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**Goran ŠKATARIC¹, Branislav VLAHOVIĆ², Dubravka UŽAR²,
Velibor SPALEVIC^{3,4} and Rajko NOVIČEVIĆ⁵**

THE INFLUENCE OF GREEN MARKETING ON CONSUMER ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

SUMMARY

Due to increasing environmental problems, environmental management is becoming a challenge and a necessity in the modern world today. Negative consequences of human behavior are increasingly being observed. These reasons have led to environmental changes and consumer awareness of the impact they may have on environmental conservation. Green marketing has raised consumer awareness of how their behavior can have a positive impact on the environment. Various environmental changes affect consumer behavior, so it is imperative that all factors be monitored continuously to meet consumer demands. The main aim of the paper is to research the attitudes and opinions of the respondents on the importance of green food, how green marketing affects the sustainability and use of green food products. The survey was completed in 2019 on a sample of 100 respondents exclusively on the territory of the Republic of Serbia. Research results generally show that consumers are not sufficiently familiar with the term green marketing. The analysis shows that they know what a green product is, but that they cannot easily recognize it in the market, and that they do not buy it sufficiently to preserve the environment.

Keywords: Green Marketing, Consumers, Food Products, Environmental Awareness

INTRODUCTION

Corporate social responsibility is a business concept where business organizations incorporate the care about society and the environment into their business operations. Being socially responsible means not only to fulfill legal

¹ Goran Škataric, Faculty of Food Technology, Food Safety and Ecology, University of Donja Gorica, Podgorica, MONTENEGRO.

² Branislav Vlahović, Dubravka Užar, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Novi Sad, Novi Sad, SERBIA.

³ Velibor Spalevic, University of Montenegro, Biotechnical Faculty Podgorica, MONTENEGRO.

⁴ Velibor Spalevic, University of Montenegro, Philosophy, Geography, Niksic, MONTENEGRO.

⁵ Rajko Novičević (corresponding author: rajko.novicevic@t-com.me), Adriatic University, Faculty of Business Economics and Law, Bar, MONTENEGRO.

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obligations but to invest in human capital, environment, and relations with customers (Kotler and Lee, 2009).

Green marketing refers to the practice of development and promotion of products based on their actual or perceived environmental sustainability (Mickovic *et al.*, 2020; Pejanovic *et al.*, 2020; Palevic *et al.*, 2019; Parsipour *et al.*, 2019). The emergence of a consumer population that is becoming increasingly concerned with environmental and social factors has led to green marketing becoming an important component of corporate public relations (Fernando, 2020). Green marketing is a form of social marketing in which products, services, and all marketing activities are planned and implemented taking into account the activities and impacts they may have on the environment and society in general (Lackovic and Andrljic 2007).

Green marketing is a form of social, environmental marketing where products, services, and all marketing activities are designed and implemented taking having regard of the actions and impacts they may have on the environment and society in general (Previšić and Ozretić, 2004). According to a simple definition: Green Marketing is a name for marketing efforts aimed at meeting consumer preferences regarding environmental protection (Skatarić *et al.*, 2018).

Green marketing is a process of designing, manufacturing, and selling products or services based on environmental benefits, such as using recycled raw materials to manufacture products, using filters in production. Green marketing is no longer a trend but a major change in the way businesses operate. This is a form of social marketing that entails cooperation with suppliers, traders, partners, and competitors to achieve environmentally sustainable development throughout the value chain and cooperation of all business functions to achieve the best solutions that lead to profit and positive contribution to the environment.

Green marketing can involve a number of different activities, such as creating an environmentally friendly product, using eco-friendly packaging, adopting sustainable business practices, or focusing marketing efforts on messages that communicate a product's green benefits (www.shopify.com).

Green marketing is based on the accepted 3R formula: reduce-reuse-recycle, (Ham and Forjan, 2009), and thus, through these three steps, a significant contribution is made to the preservation of the environment:

- Reduce – reduced use of natural resources (replacement of natural resources by synthetic and/or replacing non-renewable sources with renewable ones), reduced energy consumption in the production process, and other business processes.
- Reuse – reuse of packaging or parts thereof (multi-use plastic pallets are introduced for transport instead of wooden ones).
- Recycle – manufacturers collect, in an organized manner, the used products and/or their packaging for the recycling process; recycling of waste generated in the production process.

