



*The Open Access Journal of*

# *Resistive Economics*

[www.oajre.ir](http://www.oajre.ir)

Volume 10, Issue 3, 2022

ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Pages: 17-26

## The Effect of Strategic and Internal Green Marketing on Competitive Advantage and organizational Performance (Case Study: Branches of Melli Bank of Mazandaran Province of Iran)

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**Received:** 19 April 2022

**Revised:** 29 May 2022

**Accepted:** 17 June 2022

### **ABSTRACT**

Going green means to pursue knowledge and practices that can lead to more environmentally friendly and ecologically responsible decisions and lifestyles, which can help protect the environment and sustain its natural resources for current and future generations. The present study seeks to investigate the effect of Strategic and Internal Green Marketing on Competitive Advantage and organizational Performance in Branches of Melli Bank of Mazandaran Province of Iran. Based on literature review and identified gaps the study proposed an integrated theoretical model. To empirically test the proposed model this study collected data from 334 individual customers of questionnaire survey method. The study utilized Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) technique to statistically analyses measurement and structural models. The results show the positive effect of Internal Green Marketing Orientation (IGMO) on Competitive advantage and also negative impact of Strategies Green marketing orientation (SGMO) on Competitive advantage is. In finally, positive effect Competitive advantage (CA) on Organization Performance (OP).

**KEYWORDS:** Competitive advantage, Internal Green Marketing, Organization Performance, Strategies Green marketing orientation.

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**How to Cite This Article:** Shababi, H; Golestani, S. (2022). "The Effect of Strategic and Internal Green Marketing on Competitive Advantage and organizational Performance (Case Study: Branches of Melli Bank of Mazandaran Province of Iran)", *The Open Access Journal of Resistive Economics*, 10(3): 17-26.

## 1. Introduction

Nowadays, consumers are increasingly concerned about environmental sustainability reduce the environmental impacts caused by the products and services offered (Li et al, 2016; Julia & Kassim, 2019; Nandy & Lodh, 2012). Fund, products and asset recovery (e.g., material recycling, remanufacturing, and products redistribution) generate better financial outcomes as it reduces the encountered cost (used for disposal and investment). (Li et al, 2016). The more the companies and organizations work towards sustainable business processes in an eco-friendly manner, the more would be the returns and organization performance (Nanda & Bihari, 2012). The recent decades have witnessed accelerated growth of environmental problems in various sections of the world giving rise to high pressures on companies. The importance of this subject has given rise to an enormous amount of research since the early 1970s (Leonidou et al, 2015). On the other hand, other researchers such as Ghiasabadi Farahani & Ghafari Ashtiani (2018) consider environmental pollution as a result of human production and consumption, which have been repeatedly made by active organizations in the field as a threat to humanity (Ghiasabadi Farahani & Ghafari Astian, 2018).

The recent decades have witnessed accelerated growth of environmental problems in various sections of the world giving rise to high pressures on companies. The importance of this subject has given rise to an enormous amount of research since the early 1970s; the research focuses primarily on environmental issues in the local markets (Leonidou et al, 2015). In the EU, according to the 2013 Eurobarometer, 26% of consumers frequently purchase eco-friendly products and 54% purchase them occasionally. These numbers could be growing, as in 2015 nearly 75% of millennials were reported to be interested in paying more for eco-friendly products (Saari et al, 2017; Nielsen, 2015). Green marketing is all activities designed to generate and to facilitate any transaction to satisfy human needs and desires by minimizing the adverse eco-friendly inputs (Rahmawati & Hadiwidjojo, 2014). As a result, companies are supposed to espouse eco-friendly values to secure sustainable economic success. That calls upon organizational leaders help to be committed to environmental ethics through policy formulation and their implementation in day-to-day operations to reduce the environmental impact of business operations (Singh et al, 2019; El-Kassar & Singh, 2019).

