methods of marketing, particularly as they produced harmful products affecting health, polluted seas from oil extraction, and environmental contamination from industrial waste in rivers and oceans, business schools started incorporating new topics into their curriculum. These included business ethics, corporate social responsibility, and marketing ethics, among others.

Due to this social pressure, topics addressing issues such as consumer health and well-being were incorporated into traditional marketing, giving rise to Macromarketing (known in Spanish as *Macromercadortecnia*). Macromarketing extends beyond the exchange between businesses and consumers to encompass issues like poverty, pandemics, environmental conservation, and others with significant impact, which have not been covered by traditional commercial marketing. Macromarketing refers to the study of:

- (1) marketing systems,
- (2) the impact of marketing systems on society,
- (3) the impact of society on marketing systems.

Criterion (1) includes topics such as comparative marketing, the institutional structure of marketing, and relationships between distribution channels. Criterion (2) represents a "societal interest" that integrates issues like social responsibility and the role of marketing in economic development. Criterion (3) acknowledges the impact of marketing on society and encompasses topics such as legal aspects of marketing and the implications for marketing of different political and social value systems (Hunt 2002,

p.13). The market is a unique social institution that plays a crucial role in the provisioning process essential for humanity's sustenance. Given that society is structured by social institutions, the nature of the market and its role are interconnected with other institutions. Macromarketing is the study of these interactions (Dixon, 2001, p.1).

Macromarketing refers to the understanding, explanation, and management of the relationships between marketing and society. It serves as a bridge where the market and society meet, exchange, and interact. The purpose of macromarketing is to create and maintain a harmonious relationship between marketing and society. Therefore, macromarketing involves studying the activities and processes that establish and sustain this harmonious relationship. The process of creating and maintaining a harmonious relationship between marketing and society is bilateral (horizontal) and requires balancing business's self-interest with the public interest entrusted to society. It entails understanding the what and how of the relationship between marketing and society. (*Sheth,1992, p.2*).

Hunt (1981) gave us one of the first definitions of Macromarketing, defining it as a multidimensional construct that refers to the study of marketing systems, the impact of these marketing systems on society, as well as the impact or consequences of society on marketing systems. In the same year, George Fisk (1981) founded the "Journal of Macromarketing," through which marketing scholars began investigating topics of greater societal impact. The American Marketing Association (AMA), the world's largest organization with over 90,000 marketing professionals, defines Macromarketing as "the study of processes, activities, institutions, and outcomes of marketing from a broad perspective (such as that of a nation), investigating political, social, and economic exchanges". (AMA,2015).

The ultimate purpose of this essay is to propose how Schools and Faculties of Management and Accounting could include the teaching of this new approach to marketing called Macromarketing to undergraduate and graduate students. This aims to ensure that a greater number of future managers or decision-makers

exert their influence in companies where they are involved and provoke change.

Despite the delay in awareness, both from the government and the population, regarding the importance of contributing to these objectives, it is never too late to initiate these initiatives. The good news is that due to the level of maturity achieved in North America, there is a pathway where we can begin Macromarketing in Mexico, thanks to the portal called "Pedagogy Place." This website offers a wealth of educational resources on the pedagogical application of Macromarketing. It is completely free for use by teachers and students, covering topics such as Marketing Ethics, Green Marketing, Marketing Systems, Consumer Behavior in Sustainability, and more, which can be adapted for courses in Mexico. It includes readings, case studies, and discussion topics to put this concept into practice.

3. METHODOLOGY:

It is a critical essay that involves evaluating documentary information and theories, analyzing their content, posing questions, and attempting to make significant contributions that contribute to solving the problem. The work is primarily based on the author's personal opinion, stemming from deep reflection on the role of marketing in light of its social criticisms. This reflects the lack of sensitivity among commercial enterprises towards the deterioration of environmental sustainability, driven by the unchecked ambition to launch new products without considering their social and environmental consequences.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION:

Marketing has joined this global effort for the survival of the planet through various branches of study (Green Marketing, Corporate Social Responsibility Marketing, Social Marketing, Sustainable Marketing, etc.) to contribute in some way. However, these sustainability efforts should be aligned with the 17 environmental goals set by the UN to create a more sustainable and equitable world across all human areas.

Macromarketing is understood as the impact that marketing policies and strategies can have on the

economy and society as a whole. The specialists in macromarketing cited in this research study examine the mutual effects between marketing systems and society. Therefore, the primary objective of this approach is to maintain harmonious relationships between marketing practitioners and society at large. The ultimate goal aspired to is achieving a more just, inclusive, and sustainable society.

On the other hand, we are not talking about a new marketing discipline but rather a new integrative approach. Macromarketing, being a broader and long-term vision of social and economic issues, could be said to "encompass" many other approaches whose purposes are also social but whose focus is more specific and generally do not consider the impact of marketing systems on the global economy and society. Therefore, it is proposed to take actions to further disseminate macromarketing. These proposals, which are planned in this essay, could be grouped into 5 main categories:

- a) Propose to include the subject of Macromarketing in the curricula of Bachelor's degrees in Business Administration, Commercial Relations, and related Marketing courses, as well as in postgraduate programs in Marketing and Administration. Although this initiative may take considerable time to review current curricula, the aim is to at least ensure that this topic is included among the subjects currently taught in marketing education.
- b) Raise awareness among students about the dangerous current practice of pursuing profits without considering the harmful effects on the planet and future generations of consumers, urging for a change starting now.
- c) Suggest that professors, within various Marketing courses, engage students in discussions about ecology, the social aspects of businesses, and sustainable development, even if these topics are not identified as part of Macromarketing knowledge.
- d) Advocate for the creation, in the very near future in Mexico, of case studies and readings on national experiences in Macromarketing, using materials from "**Pedagogy Place**" as exemplary, and including original

collaborations in both English and Spanish. Currently, there are no examples of Latin American experiences.

- e) The ultimate goal of these actions would be to educate leaders, managers, and executives with a new mindset within organizations, emphasizing a broader vision of sustainability beyond mere economic profitability criteria. This should be a commitment of universities associated with ANFECA (National Association of Schools and Faculties of Accounting and Administration) to collaborate with the UN in achieving the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The time to make these changes is against us, so we must accelerate the pace to try to bring about the changes if we want the academic sector to have any significant effect in reversing actions that jeopardize the sustainability of the planet and humanity itself.

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