The adoption of green marketing will provide a more competitive advantage and greater profits for businesses along with environmental protection. Adoption and implementation of green marketing is an opportunity for the company to contribute to environmental protection and thus provide assistance to society achieving its profit goal simultaneously. Thus, the balance between environmental and economic impact is achieved (Nefat, 2015; Nacka *et al.*, 2019).

The above definitions suggest that green marketing is a complex term and serves the following objectives (Ham and Forjan, 2009):

- developing products that balance consumer needs for quality, convenience, performance, and acceptable price, with environmental acceptability in terms of minimum environmental impact.
- creating a high-quality image, including environmental consideration relating to both product characteristics and the manufacturer and its achievements in the field of environmental protection.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The data on the preferences and attitudes of respondents about the notion of green marketing, green product and sustainability concept itself were collected through a survey questionnaire. The survey was conducted in 2019 on a sample of 100 respondents on the territory of the Republic of Serbia. Descriptive statistics methods were used in the analysis.

The demographic characteristics of the respondents are given in the following section: the survey was conducted on a simple random sample. In the structure of the respondents, the female population had a higher share of 53%, while the share of the male population was 47%. By age, the respondents were divided into interval groups (up to 25, 26-35, 36-45, 46-55, 55+). The most represented respondents belonged to the age group up to 25 years (26%); this group is very significant because the younger population, forming its habits, should take the utmost environmental care. It is followed by the interval group of 46 to 55 years (23%), which will largely influence the younger population with its awareness and care for the environment. The conclusion drawn from the processed questionnaire data is that most of the respondents have secondary education 64%, followed by respondents with a university degree, 22%. In accordance with the basic characteristics of the respondents that are of relevance, their employment status was analyzed. Respondents having permanent employment (56%) prevail.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The main objective of the research was to identify the level of consumer awareness of green marketing and environmental awareness of consumers. The research should be able to answer whether respondents know what sustainable development and green marketing are, whether they know what green products

are and whether they buy them. The task is also to compare the results obtained with similar research in countries of the region.

The first segment of the investigated issue concerned the awareness of the respondents of the term green marketing and its impact on sustainability. The literature uses different terms as synonymous with the term green marketing such as ecological marketing, environmentally responsible marketing, sustainable marketing, environmentally focused marketing. The analysis showed that 60% of respondents are aware that green marketing is the marketing taking care of environmental protection, and environmental consideration, while 40% of respondents were not familiar with this term. However, the results obtained show that a large number of respondents are not yet familiar with the term and do not know what green marketing is. When these results were compared to the results of the research in Croatia (Roguljić, 2015) it can be seen that the results obtained in Serbia were slightly better. Namely, in the research of the abovementioned author, 42% of respondents in Croatia were familiar with the term green marketing. More attention needs to be paid to green marketing and it should be properly introduced to consumers. Better education is needed, especially with regard to younger consumer categories.

The analysis of the results revealed that 45% of respondents were informed of green marketing via the internet, 27% of respondents received the information via TV. These results are expected, as it is well known that most of the information nowadays is provided by the Internet and TV (Figure 1).

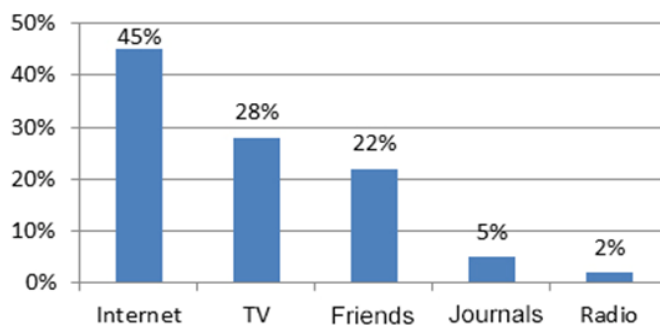


Figure 1. Ways of receiving information about the Green Marketing concept

The green consumer is the consumer who, when satisfying his/her wishes and needs, favors a product with a minimum harmful impact on the human environment (Lacković and Andrić, 2007). It is therefore important to get the results of the awareness of the term sustainability as well as the impact of green marketing on it. The analysis showed that 69% of respondents were aware that sustainable development represents the development of a society that meets human needs with the resources available, without jeopardizing natural systems and the environment, ensuring the long-term existence of human society and its environment. At the same time, 31% of respondents were not familiar with the

term sustainability. Also, most of the respondents (65%) were aware that the task of the green marketing is to promote the ideas that would increase the consumer awareness of the importance of taking care of the physical environment in which they live and work, indicating their awareness of the impact on sustainable development (Figure 2).