Preferences of the investors will dry up in the case of polluting units and market capitalization will go down significantly. Thus, financial institutions should help developing the right instruments to meet the needs of industry to control environmental impact (Biswas, 2011). Modern economies are endeavoring to reconcile ambitious economic development and obligations of preserving natural resources and ecosystems, as the two are usually seen as of conflicting nature (Turner, 1988). To aid the reduction of external carbon emission, bank should finance green technology and pollution reducing projects (Bahl, 2012). This study seeks to answer the fundamental question of whether there is a significant relationship between strategic and internal green marketing with competitive advantage on organizational performance.

## 2. Conceptual Model and Research Hypotheses

**Green Marketing:** The term Green Marketing came into prominence in the late 1980s and early 1990s (Chaudhary et al, 2011; Kumar, 2012; Crane, 2000). Green, environmental, ecological marketing and eco-friendly marketing (Polonsky, 1994; Peattie, 2001; Chamorro et al, 2009; Katrandjiev, 2016; Kinoti, 2011). Adjust or enhance existing marketing thinking and sustainable products or services practice (Frank-Martin & Peattie, 2009). Herbig et al (1993) green marketing refers “to products and packages that have one or more of the following characteristics; they are less toxic; are more durable; contain reusable materials and/or are made of recyclable materials”. These two definitions are narrow in scope as they focus on a narrow (Kinoti, 2011). Peattie (1995) defines green marketing as “the holistic management process responsible for identifying, anticipating and satisfying the requirements of customers and society, in a profitable and sustainable way”( Papadas et al, 2019).

**Strategic Green Marketing Orientation:** Cronin et al (2011) stated that when an enterprise tries to achieve the desires of an organization, there are a range of opportunities by way of which businesses can pursue green strategies to address the wants of a variety of stakeholder groups(Choudhury et al, 2019; Chahal et al, 2014; Lemke & Luzio, 2014). Strategic green marketing orientation (SGMO) refers to long-term, top management actions and policies specifically focusing on corporate eco-friendly strategy (Banerjee, 2002; Papadas et al, 2017; Choudhury et al, 2019; Papadas et al, 2019).

**Green Competitive Advantage:** as a situation in which companies get some position about environment or green innovation, refers to the integration of green issues(related to environment) in different operational areas like production, marketing, R&D, sales, finance and human capital (Banerjee, 2001). A major factor encouraging companies to adapt a position compatible with environment in their trade strategies is potential success of a conditional competitive advantage (Arago' n-Correa & Sharma, 2003; Zoo et al. 2003; Orsato, 2006).

**Internal Green Marketing Orientation:** interrelated concept, which involve the integration of ecological values of the ideal into the company's internal culture and translating these commitments into specific strategies for communication and operational level (Rahmawati & Hadiwidjojo, 2014).

