THE REASONS AND MEANS FOR IMPLEMENTING
GREEN MARKETING STRATEGIES:
A Theoretical Approach

Abstract

The increasing social awareness about the need for a greater protection of the natural resources has lead to a growing number of consumers with consideration for environmental issues in their purchase decisions. This context has strongly influenced the business initiatives to include ecological variables in their marketing strategies and green marketing has become an extremely important area of study in the business research.

Despite this relevance there is still little marketing literature that explains how the organizations develop ecological strategies and why these b policies differ in their results. With the aim to help fill this gap this research analyzes the decisional process that leads managers to implement a Green Marketing Strategy (GMS) and the role played by the organizational variables in this implementation. Understanding how the individual cognitive mechanisms operate and how the organizational variables facilitate the implementation process is highly significant to determine the characteristics of the resultant GMS. One main objective is to develop an in-depth analysis that would integrate individual, social and technical issues to depict all factors linked to the implementation of a GMS. To this extend, it is crucial to explore the identity of the green marketing concept. Indeed, only after having reached an agreement about this issue will it be possible to study the influence of the managerial and organizational factors on its implementation as a corporate strategy. Finally in order to provide with a holistic explanation of this process this study adopts a theoretical framework based on the sociological perspective of the institutional theory and on the constructivist approach.

To summarize this research proposes a multidimensional model to explain the implementation of a GMS. The present study is therefore the theoretical model of my PhD dissertation that will be in a future stage empirically validated with a representative sample of the Spanish firms that have adopted an environmental management system.

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1. - Introduction

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1.1. - Relevance of this study

Nowadays increasing social demands for ecologically responsible behavior are driving many firms to consider the natural environment in their corporate strategies (see Banerjee, 2001; Buysse and Verbeke, 2003; Daub and Ergenzinger, 2005; Sarkis, 2003; Starik and Marcus, 2000, among others). However, despite the fact that research in this area appears to be extremely useful (Sroufe et al., 2002) there is still little literature that provides with a theoretical basis explaining how organizations make decisions about ecological issues and why they differ (Sharma et al., 1999; Winn and Angel, 2000; Worthington and Patton, 2005). The non marketing literature has paid little attention to the reasons that shed light on why managers take actions concerning environmental responsibility (Cordano and Frieze, 2000) and on how the contextual variables promote corporate ecological concerns (Bansal and Roth, 2000; Sharfman et al., 2004; Sharma et al., 1999;). To this scarcity of research in the area of corporate green strategic behaviors one may add the lack of academic and professional knowledge about the process of implementing corporate strategies (James et al., 1999; Okumus, 2003). This is all the more notorious in the specific field of implementing environmental strategies (Maxwell et al., 1997, Winn and Angel, 2000) since both implementation processes and green issues are highly complex and since their study requires integrating psychological, social and technical variables.

Moreover conventional marketing practice has frequently been criticized for promoting excessive consumption and materialism and not considering environmental protection (Schaefer, 2005). Since the last decade marketing research has taken a great deal of interest in the study of ecological issues (see Belz 2006; Kangun and Polonsky, 1995; Kirchgeorg and Winn, 2006; Krausse, 1993; Menon and Menon, 1997; Otman, 1993; Peattie, 1995; Prakash, 2002; Wasik, 1996, among others), however there is no consensus yet about what green marketing exactly concerns (Saha and Darnton, 2005) and many firms feel uncertain about how to face these green challenges (Kärnä et al, 2003). On the other hand, despite the fact that the marketing literature recognizes that the implementation plays

an extremely important role in the success of the strategies (Cravens, 1987), academic research models dealing with this issue are still lacking (Chimhanci and Morgan, 2005; Lane, 2005) and this vacuum is even more evident when environmental issues are at stake.

The social awareness about ecological problems has also lead governments to develop new legislations to protect the natural environment, which is mostly addressed to companies. However firms do not respond equally to these regulative pressures and corporate strategies for environmental protection are often far from being achieved (Belz, 2006). For instance Spain is one of countries of the EU showing the lowest levels of compliance with the European and national environmental legislation (Altafaj A, 2004; Méndez R, 2005) with a production system that is still in its early stages regarding ecological behaviors (Del Brío et al., 2002) and that shows little efficiency in the use of energy and water (http://www.mma.es, 2005); despite the fact that the Eurostat reports that the Spanish manufacturing industry is emitting the majority of the gases responsible in Spain for the greenhouse effect (Boiza, 2006) and that has one of the lowest levels of compliance with the Kyoto Protocol (http://www.efe.es, 2005).

1.2. - Purpose of research and research questions

The aim of this research is to provide with an integrative framework that allows for the study of the nature of the implementation of a GMS. Therefore, it analyzes the drivers for ecological responsibility and the role played by the organizational variables in the implementation of these GMSs. Based on the institutional theory and the constructivist[1] perspective, this study proposes a model that explains the process of implementing a GMS including individual, group and organizational variables. Indeed integrating the macro and micro perspective in the environmental/marketing relationship proves to be one the most important challenge for the marketing academy in the 21st century (Baumann et al., 2002; Kilbourne and Beckmann, 1998)

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[1] There is not a widely accepted term that designs the social construction of reality. Some authors propose "social constructionism", others prefer "social constructivism" while others use just "constructionism" or "constructivism" without justifying this election (Birmingham, 1998). This study will adopt the term "constructivism" because it is the most used by the literature.

To predict the relations between the organizations and their institutional environments, the institutional theory covers and operates at multiple levels (Scott, 1995). Therefore this theory will serve to explain the reasons that lead the organizations to implement a GMS and the links between managerial perceptions of the environmental pressures and the organizational behaviors regarding these GMSs.

Moreover the constructivist approach will be extremely useful in analyzing the nature of the implementation of organizational strategies. According to this perspective the implementation is a social process resulting from the interaction of all the organizational members. Therefore the institutional theory explains the relation between the environmental pressures and the organizational decisions while the constructivist approach is framed in a smaller level – the intra-organizational relations among the individual members of an organization. Consequently the constructivist perspective facilitates the analysis of how the interactions among the individual members influence the organizational mechanisms addressed to implement a GMS and how both variables - individual and organizational - affect the resulting GMS. Indeed the constructivist approach contributes to achieve a holistic perspective of the implementation process linking the reasons explained by the institutional theory with the means of the implementation process.

Overall the goal of this research is to study the managerial, organizational and contextual variables that influence the organizational behaviors regarding the GMSs. The specific questions under focus are: What does green marketing concern? Why are firms engaging in GMSs? How are the ecological issues incorporated in a corporate GMS? Therefore it will focus on identifying and validating the main cognitive and organizational variables that play a role in implementing the GMSs. As a result the main asset of this model will be to prove the implementation of these strategies as a social process in which psychological, social and technical aspects intervene.