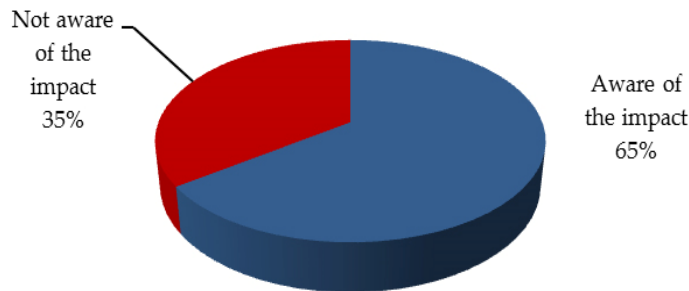


Figure 2. Respondents' awareness of green marketing's impact on sustainability

The results of a survey by Širola and Rosandić (2019) in Croatia show that awareness of the importance of environmental protection has a positive impact on the intention of the purchase and use of ecological products and services.

When asked whether they would propose introducing environmental education as a mandatory school subject, as many as 67% of respondents said they would propose introducing such a subject: environmental education as a mandatory school subject because they feel it is good for the children to be informed from a young age how to act when it comes to the environment; whereas, 13% of respondents would not want it as a mandatory school subject because they feel that children are burdened already, while 20% of respondents have no opinion on this idea.

Green marketing has raised consumers' awareness of how their behavior can have a positive impact on the environment. Separation of raw materials following the use of food products is also a significant attitude towards the environment. Most of the respondents (50%) separate raw materials for recycling after use, 36% of respondents do not know how to do this, and 14% do not want to waste their time. These results are not at an enviable level, but they should improve significantly over time. When these results were compared to the results of the research in Croatia (Roguljić, 2015), it can be noted that the results in Croatia are much better. When asked whether they recycle waste 51.5% of respondents replied in the affirmative, 45.5% recycle occasionally, and only 5.1% never, which is a very good result and an indication of consumers' responsibility.

Based on the research conducted by Tolušić *et al.* (2013) in Croatia, it can be concluded that the awareness of the current environmental problems is widespread, but the actual individual actions contributing to the preservation of the environment are relatively few, which is confirmed by the results obtained.

Only 12% of respondents recycle on a regular basis, 61% occasionally, and as many as 27% never. This issue and increasing the consumers' awareness of they themselves can help and develop environmental thinking can be solved in part by green marketing, encouraging the development of ecology, launching appropriate environmental actions, education on the preservation of the environment, but also by strengthening the links between businesses and scientific institutions (Spalevic *et al.*, 2017).

In the Republic of Serbia, the state has not provided the proper conditions for this purpose. Some respondents stated that they would pay more attention and separate the raw materials if it were made possible by the authorities, they would take care of how they would handle waste if the proper conditions for the separation of plastic, paper, glass, etc. were provided. Following the cross-referencing of the answers received with the gender structure of the respondents, it can be noted that more women separate raw materials for recycling after use. In most cases, plastic is separated (46%), followed by paper (21%), 17% of respondents said they separate glass and 18% metal, only 10% of respondents separate electronic waste, and as many as 46% of respondents do not separate raw materials after use. By cross-referencing the answers received with the previous question where as many as 36% of the respondents stated that they did not know how to classify raw materials, it can be assumed that this percentage would decrease if adequate conditions for the waste separation were provided in our country, so it would automatically increase the number of respondents who separate raw materials after use and thus, these results would be improved in future.

The analysis of the responses received shows that 83% of respondents think that plastic bags absolutely pollute the environment as they are very difficult to decompose, 13% of respondents think that plastic bags do not pollute the environment if they are properly disposed of and 4% think that plastic bags do not pollute the environment because they help them to dispose of waste more easily. These results are good because the respondents are aware to what extent plastic bags pollute the environment.