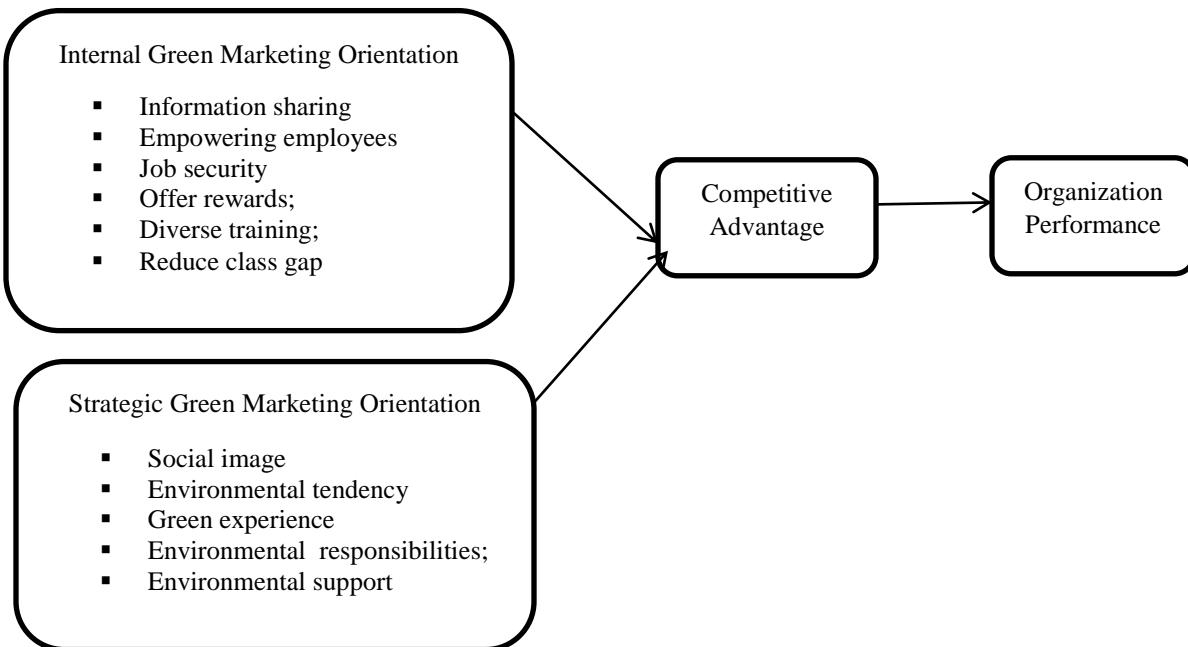
**Competitive advantage:** from which advantages of enterprises managed by them result and sources, from which, new competitive advantages may potentially result (Cegliński, 2016). Porter (1985) he states that competitive advantage stems from the firm's ability to create superior value for its buyers (Sigalas, 2015; Porter, 1985). Ability an organization that allow to differentiate from its competitors and is an outcome of critical management decisions (Li et al, 2006).

**Organization Performance:** comprises the actual output or results of an organization as measured against its intended outputs (Upadhyaya et al, 2014). This construct consists of four correlated elements: financial results, operational efficiency, stakeholder satisfaction, and ability to compete (Jiang & Holburn, 2018; Richard et al, 2009; Singh et al, 2019; Li et al, 2006; Tracey et al, 1999).

**Table 1: Influence of effective variables**

Source	Sub-criteria under each criteria	The main purpose of the research
Papadas et al(2019); Kinoti (2011); Rahmawati & Hadiwidjojo (2014);	Strategies Green Marketing Orientation	Competitive Advantage
Papadas et al(2017); Choudhury et al (2019); Kuo et al (2017); Yang et al (2009); Prakash (2014); Li et al (2006); Efrat et al (2018); Huang & Huang, (2020); Cantelle & Zardini (2018)	Competitive Advantage	Organization Performance
Papadas et al(2019); Rahmawati & Hadiwidjojo (2014);	Internal Green Marketing	Competitive Advantage

So the author presents her research conceptual model based on the above-mentioned theories, as fallow:

**Fig.1. the Conceptual Model**

### **2.1. Previous research study**

Choudhury et al (2019) Research titled the Impact of Strategic and Tactical Green Marketing Orientation on SMEs Performance. The results indicate that tactical green marketing orientation impacts firm performance. To author's knowledge, this paper is unique in the terms of finding impacts of TGMO and SGMO on firm performance and environmental performance.

Chahal et al (2014) Research titled the Antecedents and consequences of strategic green marketing orientation. The study provides new insight to marketing management by highlighting the factors such as social marketing, relationship marketing and marketing orientation as the constituent elements which facilitate the development of SGMO in an organization. Further, the study has put emphasis on SGMO-performance relationship which is mediated by green trust, green satisfaction and green loyalty. Finally, it advances an understanding in enhancing green brand equity of the organization.

Sambasivan et al (2013) findings imply that environmental action positively relates to efficient performance, organizational learning and environmental performance, investors satisfaction and financial performance. Moderating role of investor's satisfaction are supported and confirmed by the data although the mediating role of environmental performance and the mediating role of a variety of technologies are not confirmed according to the findings.

Menguc et al (2010) in their study emphasis that the organization founder's trends are effective in adapting green marketing strategy and adapting the marketing strategy will cause improvement of company performance. These findings show that governmental regulations can moderate the relationship between founder's trend and adaptation of green marketing strategy.