This study concludes with the description of the methodology to be used for conducting the future empirical research that will serve to validate the GMS implementation model proposed in this analysis.

2. - Green Marketing

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2.1. - Introduction

Society mostly started to show concern about the natural environmental problems in the sixties and since then the awareness has continuously increased. As a result social behaviors, including patterns of consumption, have gradually changed to adapt themselves to the existing ecological problems which have motivated firms to include environmental criteria in their marketing strategies (Menon and Menon, 1997). In the mid eighties a high number of companies had already integrated environmental policies in their marketing and business strategies (Fischer and Schot, 1993; Kirkpatrick, 1990). However it is not until the nineties - after major ecological catastrophes such as Chernobyl, Bhopal or Exxon Valdez - that the interest for environmental problems is widely shared within the society (Kilbourne and Beckmann, 1998; Saha and Darton, 2005) and that customers make more explicit their demand for business environmental responsibility (Wagner, 1997). At the same time the public policies started to limit some industrial polluting activities (Polonsky, 1991; Porter, 1991) and as a result the number of companies that included ecological issues in their corporate policies increased spectacularly (Peattie and Crane, 2005; Saha and Darnton, 2005).

Parallel to this societal and corporate interest for environmental protection, the marketing literature has become increasingly concerned about the importance of ecological issues. In the seventies some renowned authors had already studied the links between marketing and environmental responsible behaviors (see Anderson and Cunnigham, 1972; Feldman, 1971; Fisk, 1973). In the nineties the marketing literature adopted ecological issues as an important area of research (Sheth and Parvatiyar 1995; Menon and Menon, 1997) and nowadays green marketing is one of the major trends in the modern business agenda (Gurau and Ranchhod, 2005).

All along this time academic research has focused on: a) the characterization of the "green consumer"; b) the analysis of the individual specific environmental consciousness and its influence on behavioural intentions; c) the study of the general environmental beliefs and values, and institutional factors (Kilbourne and Beckmann, 1998) and d) the validation of green strategies as key tools for organizational survival as the consumers are increasingly concerned about ecological issues and punish organizations that do not include them in their marketing strategy (see Kangun and Polonsky, 1995; Krausse, 1993; Ottman, 1993; Peattie, 1995; Wasik 1996, among others). However even after some decades of research on environmentally responsible marketing, these strategies are not completely understood yet (Belz, 2006) neither completely achieved (Peattie and Crane, 2005) and the literature still lacks a widely accepted concept of green marketing (Kilbourne and Beckmann, 1998).

2.2. - Conceptual Approaches

There is an extensive range of terms to refer to the marketing activities that include ecological issues: *green marketing* (Gurau and Ranchod, 2005; Ottman, 1993, 1998; Peattie an Crane, 2005; Polonsky, 1994; Polonsky and Rosemberger, 2001; Prakash, 2002; Wasik, 1996) *greener marketing* (Charter and Polonsky, 1999) *environmental marketing* (Coddington, 1993; Miles and Covin, 2000; Peattie, 1995; Polonsky, 1995) *ecological marketing* (Dyllick, 1989; Henion, 1981; Henion and Kinnear, 1976; Herberger, 1977; Neuner, 2000), *eco-marketing* (Belz, 1999; Miles and Munilla, 1993); *enviropreneurial marketing* (Menon and Menon 1997; Varadarajan, 1992) *sustainable marketing* (Fuller, 1999; Lafferty, 2002), *sustainability marketing* (Belz 2006; Kirchgeorg and Winn, 2006). This study will use the term green marketing because it is the one most frequently employed in the academic literature to refer exclusively to corporate strategies with ecologically responsible behaviours and not with other responsible concerns.

The first conceptual approaches to marketing strategies for environmental responsibility appeared in the seventies. In 1976 two renowned researchers, Henion and

Kinnear, suggested that ecological marketing should include the analyses of the effects of marketing activities on pollution and the depletion of the natural resources. Wagner (1997:1) supports this idea and states that green marketing reflects *concern about the effects of manufacturing and consumption on the natural environment*.

Other authors propose some more operative approaches to green marketing. For example, Simintiras et al. (1994) and Pride and Ferrel (1993) state that green marketing is designing, pricing, distributing and promoting products that do not harm the environment. Some others focus only on one aspect of the marketing mix: production (Porter, 1991), pricing (Jay, 1990), distribution (Bohlen et al., 1993) or communication (Kangun et al., 1991). In addition, Fuller (1999) who also adopts an operative perspective differs from the aforementioned authors in that he includes criteria such as the consumers needs, the objectives of the organization and the environmental compatibility.

Following this perspective, Ottman (1998) suggests that green marketing should be focused on developing products that balance the necessities of the consumers - quality, affordability and utility - with the "environmental compatibility", which means a minimum impact on the natural environment[2]. Also from this approach (Polonsky, 1995) states that environmental marketing consists in satisfying human needs and creating minimum negative impact on the natural environment.

Within the mainstream marketing literature one may also observe conceptual developments showing a holistic perspective (McDonagh and Prothero, 1997). Some followers of this approach are Sheth and Parvatiyar (1995) who suggest that marketing activities should reinvent the products and the production systems; Welford (1995) who proposes a comprehensive approach to the product, so that all its life cycle should be considered in order to be regarded as a green product; Saha and Darton (2005) who state that green marketing involves ecological concerns in all corporate activities and points out that the focus should not be limited to the end product; or Peattie (1999) and Chamorro and

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[2] Ottman (1998) considers that green marketing should minimize the negative effects on the natural environment. Yet she does not take position for the need of eliminating them. This idea is implicitly included in most of the definitions. None of the authors quoted in this study state that green marketing activities should not create any negative environmental impact.

Banegil, (2006) who remark the importance of the ecological responsible philosophy of the organization when green marketing is at stake.

Furthermore several authors such as Coddignton (1993) or Polonsky and Rosemberger (2001) also support the idea that green marketing requires the compromise of the whole organization while adding the concept of strategic potential to permit new opportunities of competitive advantage. Regarding this strategic approach, Varadarajan introduced in 1992 the concept of enviropreneurial marketing according to which ecological concerns and marketing strategy objectives are combined. Some renowned followers of this idea were Menon and Menon (1997) who suggest that enviropreneurial marketing attempts to create revenue and meet social performance objectives by integrating environmental concerns when developing marketing policies and practices.