It is evident that 29% of the respondents participated in environmental activities, but most of them stressed that they participated in such campaigns just a few times, some only once, while as many as 67% of respondents said they did not have the opportunity to participate in the campaigns of this type, and 4% of the respondents think it that it is not important at all. Cross-referencing of the answers received with the age categories shows that young people from categories of up to 25 years of age participated most in such campaigns. When the results obtained were compared to the results of the research in Croatia (Roguljić, 2015), it can be noted that the results in Croatia are much better. Namely, in the research of the abovementioned author, 52% of respondents in Croatia participated in various environmental campaigns.

Of the total number, 81% of respondents think waste management is very important because the environment has to be protected, 14% think it is important,

but that authorized persons should take care of it, and 5% think that some other issue is much more important. When the results obtained are compared with the results from the previous responses, it can be noted that despite the significant care for the environment, very few respondents are involved in various environmental campaigns. In most cases, they are younger, male respondents.

The term "green product" is intended for labeling products and services with reduced environmental impact, i.e. products that have a reduced impact on the environment and human health over the entire life cycle compared to other products intended for the same purpose and use (Ottman, 2011). A green product is a sustainable product designed so as to minimize its impact on the environment throughout its life cycle and even after the process of use. Green products are typically identified with two main objectives - waste reduction and maximizing resource efficiency. They are produced using non-toxic ingredients and environmentally friendly procedures and are certified by recognized organizations. Some of the green product features are it is produced without the use of toxic chemicals and in hygienic conditions. It can be recycled, reused, and is biodegradable in nature. It comes with eco-friendly packaging. It uses a small amount of natural resources. It is environmentally efficient. It has a reduced or zero carbon share. It has a reduced or zero plastic footprint. In a typical scenario, brands producing green products use green marketing to transfer their values at the market (Das Prinona, 2019).

The terms "green" or "sustainable" often refer to products, services, or practices that enable economic development along with preservation for future generations. A green product is a product with a lower environmental impact or less harmful to human health than the traditional product equivalent. Some authors report that almost no product can ever be 100% green, as any product development will have a certain impact on the environment. Green products have the following attributes: they are energy-efficient, often low-maintenance. Contain no ozone-depleting substances, toxic compounds and do not produce toxic by-products. They are often made from recycled materials or ingredients or renewable and sustainable sources. Raw materials are obtained from local producers or resources. They are biodegradable and easily reused in part or in whole (Speer 2011).

The question asked was to what extent the respondents were familiar with the term green products. The results of the research indicate that 75% of respondents know that a green product is a product that does not harm the environment, whether it concerns production, consumption or waste - which is a very good result - while 25% of respondents do not know what a green product is. Most of the respondents, 40% of them, are not sure if they can recognize a green product, while 35% claim they manage well and can recognize green products, whereas 25% say they cannot recognize green products. Such products need to be visibly marked with a specific marking. The assumption is that green products need more advertising to raise consumers' interest so they would look for and recognize green products on the supermarket shelves.

Most of the respondents (41%) believe that a green product is different from a conventional one, while 12% think that these two products do not differ, and as many as 47% of respondents are not sure if a green product differs from a conventional one. Promotional activities are needed to inform consumers so that in the future they would be able to recognize the products more easily and select the products that will have a lower environmental impact. There is a need for green products in Serbia to be marked specifically so that customers can easily identify them and distinguish them from conventional products. That way, they would not be in a dilemma whether these were really green products. Such is the practice in developed countries of the world.

A bit more than half of the respondents (57%) are familiar with the labels on the packaging. One-third of the respondents are not sure if they are fully familiar with the labels, 10% are not familiar with the eco-labels at all. According to the results of the survey, 10% of respondents always pay attention to the packaging labels when buying a product, whereas the majority of respondents, 60%, pay very little attention, and one-third of respondents never pay attention to the labels on the green product. Therefore, better consumer education is needed so they would pay attention to product labels during shopping.

The packaging contains all the information on the product contained in it, as well as the information relating to it. Some of the information is also eco-labeling, which shows what the packaging is made of and how it is used and how it behaves after the consumption of the product that was inside. The labels also provide information on whether the packaging is suitable for recycling and how it can be recycled. Today, consumers and businesses are very focused on PET packaging and its recycling, taking into account its harmful environmental impact. Because of such materials, eco-materials have been used as of recently that are less harmful or are not harmful to the environment at all. With such materials and with sending eco-messages from businesses to consumers, the consumer's environmental awareness is growing (<https://energis.ba/>).