## **3. Materials and Method**

### **3.1. Method**

This research is applied in terms of its purpose and non-experimental in terms of its implementation and the research design is based on factor analysis and structural equations methods. The study population includes: Meli bank in Iran Consumers in 2019. Thus the statistical population is of unlimited type, which according to Morgan table is a sample of 384 persons. The questionnaire was sent to each of these

customers by electronic tools, attached to a letter aimed at demonstrating the usefulness of the results of this study. In some cases personal meetings were used to encourage participation. A total of 334 questionnaires were returned. Required and proprietary information was collected by using field method. Corenbach's alpha coefficient ( $\alpha = .88$ ) was used to calculate the reliability of the questionnaire. Finally this research data analysis was carried out by statistical characteristics like charts, frequency tables, percent, structural equations test, factor analysis and SPSS and Smart PLS software, on two descriptive and inferential levels. The average value of the extracted variance is always greater than .4 and composite reliability value is also greater than average extracted variance. So the convergent validity is also confirmed. After examining the fitting of the tested pattern, the results of the research hypothesis testing are presented.

### 3.2. Research Findings

Based on the results of measurement model, factor loadings in all cases have acceptable value (above .3), that shows there is an appropriate correlation between observed variables and hidden variables related to them. So it can be concluded that each major variable has been measured correctly and given the findings from this scale the research hypothesis can be tested. The research model was evaluated based on the optimal values of the fit indices, which are presented in Table (2).

Table 2: The Results of the Structural Model

Symbol	Model Estimation
(NFI)	0.89
(NNFI)	0.93
(CFI)	0.94
(IFI)	0.94
(RMR)	0.070
(GFI)	0.86
(AGFI)	0.82

According to the values obtained in the table, the present research model shows excellent fit and is approved.