2.3. - Conceptual Proposal

The conceptual proposal of green marketing[3] adopted in this study is based on the definition of marketing suggested in 2004 by the American Marketing Association (http://www.marketingpower.com, 2004) that points out the importance of satisfying the customer as well as the organization and its stakeholders:

Marketing is an organizational function and a set of processes for creating, communicating, and delivering value to customers and for managing customer relationships in ways that benefit the organization and its stakeholders.

One should mention that this definition allows for diverse interpretations of the drivers of marketing activities with ecological concerns. The firms would behave in an ecologically responsible way if it were to help improve their performance, if the customers

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[3] All along this study the term "green marketing" will be based on the business perspective- adopted by those firms that commercialize environmental responsible products. This approach has to be differentiated from the social perspective, which includes the activities developed by the non-lucrative institutions to promote environmental responsible behaviors.

were to require it or if it were to satisfy their stakeholders. Furthermore in the case that the demands for environmental protection do not come from the direct participants to the process but from the organizational desire to satisfy its stakeholders, different academic approaches to the nature of these stakeholders appear.

Who are these stakeholders that benefit from corporate environmental responsibility? Are they the social groups with ecological concerns? Or is it the natural environment itself? Since the majority of the literature places the natural environment at the bottom of the list of the stakeholders of a firm (Driscoll and Starik, 2004) or does not even consider it as a stakeholder by itself, one might think that the most relevant stakeholders to a firm are the social groups affected by its marketing activities. However Driscoll and Starik's (2004) idea that the natural environment is the primary stakeholder of a firm should not be discarded. In addition, satisfying the demands of the social groups of interest might better belong to the concept of marketing strategies for corporate social responsibility (see Brown and Dacin, 1997; Jones; 1980; Maignan and Ferrel, 2004, among others) as these demands may not only include ecological responsibility. Consequently this research offers a definition of green marketing that takes into account the interest for environmental protection of all the stakeholders, but not the other demands of the society that might be better addressed in the concept of socially responsible marketing.

According to this study green marketing may be regarded as "**the exchange relationship that satisfies both the needs of its protagonists and the requirements for environmental protection of its other stakeholders and that allows for an ecological sustainability during the product's life cycle**".

Therefore this definition considers ecological concerns as a corporate response not only to customer or organizational requirements, but also to social pressures for environmental protection and/or as an organizational imperative to protect the natural environment for what it is. Indeed the definition of the AMA in which this concept is based does not restrict the existence of a stakeholder to its social nature.

2.4. - Definition of a GMS

According to this research a GMS is "**the pattern of organizational behaviour that results from following an organizational green marketing policy"**. An in-depth analysis of the meaning of strategy will be provided in a further section of this study. But in order to favour the understanding of the GMS implementation model a previous definition of GMS proves necessary.

2.5. - Summary

– The awareness of the society and particularly that of the consumers about the environmental problems has lead many companies to integrate ecological issues in the marketing strategies and has induced substantial research about environmental responsible marketing. Nevertheless there is not yet a consensus about the definition of green marketing.

– The concept of green marketing suggested in this study adopts some approaches included previously in the literature. It integrates traditional marketing principles - the necessity of satisfying the consumers and the organization - and more recent perspectives that claim for attending also to stakeholder concerns about ecological issues integrating a sustainable philosophy in the product's life cycle.

3. - The Reasons for Implementing a GMS:
An Institutional Framework

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3.1. - Introduction

There is scarce literature that analyzes the reasons behind managerial behaviours and this academic void gets wider when organizational changes are at stake (Sahittal and Jassawalla, 1998). The literature also lacks a widely accepted theory explaining why organizations include ecological issues in their strategies. Therefore Gladwin (1993) proposes the sociological approach to the institutional theory as a highly comprehensive and clarifying perspective on the reasons and means of organizational greening. This idea is shared by many authors in the natural environment field (see Rothenberg et al., 1992; Hoffman, 1999; Jennings and Zandbergen, 1995, among others). Specifically Kilbourne and Beckmann (1998) state that to include the institutional level would improve the green marketing research field and complete the causal model. Sharma et al. (1999) also remark the need of going beyond description and of providing comprehensive frameworks that explain the occurrence of the organizational strategies for environmental protection.

3.2. Institutional Theory

The institutional theory offers extensive arguments for the necessity of corporations to adapt themselves to the constrictions and demands of their external contexts in order to acquire legitimacy and survive in the long run (Scott, 1995). Also, as suggested before, the firms nowadays face strong pressures for natural environment protection. Therefore the institutional theory becomes extremely relevant for the study of GMSs.

This theory focuses on the relationship between organizational behaviours and institutional pressures. Interest groups play a critical role in this relation since they elevate concern about issues to a level at which organizations feel such pressures (Greening and

Gray, 1994). Indeed the institutional theory is based on an open system framework that emphasizes the influence of the wider context on the organizational behavior (Scott, 1992).

There are many varying meanings and usages associated with the concept of institution (Scott, 1995). This study will be based on the definition suggested by Scott (1995, p. 33): *institutions consist of cognitive, normative, and regulative structures and activities that provide stability and meaning to social behavior.* Consequently this research relies on the sociological perspective of neo-institutional theory as proposed by this author.

Responding to institutional pressures confers the organizations a legitimacy that is necessary for their survival (DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Meyer and Rowan, 1977). According to the institutional perspective, the legitimacy is an organizational imperative (Selznick, 1996). The institutional legitimacy is linked to the degree of cultural support of an organization (Meyer and Scott, 1983). This response to institutional pressures - and not necessarily to objective requirements of efficiency - leads to a high degree of homogeneity among organizations belonging to a similar cultural environment (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Mizruchi and Fein, 1999). Regarding this conformity with the external environment, several authors have criticised the fact that a broad emphasis on compliance leads to a downplaying of the role of interest and agency in organizational responses to institutional environments (DiMaggio, 1988; Oliver, 1991; Zucker, 1977). The institutional theory has significantly contributed to understanding organizational behaviours in response to their wider social environment (Beckert, 1999). However its explanatory power about the organizational connection to its context contrasts with the limited attention paid to the strategic agency (Beckert, 1999; Oliver, 1991). This scarcity is particularly evident when organizations face conflicting societal demands since in this context discretionary behaviour becomes compulsory (Beckert, 1999; Scott, 1994). Therefore some contemporaneous institutional authors agree on the necessity of including strategic choice in institutional insights (see DiMaggio and Powell, 1991; Zucker, 1988, among others) and the managerial role in this choice (Fligstein, 1991).