The desirable benefits of green products can be as follows (Ottman *et al.*, 2006):

- Efficiency and cost efficiency - when buying green products is often mentioned by producers when buying green products. Resources are used again through waste and waste material recycling.
- Health and safety - it is very important to show to green consumers the care for their health and the health of their families.
- Quality - many green products offer better quality than standard products, i.e. they are practical because they save energy through work.
- Symbolism and status - the goal is to create a symbol with the benefits of a green product.
- Convenience - Green products provide benefits to green consumers through work.

A green positioning strategy can also be considered through functional and emotional benefits. The functional benefit includes the brand of the product and

its environmental impact. Green consumers explore the product and each element is important to them; thus, in this situation, it is important whether the product is degradable, i.e. functional benefit may be related to the product manufacturing process and its disposal.

A green consumer may be defined as a consumer who, in satisfying his/her needs and desires, seeks a product with a minimum negative environmental impact. These are, as a rule, educated consumers, and very interesting as a target market, even though consumers who are passive towards environmental protection form a far larger market (Ham, 2009). Such consumers intensively consider environmental issues when buying and using products. They are often very active in their environment, accepting and supporting environmental actions and objectives, and are ready to spend more for green agri-food products. For all these reasons, they expect full information on the product or packaging of the product, as they are motivated by the desire to protect themselves, their family members and to safeguard their future.

The first market segmentation in green marketing was carried out in 1990 by then Roper Starch, GfK Roper Consulting today. The following consumer segments were identified at that time:

True Blue Greens - they are characterized by a high level of environmental awareness. They are very much concerned about the environment and they actively want to make a positive change. It is four times more likely they will boycott products or organizations that are not environmentally responsible. This group is comprised of high-income and higher education consumers.

Greenback Greens – not too active, but more likely to buy an eco-friendly product than average consumers. They do not have enough time to think about environmental issues but are ready to buy green products and support environmental programs. They also have a high income and a higher education level, but not as high as the previously mentioned consumer category.

Sprouts - consumers who believe in the care for the environment in theory but not in practice. They rarely buy green products if they should spend much more money on such a product than for conventional ones. Marketing activities have a significant impact on this consumer category in the sense that it is easy to persuade them to start purchasing these products.

Grouzers – skeptical and uneducated with regard to the environment and cynical toward the positive changes they can bring. They are not sufficiently educated on environmental issues and are characterized by a high disinterest in this area. They feel that as individuals they cannot contribute much to solving environmental issues, so they are very passive in this regard. They consider green products to be overrated and worse than classical products and that their price is unrealistically high.

Basic Browns – they are characterized by lower education levels and lower income. They are burdened with everyday problems and do not care about social issues and the environment. They are particularly indifferent towards

environmental issues and belong to the segment that is least interested in global environmental problems and their resolution (Krstić and Jovanović, 2007).

The Natural Marketing Institute (NMI) conducted a survey based on consumer behavior and attitudes. According to the results, consumers are divided into the following groups (Kamenar Sara 2018, according to Dahlstrom, 2011):

a) consumers focused on health, environmental protection, personal development, social fairness, and sustainability - Lifestyles of Health and Sustainability (LOHAS) - this consumer group comprises educated individuals whose decisions on purchasing green products are based on their own environmental awareness and cultural and social values. The main motives include the need for personal participation in environmental protection and care about their health. These consumers are often willing to spend more money on green products. According to the survey, 17% of adult consumers in the United States are considered to be part of this group. NMI divides these consumers into two subgroups – LOHAS leaders and LOHAS followers. The former is quick to adopt green products and influence the shaping of general opinion on green companies and products. They are often the first potential buyers and users of a particular green product. The second group comprises people who are more moderate with regard to green product preferences, but just like leaders, they are often the first buyers of a particular green product.

b) Naturalites – consumers who are slightly less engaged in active environmental protection than the previous group and their main incentive is caring for psychophysical health. Their focus on health is guiding them toward green products. These consumers are generally not environmentally active. They represent approximately 17% of US consumers.