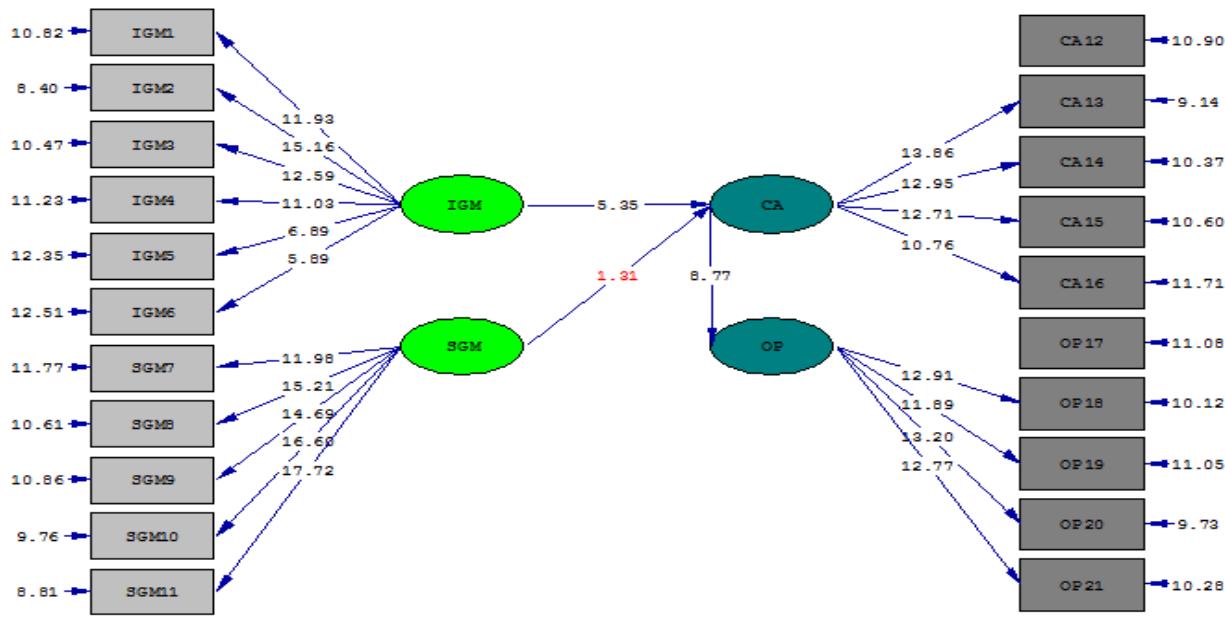
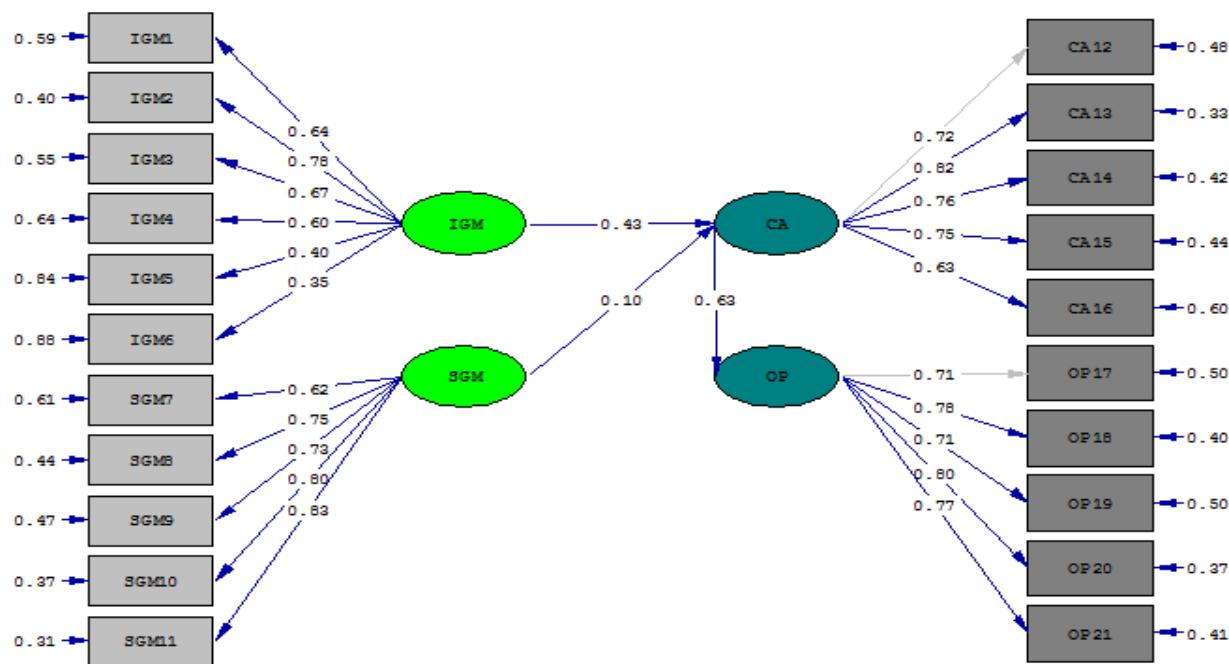


Chart 1: T-statistic coefficients



Chi-Square=567.68, df=185, P-value=0.00000, RMSEA=0.079

Chart 2: Factor load coefficients

Table 3:  $\lambda$  Coefficient values and t-statistic

Variables	Observed Variables	$\lambda$	t
Internal Green Marketing Orientation	IGM1	0.64	11.93
	IGM2	0.78	15.16
	IGM3	0.67	12.59
	IGM4	0.60	11.03
	IGM5	0.40	6.89
	IGM6	0.35	5.89
Strategies Green marketing Orientation	SGM7	0.62	11.98
	SGM8	0.75	15.21
	SGM9	0.73	14.69
	SGM10	0.80	16.60
	SGM11	0.83	17.72
Competitive Advantage	CA12	0.72	-
	CA13	0.82	13.86
	CA14	0.76	12.95
	CA15	0.75	12.71
	CA16	0.63	10.76
Organization Performance	OP17	0.71	-
	OP18	0.78	12.91
	OP19	0.71	11.89
	OP20	0.80	13.20
	OP21	0.77	12.77

#### 4. Research Findings

##### 4.1. Results

The findings showed that Internal Green Marketing Orientation had a positive effect on Competitive advantage. The results of this hypothesis are supported by researches Papadas et al, 2019 and Rahmawati & Hadiwidjojo, 2014.