As Selznick (1996) puts it, the apparent conflict of agency and institutional perspective is solved by admitting that individual perceptions are the basis for understanding social issues. Overall institutional environments exist but only after individuals take them into account (Meyer and Rowan, 1977). In other words:

For better or worse, individuals really do share their thoughts and they do to some extent harmonize their preferences, and they have no other way to make the big decisions except within the scope of institutions they build (Douglas, 1987, p.128)

Therefore the strategic choice approach to the institutional theory does not deny the existence of an objective external reality once a social knowledge is set up (Zucker, 1977) while it allows for a constructivist approach and for integrating different level of analysis (Lounsbury, 2001; Scott, 1995).

Finally the institutional theory includes relevant concerns about social issues. It shows how organizations not only react to market pressures but also to other institutional pressures (Greenwood and Hinnings, 1996). Consequently this perspective serves to explain organizational behaviours regarding GMS since it considers issues in addition to the profit maximization (Selznick, 1996) - which is extremely useful when studying corporate actions for ecological responsibility.

3.3. Summary

-        The time when firms could solely base their organizational policy on economic criterions in order to ensure their long term survival is over. Nowadays they face several pressures from their groups of interest that include the environmental protection.

-        In the absence of a widely accepted theoretical approach to the managerial behaviour regarding green issues, the institutional theory means a suitable framework to explain the reasons behind organizational ecological strategies.

-       Contemporaneous institutional authors that follow a sociological approach remark the open system framework of this theory and include a constructivist perspective without dismissing the individual discretion.

-       This approach to the institutional theory means an extremely relevant tool to explain ecological organizational behaviours in response to the pressures for natural environment protection, where managerial discretion plays a key role in the resulting GMS and where different levels of analysis are connected.

4.-The Means for Implementing a GMS: Theoretical Implications

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4.1. - Introduction and Relevance

The rapid changes in society ask for constant organizational evolutions. In this context, the implementation stage comes as a key issue because it is directly related to the business adaptation to its wider environment (Thomas, 2002).

The management literature shows that the results of the implementation may vary widely from the expectations (Marcus, 1988) and that "intended" strategies and "realized" strategies are distinct in nature (Mintzberg, 1978). The reason for it is that the implementation is not the direct outcome of a strategy formulation but a process (see Moorman and Miner, 1998; Piercy and Giles, 1990; Thomas, 2002) with high influence on the success of the organizational decisions (Eisenhardt and Zbaracki, 1992). Therefore the implementation represents a relevant area of research (Nutt, 1998).

The marketing literature has long considered the implementation as a key issue (Chimhanzi, 2004) agreeing with the management literature on that it is critical to the organizational results (ver Bonoma, 1984). However, this literature still presents some relevant vacuums regarding the organizational abilities to effectively implement a marketing strategy (Noble and Mokwa, 1999; Piercy, 1998), despite the fact that the business context intervenes not only in the strategic planning but also in the implementation (Piercy, 1990). Neither has the marketing research paid high attention to manager-level factors (Noble and Mokwa, 1999) as it is the case of the study of the making of strategic decisions (Hickson et al., 2003).

Furthermore after examining the history of research in strategic marketing, Zinkham and Pereira (1994) conclude that the implementation is the less developed area in marketing. This statement reinforces Pasco's (1992) opinion that marketing professors do not consider it important enough. And consequently Noble and Mokwa (1999) call for the

need for an in-depth research about the organizational and individual dynamics linked to implementing market decisions.

The natural environment literature also lacks some analysis about the implementation of ecological strategies in the firms (Ramus and Steger, 2000). Moreover in the specific area of marketing strategies for environmental protection managers agree on that green marketing allows for sustainable competitive advantage. However these strategies are scarcely adopted because their implementation is complex (Dunn, 1997, Florida, 1996; Shrivastava, 1995) as they require deep organizational changes (Clair et al., 1996; McDaniel and Rylander, 1993) and new behaviours for which the firms lack experience (Gupta, 1995).

Therefore in order to control this complexity and novelty the firms require a two-level organizational dynamic; the managerial compromise for environmental protection needs to be shared and coordinated by the diverse functional departments (Klassen, 1993). Therefore implementing a GMSs demands for integrating variables of different level that all have an influence on each other.

4.2. - The concept of Implementation: Diverse Approaches

There is not a widely accepted definition of the implementation; it varies according to the authors. For some of them it is the mechanism that allows for the enactment of the marketing plans (Bonoma, 1984; Meldrum, 1996; Kotler, 1997; Wind and Robertson 1983). From this operative approach Sashittal and Wilemon (1996: 75) suggest the following definition:

It is a process that *involves translating strategic intentions into action steps, assigning relevant tasks and actions to people, ensuring that the tasks are executed, and accomplishing the predetermined objectives*.

Follower of a different perspective Piercy (1998) proposes that the implementation should not be seen as a "formulation-implementation" dichotomy but as a process.

Moreover Cespedes (1991) states that the implementation may not be preceded by the strategy formulation but that there is an interactive relationship between these two types of activities. Furthermore Frankwick et al. (1994) and Workman (1993) remark the important role played by the interpersonal and behavioural features. In addition Hrebiniak and Joyce (1984) and Webster (1997) include the concept of routine: the implementation relies on the daily activities performed by all organizational members.

With the aim of integrating the diverse concepts proposed by the authors, this study adopts the constructivist perspective that allows for including:

- the <u>analytic-rational</u> approach that characterizes both the conscious planning of the competitive behaviours to adopt and the administration of the necessary resources to maintain them;
- the <u>cognitive-social</u> approach that assumes the role played by the organizational members in materializing these competitive behaviours.

The constructivist perspective assumes that the success of the organizational strategies depends not only on the planning but also on subjective personal factors - perceptions and motivations - because the strategies are carried out thanks to individual repeated behaviours. Therefore this perspective allows for a methodological approach that simultaneously analyzes the different levels of the organizational reality (Valencia and Pasquero, 2003).