c) Conventionals - consumers who are mostly not driven by the need for active preservation of the environment, but rather by frugality and convenience, that is, they are driven by their own objectives. These consumers need to see the result of their activities, and therefore, they tend to save energy resources and recycle. They recognize the value of buying products that save money in the long term, but the environmental segment is not a decisive factor in the decision-making process. They make up 26% of the population.

d) Drifters – consumers who are younger people limited by financial difficulties. Their views on environmental protection are not fully formed, but they are generally not overly concerned about environmental issues and feel that such issues will probably be resolved. They show a tendency to support environmental protection, but usually for those issues influence of which they feel directly. The choice between green or other products is in most cases dictated by the price. Make up 24% of adult US consumers.

e) Unconcerned – consumers who are neither interested in environmental protection nor are involved in related activities as long as they are not directly affected. They usually do not pay attention to green products and they do not tend to search for information about them. Consumers from this group choose products based on price, availability, quality, and value, but not based on the

environmental impact of the production process or the product itself. This group comprises 16% of the respondents (Dahlstrom, 2011).

Research results show that only 13% of respondents in Serbia stated that they buy green products, while 57% of them buy them occasionally, 30% of respondents do not buy green products, a few respondents stated they may be buying green products at times, but they are not aware of it. It is evident that green products are generally not bought by the consumers, which indicates that a small percentage of respondents (2%) are those who buy them on a daily basis (Figure 3). When the results obtained were compared to the results of the research in Croatia (Roguljić, 2015), it can be noted that the results in Croatia are better. When asked how often they buy green products, 46.5% of consumers buy 2-3 products per month, 37.4% buy 2-3 products a week, 9.1% buy on a daily basis, and 7.1% of consumers do not buy and do not consume green products.

According to the results of the research conducted by Tolušić *et al.*, (2013), 69% of respondents in Croatia stated they bought a product motivated by a promotional message stating that the product is environmentally safe, which is seen as a result of promotion, one of green marketing activities, while 38% responded to this question in the negative. Such responses suggest that consumers are directly influenced by advertising and that distinctive eco-labels should be highlighted and referred to through promotion. Consumers of Vukovar-Srijem County are aware of the problem and are ready to buy ecological products and products of business organizations - companies implementing the sustainable development business policy.

Consumers will act in a more environmentally friendly manner if they realize that an environmentally friendly way can provide sufficient benefits to make up for the cost caused by higher prices of green products. Further to this, consumers can feel individual benefits as a result of environmentally conscious behavior, but these consequences are not necessarily related to a significant improvement in the quality of the environment, but, for example, with emotional benefits, based on psychological factors (Fraj and Martinez, 2006).

Consumers are often more motivated by the so-called economic rather than by the altruistic reasons when choosing a product. One of such essential motives that drive consumers to choose and buy a green product is also their personal interest – they want a product whose basic function will be achieved in entirety or will result in savings. According to Pike and Makower (2009), consumers will be willing to buy a green product – if it comes from a brand they know and trust, if it is at least as good as the product they usually buy if they can buy it at the usual place of purchase, if this does not require a change in purchasing habits if its price is not higher, and, ideally, if it has some other additional benefit (which is not green) - it lasts longer, looks better or saves money. Hence, companies should produce such green products whose green marketing impact on consumers are functional characteristics that are at least equal to the existing products on the market, if not better. Another important reason is the care for health, which primarily concerns food products.

Among the main reasons for the low purchase of green food products are, above all, low income of consumers, the higher price of green products compared to products from conventional production, low market availability, unsatisfactory range of green products and low consumer awareness of green products (Willer, Lernoud, 2014).

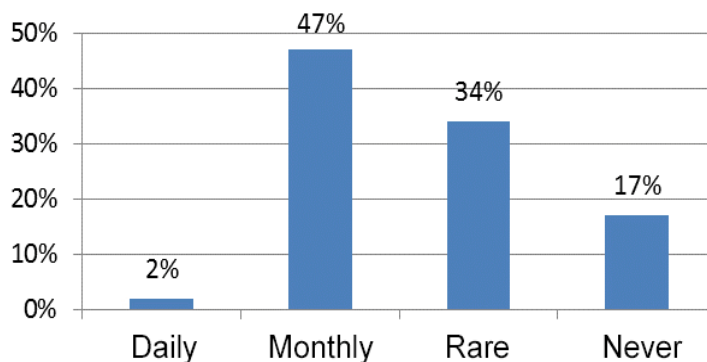


Figure 3: Purchase frequency of green products

A number of claims were proposed to the participants in the survey, to which they were to state their level of agreement. They could respond to each claim with one of 4 responses offered: Strongly disagree, disagree, agree, and strongly agree. Most of the respondents, 50%, answered they agree with the statement that green products appear to be as good or better than ordinary ones and are therefore worthy of a higher price, 10% strongly agree, 30% disagree with this statement, and 10% strongly disagree (Table 1).