The results of the second hypothesis test showed that Strategies Green marketing orientation had not a positive effect on Competitive advantage. The results are consistent with researches Papadas et al, 2019; Kinoti, 2011 and Rahmawati & Hadiwidjojo, 2014. However, researcher find support a corporate environmental integration approach which is vital to competitive success rather than solely undertaking corporate social/environmental responsibility (Menon & Menon, 1997; Porter & Van der Linde, 1995). Our findings too confirm prior researches about the positive relationship of stakeholders' pressures with a green marketing strategy (Polonsky, 1995). Similarly SGMO reflects the value of long-term commitment and investment in green marketing initiatives and given its positive role with competitiveness and profitability, it could be also used as a strategic business tool. In this context, internal green marketing operation could boost the impact of the core green marketing strategy on competitive advantage. For example, bonus that promote enviroment friendly behavior and incentives for exemplary environmental employee behavior could contribute towards the development of better managerial abilities inside the organization as well as help building a culture which differentiates the company from its competitors. to this end, organizations will eventually create environmental knowledge and competence by making every employee a green champion.

The results of the third hypothesis test showed that competitive advantage had a positive effect on Organization Performance. The results are consistent with the researches by Papadas et al, 2017; Choudhury et al, 2019; Kuo et al, 2017; Yang et al, 2009; Prakash, 2014; Li et al, 2006; Efrat et al, 2018; Huang & Huang, 2020; Cantele & Zardini, 2018.

In this regard, investing in developing services that are enviromental friendly can help an organization to build better R & D abilities from its competitors and sustain a competitive advantage. This is due to the fact, our findings reveal interplay between strategic and internal green marketing initiatives and provide managers with nuanced insights about the approach an organization should employ in order to achieve high levels of competitiveness.In addition to this research suggests that strategy and people do matter when pursuing an environmentally-driven competitive advantage. So, a strategic direction that captures the human capital element is broader than any environmental strategy.

##### 4.2. Managerial implications

- Eco-friendly organization should allow customers to believe that using green services is the right decision to use in eco-friendly society.
- To satisfy consumers' demands for green services, environmental organizations must provide an interesting environmental experience to engage with environmentally friendly behaviors when using services.

##### 4.3. Limitations and future researches

- Future studies can try to add or modify more variables to expand the scope of this study and enhance accuracy.
- This study conducted random sampling of consumers who had used services Meli bank in Iran. So, Researchers can study other organizations.

##### 4.4. Contributions

The purpose of this study is to lay a foundation for discussion of theoretical assumptions and practical implications. Going beyond previous literature, this study found new information concerning the interrelationships between Internal Green Marketing Orientation, Strategies Green marketing orientation, competitive advantage, and organizational performance. Several prior studies (Papadas et al, 2019;

Kinoti, 2011; Rahmawati & Hadiwidjojo, 2014; Papadas et al, 2017; Choudhury et al, 2019; Kuo et al, 2017; Yang et al, 2009; Prakash, 2014).

- This research adds new knowledge to this domain of study by showing the effects of the relationships between Internal Green Marketing Orientation, Strategies Green marketing orientation, competitive advantage, and organizational performance.
- This study has used quantitative research with rigorous statistical techniques such as exploratory factor analysis, validity and reliability tests, structural equation modeling, and hierarchical regression to examine research hypotheses as related to research questions and research objectives.

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The current study has not received any grant, fund or contribution from private or government institutions. Also, the authors declare that there is no conflict of interests

## ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

Authenticity of the texts, honesty and fidelity has been observed.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Author/s confirmed no conflict of interest.