4.3. - The Constructivist Approach to the Implementation

The model proposed in this study is based on the constructivist approach that considers the influence of the managers when formulating strategies and administrating the organizational resources for their implementation. Indeed there is an interconnection among management style, organizational culture and the nature of the implementation process (Bourgeois and Brodwin 1984).
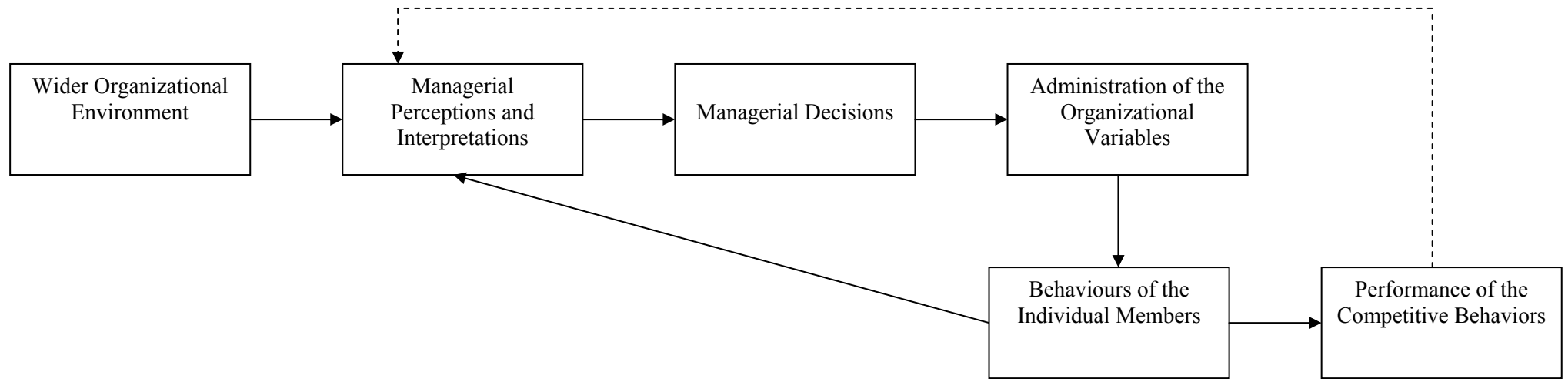
From the constructivist perspective Sveiby (1997) suggests that the interaction among the individual members creates the organizational structures. According to him it is the bi-directional process - two individuals communicating - that co-creates knowledge involving the whole organizational members. This constructivist perspective also emphasizes the importance of the cognition as a mediator between the structure and outcome, because individual cognition influences individual decisions and consequently the decisions of the others (Carley and Behrens, 1999). These authors also remark that the organizational performance depends on both the individual action and its context, and that it calls for linking the organizational and the individual perspective.

Therefore, the framework adopted in this study supports the interdependence individual/ object; it is aligned with the idea that the individuals interacting in specific contexts create "inter-subjectively shared" interpretations and meanings of the social issues[4] (Mahoney, 2004). These shared understandings make it possible for the organizations to coordinate the actions of the individual members and to adapt themselves to the changes of their internal and external environment (Feldman and Rafaeli, 2002).

These assumptions imply that the implementation is not an external and imposed phenomena but a shared process: the firm assigns resources to maintain the compromise of the employees in repeating the same strategy. The model of strategy means a guideline for these individual behaviours and it is therefore the cause and the result of the implementation. Figure 1 shows the constructivist approach to the implementation adopted in this study.

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[4] It should be noted that the aim of the social constructivism is not to question the reality, but to explain how contextual issues come to be seen and treated in a social process (Burningham, 1998).

Figure 1: A Constructivist Approach to the Implementation

Wider Organizational Environment	→	Managerial Perceptions and Interpretations	→	Managerial Decisions	→	Administration of the Organizational Variables

Behaviours of the Individual Members → Performance of the Competitive Behaviors

4.3.1. - Conceptual Proposal

Based on the constructivist approach this study suggests the following definition of the implementation: "**the organizational knowledge generated by the administration of the organizational resources to maintain the cognitive representations that lead to competitive behaviours**".

In order to present with an in-depth study of the implementation and a comprehensive theoretical framework, this work introduces a model that integrates the individual, social and technical aspects linked to the implementation of a GMS by considering the constructivist definition of the organization and of the strategy. Indeed strategy making includes multiple simultaneous processes (Mintzberg et al., 1998) and levels of management (Bourgeois and Brodwin 1984; Burgelman, 1994). In addition the nature of the ecological issues potentially affected by the activities of a firm is multidimensional and needs to be analyzed according to the contextual characteristics of the organization (Braglia and Petroni, 1999).

4.3.2. - A Constructivist Approach to the Organization

The constructivist approach to the organizations admits that the basis of their structures relies in the mind and habits of the employees. Consequently the organizations are the result of the human subjectivity and activity (Weick, 1979). According to this approach, the daily activities and routine interactions among the organizational members reconstruct the organizational structure (Giddens, 1984). Therefore the organization is "a reconstruction of the past recreated constantly in the present" by the social actors (Giddens, 1984:25). Oliver (1990) also states that the routines mean an essential process to promote confidence among the organizational members and to control the uncertainty of the environment. Furthermore Nelson and Winter (1982) suggest that the routines should be the unit of analysis in the study of the organizations because their structure relies on the habits and routine behaviours of their individual members.

In this research the concept of "organizational routine" serves to design a stable and repetitive activity (Betsch et al., 2001; Costello, 2000; Feldman and Rafaeli, 2002;

Karim and Mitchell, 2000) that explains the behaviour of the organizations (Nelson and Winter, 1982). It is important to mention that the organizational routines do not mean a lack of innovation or environmental adaptation. On the contrary, despite their stable nature, the organizational literature acknowledges that the routines can change. After all the pattering of ways of attempting to innovate is a routine itself (Nelson and Winter, 1982).

The literature suggests two approaches to the routines: (i) "the recurrent interaction patterns" (Dosi et al., 2000; Edmonson et al., 2001; Feldman, 2000; Feldman and Rafaeli, 2002; Guennif and Mangolte 2002; Jarzabkowski and Wilson, 2002; Jones and Craven, 2001; Warglien and Winter, 1996); and (ii) "the cognitive representations" (Cohen 1991; Egidi 1992; Forgas, 1979).

This research will adopt the first perspective as it is the most frequently used in the literature (Cohen and Bacdayan, 1994) and because it assumes the patterns of behaviour to be the result of cognitive routines. The organizational routines are the regular and predictable patterns of behaviour or personal abilities that have been learnt in response to selective pressures Cohen et al. 1996) and that stand for directly observable organizational practices (Guennif and Mangolte, 2002). They determine the daily activities of the organizations (Cyert and March, 1963; Nelson and Winter, 1982) becoming semi-automating along the time. The knowledge of these routines is stored neither in manuals nor in files, but in the memory of the persons that develop them (Cohen et al., 1996) resulting from the accumulation of knowledge, experience and learning. Therefore they depend on the organizational context and history allowing for a cognitive and motivational explanation of the organizational behaviours (Nelson and Winter, 1982).

4.3.3. - A Constructivist Approach to the Strategy

Strategy formation is a social process (Giddens, 1979) that depends on the daily activities of all the organizational members (Hrebiniak and Joyce, 1984; Webster 1997). Indeed the constructivist approach considers all the employees - independently of their hierarchal level - as active agents that need some organizational knowledge to be co-producers of their surrounding reality.