The results obtained in this research show that green consumers are the leaders who should influence consumer behavior and that consumers nowadays do not buy products based only on price, performance, and product convenience. Respondents believe that habits influence consumers to buy a particular product. Green consumers are strongly influenced by the recommendations given by friends, family, and acquaintances, and 46% of respondents agree with this statement. Products that do not harm the environment or have a minimum negative environmental impact, resulting from market-responsible thinking and behavior (Table 1).

Adoption of the concept of green marketing as a whole, or only in some of its parts, demonstrates a good approach to business, deliberation, and efforts of the company to distinguish itself from the competition and meet better the needs and wishes of the market segments. There are also situations when green marketing is declared a strategy for achieving competitive advantages and a possible overall quality management strategy (). A successful green marketing strategy has to satisfy four conditions (Roguljić, 2015):

- Companies must not count on the willingness of consumers to pay more for products that do not have harmful environmental effects.

- Marketing claims, concerning environmental aspects, should be clear and understandable, they must not be general and have to meet strict environmental standards.
- Access to green marketing products has to respect the duration of their production and use cycle. Raw materials and resources needed for production and the period of use by consumers are taken account of.
- The green marketing strategy should be proactive, not reactive. This means that businesses should seek to improve environmental awareness before they are forced to do so by law and to offer consumers products and services whose standards, in terms of environmental protection, go beyond the ones currently laid down by the law.

Table 1 Level of agreement of respondents with specific claims (%)

	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly agree</i>
Green products are worthy of a higher price	10	30	50	10
Green consumers are the leaders who influence consumer behavior	12	44	40	4
Consumers are no longer buying based solely on the price and convenience of products.	5	37	48	10
Habits affect the process of manufacturing, packaging, and the ethical values of a company.	8	12	65	15
The recommendations given by friends, family, and acquaintances have a strong influence on green consumers.	5	34	46	15
Products that do not harm the environment or have a minimum negative environmental impact are considered to be green products.	2	6	58	34

Source: Data processed by the authors

CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of the survey in Serbia showed that 60% of respondents are aware that green marketing is the marketing taking care of the environmental protection, and environmental consideration, while 40% of respondents were not familiar with this term. The results of the survey show unambiguously that respondents are not yet sufficiently familiar with the term green marketing and its role in the preservation of the environment. The analysis also shows that they know what a green product is, but they cannot easily recognize it on the market,

and they do not buy it to the extent necessary to preserve the environment in such a way. It is evident from the research that respondents are aware of the importance of environmental concerns but are not sufficiently familiar with the concept of corporate social responsibility. The social community and companies have the task and responsibility to educate their consumers about the importance of green products and their effect on environmental protection.

In the Republic of Serbia, the state has not yet provided the proper conditions for waste sorting; respondents stated that they would pay more attention and separate the raw materials if it were made possible by the authorities, they would take care of how they would handle waste if the proper conditions for the separation of plastic, paper, glass, etc. were provided. Following the cross-referencing of the answers received with the gender structure of the respondents, it can be noted that more women separate raw materials for recycling after use. The survey showed that respondents know how important proper waste management is, but that they do not have the conditions to handle it properly, since containers for sorting and disposal have not been made available by the competent authorities.

While poor economic situation and low standard of living directly affect the low level of green product purchase and consumption, awareness of environmental protection and preservation has been developed. Respondents with higher education and the female population are more aware. There is a need for green products in Serbia to be marked specifically so that customers can easily identify them and distinguish them from conventional products. That way, they would not be in a dilemma whether these were really green products. In our country, true green consumers have not yet become distinct, as in developed countries of the world. All actors in society (schools, faculties, Ministry, business organizations) should continue working even more intensively on socially responsible business and the implementation of green marketing.

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