In order to achieve the participation of all the departments in the reconstruction of the organization the manager would represent the desired situation in a similar way to all the organizational members (Asch, 1987). This representation is *the entrepreneurial model or purpose.* As a consequence this model requires for the organization to put the needed resources at the disposal of the employees in order to improve their perceptions of the strategic context and to allow them to repeat the desired behaviours (Denis, 1990; Katz and Kahn, 1966).

Therefore this study defines the strategy as "**a pattern of organizational behaviour that results from the recurring conducts of all the organizational members oriented to achieve an efficient adaptation to its context**". This definition also integrates the opinion of Mintzberg (1987:27) based on the idea that the strategy is an organizational model repeated along the time as a pattern or behavioural routine.

4.4.- Integrating Different Dimensions

The mental representations and the organizational reconstruction require a stable environment. In order to create this predictable context the managers need to provide with resources to the organization – with a distribution of these resources also affected by their individual perceptions of the reality. In addition the social dimension should be taken into account in the individual and organizational variables relationship, because the organizational knowledge required for the competitive behaviours are reconstructed by the social practices to which the individuals participate.

Consequently this study proposes that the organizational desire to implement a GMS depends on the objective necessity of implementing a corporate environmentally friendly attitude and on the subjective managerial perception of its importance, which for one part is determined by the social interactions (Pregernig, 2002). Moreover the resultant organizational process is the outcome of the interaction between the personality of the manager, the organizational variables and the characteristics of the institutional environment (Bouchikhi, 1993). Therefore in order to follow a holistic approach, a necessity for one who wishes to evaluate issues of implementation (Okumus, 2003), this study integrates the individual, the social and the technical dimensions when analyzing the implementation of a GMS.

4.5.- The Role of the Managerial Discretion

According to the business literature, the managers are extremely important agents for deciding the organizational strategy (Mitchell et al., 1997) and the production systems (Hambrick and Mason, 1984); determining the organizational structures; and influencing the implementation process (Dess, 1987; Gupta and Govindarajan, 1984; Hickson et al., 1989; Hodgkinson and Johnson, 1994; Lant et al., 1992; Noble and Mokwa; 1999; Piercy and Morgan, 1994; Priem, 1990; Urban and Star, 1991).

The environmental literature also recognises this managerial relevance on the implementation of corporate environmental strategies (Winn and Angel, 2000). Specifically it emphasizes the importance of their perceptions and interpretations in the organizational commitment to the natural environment protection (Jennings et al, 1995; Naess, 1993; Schmidheiny, 1992). Aragón-Correa et al. (2004) points out the necessity of identifying the individual variables that induce the managers to adopt a green orientation (Drumwright, 1994). Nevertheless, the literature still lacks in-depth studies about this issue (Aragón-Correa et al., 2004). Therefore, with the aim to help fill this gap, this study analyzes some of the individual variables - characteristics and perceptions - that determine the assignment of the administrative mechanisms to implement a GMS.

4.5.1. Individual Characteristics

4.5.1.1. Age

Some authors (see Hart and Mellons, 1970, or more recently Bertrand and Schoar, 2003, among others) hold that there is a strong correlation between the age and the tendency to take risks. In Child's (1974) opinion older managers possess less physical and mental resistance and ability to choose new ideas and learn new behaviours (Chown 1960). Similarly Stevens et al. (1978) suggest that older executives show a higher psychological compromise with the organizational status quo. Carlsson and Karlsson (1970) add that the idea that more aged executives highly value the

financial and working security; their expectative is more linked to their future retirement pension and they are consequently less risk-taker.

Yet the adoption of environmental protection initiatives demands innovative strategies and programmes. Therefore more aged executives managers would be less likely to implement them. This idea leads to the following hypothesis:

H1: There is a negative relation between the age of a manager and his/her attitude towards the implementation of a GMS.

4.5.1.2. Functional Experience

The literature shows that the functional experience influences the election of the organizational strategy (Hambrick and Mason, 1984) as personal experiences are strongly linked to individual decisions and actions (Sashittal and Jassawalla, 1998). Put it another way, the professional background affects the organizational changes (Whittington and Whipp, 1992). Specifically the marketing ideology strongly determines the implementation of commercial strategies and their success (Miles and Snow, 1978). Following this perspective Fligstein (1991) emphasizes the importance of the managerial marketing background in the success of the organizational strategies. This logic leads to thinking that the managers with a functional commercial experience would implement a more market-oriented environmental strategy and to proposing the second hypothesis.

H2: There is a positive relation between the commercial experience of a manager and his/her attitude towards the implementation of a GMS.

4.5.1.3. Formal Education

Traditionally the management literature assumes that a formal education is linked to the elaboration of diverse and complex information. Particularly (Hambrick and Mason, 1984) put forward the idea that the education determines the personal knowledge and abilities and (Vassilis et al., 1998) add that, as a result, these individual capacities exert a strong influence on the organizational processes and outcomes.

Another traditional assumption is that the education is an indicator of the personal values and cognitive preferences. For example, Rogers (1983) points out that there is a narrow relationship between the level of formal education and the innovative behaviours. Specifically Bertrand and Schoar (2003) state that the managers holding a MBA would adopt more aggressive strategies. Consequently the innovative requirements of a GMS would demand for highly educated managers more prompt to take a favourable attitude towards new strategies. As a result this study suggests that:

H3: There is a positive relation between the level of studies of a manager and his/her attitude towards the implementation of a GMS.

4.5.2. *Individual Perceptions*

4.5.2.1.   Stakeholder Pressures

A suitable organizational response to the stakeholder demands is highly determined by the managerial perceptions of their relevance (Daft et al., 1988, Frederick, 1995; Greer and Downey, 1982; Mitchel et al., 1997). As stated by these authors the individual cognitive frames influence the interpretation of the salient stakeholders who, therefore, receive a management attention and resource allocation to satisfy their claims.

The environmental literature (see Berry and Rondinelli, 1998; King and Lennox 2000; Saha and Darton, 2005; Starik and Rands, 1995, among others) suggests that the green strategies are strongly linked to the restrictions exerted by the organizational stakeholders and that the managers are the key mediators for the ecological demands of the society (Fineman and Clarke, 1996). Shrivastava (1994) adds that the organizational legitimacy requires responding to the green awareness of the clients, suppliers, investors, governments, communities and media. To that extend the managers need to control diverse resources (Weick, 1995). Furthermore Buysse and Verbeke (2003) hold that responding to the demands of the stakeholders is highly linked to proactive ecological strategies. Therefore this study proposes that:

H4: There is a positive relation between the managerial perception of the stakeholder pressures and the level of organizational variables used to implement a GMS.

4.5.2.2. Expected Benefits

Previous researches have proven that the managerial interpretations of the environmental issues promote new relationships with their buyers and suppliers (Elkington, 1994) and induce internal organizational changes (Rothenberg et al., 1992). Moreover improving returns and generating a competitive advantage are key issues in the implementation of corporate environmental strategies (Bansal and Roth, 2000; Florida and Davison, 2001; Sharma, 2000). Therefore the organizations adopt environmental protection standards driven by competitive motivations (González-Benito and González-Benito, 2005). Consequently, this research proposes that:

H5: There is a positive relation between the expected organizational benefits linked to a GMS and the level of organizational variables used to facilitate its implementation.

4.5.2.3. Green Awareness

The prior research on strategic choice supports the important role that the managerial personal values and commitments play on the organizational actions (Frederick, 1995; Hambrick and Manson, 1984).

The environmental literature also recognizes that the personal values and perceptions of the leaders can accelerate the voluntary efforts of the firm concerning environmental issues (Boiral and Sala, 1998; Pregernig, 2002; Welford, 1995). Specifically Branzei et al. (2000) states that a manager with strong personal values for eco-sustainability is able to construct proactive environmental practices while decreasing the risk and increasing the value creation of the firms. Furthermore, exploratory research has confirmed the link between managerial awareness regarding environmental problems and the level of green marketing in the firm (Langerak et al., 1998; Vertinsky and Zietsma, 1998). As a result, this study suggests that:

H6: There is a positive relation between the level of the managerial eco-awareness and the level of the organizational variables used to implement a GMS.

4.5.2.4.   Obstacles

According to the literature the organizational variables have a positive but also a negative influence on the implementation. The knowledge about the obstacles favours or hinders the success of the strategy depending of the tasks required (Boldero, 1995).

Nevertheless some authors point out the negative effects that some matters provoke when implementing an environmental strategy is at stake. For example, Pinto and Prescott (1990) propose a list of variables - empirically obtained - that mean an obstacle to the implementation: the lack of specificity of the goals, the lack of support of the top-managers, the little clearness of the required individual actions, the unavailability of the needed technology, the lack of resources and the relevance of the information. Hitchens et al. (2003) agree with most of them and adds that the firms have in mind that the implementation of such strategies may involve too many organizational changes and scarce benefits.

Yet the influence of the managerial perceptions on the difficulties in implementing a GMS may have different effects - positive or negative - on the resultant strategy, as suggested by some literature. Therefore this study raises two different hypotheses:

H7:   There is a positive relation between the managerial awareness of the obstacles and the level of organizational variables adopted to support the implementation of a GMS.

H8: There is a negative relation between the managerial awareness of the obstacles and the level of organizational variables adopted to support the implementation of a GMS.

4.6.   The Role of the Organizational Variables

As previously mentioned, the implementation of a GMS demands new organizational behaviours and changes that generate uncertainty. Therefore a successful implementation of these strategies requires a deep knowledge of the organizational variables that facilitate them by favouring the performance of all the organizational members. Managerial perceptions are extremely important for the implementation of strategies but the effectiveness of their decisions is also strongly related to the physical environment (Sashittal and Jassawalla, 1998).

In the natural environment literature there is scarce research about these issues and it is mainly focussed on the implementation of standards. However some of these studies also show the existence of organizational dynamics related with the implementation of ISO 14000 (see Chin et al., 1998) and remark the importance of implicating the whole organization in the greening process (Sarkis and Rasheed, 1995).

The marketing literature suggests that three variables - under the organizational and managerial control - determine the organizational actions: the structures, systems and processes. (Piercy, 1990) states that the concept of marketing can be implemented as an organizational culture using these actions. Moreover Narver and Slater (1990) suggest that the organizations would benefit from a higher market orientation thanks to a suitable organizational infrastructure that includes structures, systems and processes of management.

4.6.1. - Structures

The organizational structures are the group of relations that formally determine the functions that every unit has to accomplish and the way of communication among them (Strategor, 1988). They constitute all the manners in which the task is divided and its subsequent coordination (Mintzberg, 1984). The organizational structures include the pattern of relationships and formal obligations, the links of power, of status-quo and hierarchy inside the organization. They also integrate the policy, procedures and formal controls that guide the activities and relationships of the organizational members (Kast

and Rosenzweig, 1987). The structural variables allow for the division of the organization in functional units so that the personnel perform efficiently. This division of the task allows for the optimisation of the use of their cognitive resources to succeed in their tasks (Lawrence and Lorsch, 1967). Furthermore they provide the employees with a stable physical and mental environment to plan their work and develop it as a routine.

Previous researches in management proposes that the strategies require mechanisms of implementation derived mainly from reorganizing the structural variables (see Daft and Macintosh, 1984; Dundas and Richardson, 1982; Grinyer and Yasai-Arkedani, 1981; Horovitz and Thietart, 1982), such as changes in the written rules and in the procedures that guide the roles and behaviours (Daniels et al., 1984).

The environmental literature also recognises the positive contribution of these variables. The structuring of the required tasks for the environmental protection influence the organizational ecological performance (Menon and Menon, 1997). Moreover the structures maintain and allow for the development of a marketing strategy according to the ecological requirements (Juslin, 1994). These variables include the specialization, the formalization and the centralization.

4.6.1.1.   Specialization

The administrative literature shows that adapting to the complexity of the environment requires an organizational logic that splits the problem into factors. It assumes that this division of the problem is the base of the work division. Indeed, when the context is perceived as complex the managers model it through strategies of splitting: "organizing objects into meaningful groups" (Dutton and Jackson, 1987: 78).

The demands for environmental protection are evolving to become increasingly complex. As a result the activities that concern the analysis and response to them require the specialization of the organizational tasks and functions. Furthermore in order to implement innovative strategies to protect the natural environment, the specialization

serves to create additional tasks and categories (Jauch and Glueck, 1988). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H9: There is a positive relation between the level of a GMS and the level of specialization of the organizational tasks driven to protect the natural environment.

4.6.1.2. Formalization

The organizational literature affirms that acting in uncertain contexts or in working environments with a poorly structured language implies using basic significations (Eraly, 1988). Scarcity in the formalization imposes a heavy charge of information because the participants have to constitute the conventional signs and categories that they will need to communicate; consequently the uncertainty increases.

The formalization is an organizational tool to ensure the predictability of the working situations that is developed through the formalization of roles, contracts, rules and programs (Cyert and March 1963). It limits the contexts of every organizational member allowing for increasing the prognostication of their behaviours. It also eliminates the ambiguity of the roles (Perrow, 1972) as it specifies where and who should develop the tasks. Furthermore Lichtenthal and Wilson (1992) show from the marketing approach that promoting rules related to the external environment favours the social change.

From the natural environmental literature, Dechant and Altman (1994) remark the importance of the mechanisms for aligning the corporate operations with its environmental objectives in order to increase the green responsibility of the organizations. The model of implementation proposed in this study is based on the ideas of Daniels et al. (1984) and assumes that the formalization refers to the modifications in the written rules and in the procedures that govern the roles and behaviours. This study proposes that:

H10: There is a positive relation between the level of a GMS and the number of the ecological responsible activities that a firm regulates.

4.6.1.3. Centralization

The managerial literature defines the centralization as the delegation of authority in the decision-making permitting the participation of the organizational members of different hierarchy levels (Aiken and Hage, 1968). Galbraith (1977) shows that the organizations are centralized when the top level takes the decisions. This author also states that the centralization is neither good nor bad *per se*, but that it depends on the situation. For example, he affirms that in complex systems the hierarchy and the centralization are the greatest sources of information distortion and blocking. On the other hand, if the decisions are decentralized, the problem of the fragmented and non-coordinated activities appears (Galbraith, 1977). Furthermore, most of this literature assumes that the results of the organizational tasks are more successful when the decisions are centralized. However, Rueckert et al. (1985) specify that this relationship is positive only when they are routine tasks, frequently developed, easily assessed and that take place in stable and non-complex contexts. Moreover Noble and Mokwa (1999) add that the implementation of organizational innovations is a process of internal diffusion that implies the adoption of many decisions by the employees.

In the natural environmental protection field Azzone and Noci (1998) link the responsibility of the personnel to the resultant corporate environmental performance. Consequently, as organizational tasks for environmental protection demand for multiple changes inside the firm, this study proposes the next hypothesis:

H11: There is a positive relation between the level of a GMS and the level of a firm decentralization in order to accomplish the tasks that favour the natural environment protection.

4.6.2. - Systems

The systems are the means to assign and redistribute the organizational resources. They allow for defining the responsibilities and administrating the actions for an effective functioning (Bolman and Deal, 1986). This variable is a formal mean for the implementation because it permits the managers to carry out the strategy by

distributing the budget, assigning the human resources and the training systems (Hambrick and Schecter, 1983).

The environmental literature also assumes that the systems are a powerful variable for the implementation since they facilitate the participation of the employees in the environmental actions (Ulhoi et al., 1996) and promote the transfer of the green knowledge (Dieleman and de Hoo, 1993).

The variable "systems" can be subdivided in three different categories: the resources, the training, the incentives and the leaders.

4.6.2.1. Resources

Jauch and Glueck (1988) explain that the implementation of the marketing strategies requires assigning the necessary resources and organizing the tasks required - this idea is tactically accepted by most of the authors in the marketing arena. According to them, assigning resources means using the formal power to decide which department division or strategic unit will increase its facilities, money or number of managers. These ideas are explicitly supported by Walker and Rueckert (1987) who state that to implement a strategy successfully the organization should have enough functional capabilities, but that it should also support the critical tasks with the required resources. In the environmental branch of knowledge, Bleischwitz (2003) points out the importance of the technical resources in the improvement of the environmental quality. Therefore in the context of implementing strategies of green marketing this study supposes that there is a link between the assignation of organizational resources and the implementation of a GMS.

H12: There is a positive relation between the level of a GMS and the amount of resources assigned to the tasks that favor the natural environment protection.

4.6.2.2. Training

Improving the professional capabilities of the organizational members means an important mechanism to efficiently implement a strategy (Weimer and Vining, 1989).

Skivington and Daft (1991) emphasize their relevance when the implementation concerns strategies of differentiation. Porter (1985) shows that efficient sales increase the value for the client since they contribute with a practical knowledge that reduces the costs and/or increases the results of the product. Similarly, in the area of the implementation of projects Pinto and Prescott (1990) suggest training the personnel as a mean to improve the implementation.

In the area of implementing strategies for environmental responsibility (Hanna et al., 2000; Theyel, 2000; Vasanthakumar, 1992) state that training employees means an important variable for improving the ecological performance of the firms.

According to these ideas, this research assumes that the training is a highly relevant organizational variable to implement marketing strategies of green responsibility.

H13: There is a positive link between the level of a GMS and the amount of resources assigned to support the training activities.

4.6.2.3. Incentives

The literature about incentives widely accepts that the remuneration policies influence the competence and the commitment of the organizational members (De Kok et al., 2003) and the organizational results as a consequence (Gómez-Mejía and Welbourne, 1988). This approach assumes that the incentives mean a direct and symbolic approval of the desired actions or behaviours. Specifically, Daft and Becker (1978) highlight the role of the incentives to favour the implementation of programs and projects.

The environmental management research also assumes the influence of the incentives in the implementation of corporate environmental actions (Tinsley, 2002). In addition, the implementation of a GMS requires new organizational activities to adapt to the changing conditions. According to this, using incentives to support these new tasks seems extremely necessary. Therefore the following hypothesis results:

H14: There is a positive relation between the level of a GMS and the degree of rewards for having responded to the demands for natural environment protection.

4.6.2.4.   Leaders

The coordination is the main mission of the leadership. This becomes even more important when several departments have to develop a common task and when the firm faces a complex context (Galbraith, 1977). Furthermore the leaders are responsible for promoting the changes that benefit the organization.

The literature about the implementation of strategies suggests that the leaders of the strategy are the managers that carry out the changes in the shared meaning – the model of strategy - and that build consensus about the new strategy (Skivington and Daft 1991). These authors think that the leaders may be hired with the objective of increasing the consensus and the acceptation of a new strategy. In this case, they provide with the energy required to change the signification as well as the existent values with the purpose that the employees accept the new strategic behaviours.

On the other hand, some authors specialized in environmental issues (see Portugal and Yukl, 1994; Winn, 1995) support the idea that green leadership is directly linked to the organizational environmental results and to the collectively construction of the organizational frames (Zietsma and Vertinsky, 1999-2001). Brazein et al. (2000) add that when organizational members believe that the firm is committed towards ecological issues, pro-environmental strategic choices and practices follow. In addition, Egri and Herman (2000) state that the environmental leaders play key roles in the ecological management of the firms. For all these reasons, this study proposes that:

H15: There is a positive relation between the level of a GMS and the existence of an organizational leader.

4.6.3. - Processes

The processes include to the actions or events that, resulting from shared understanding of the strategic priorities (Rapert et al., 2002), depend more on the participation and interaction of the individuals than on the systematic organizational actions (Skivington and Daft, 1991). The literature shows empirical evidences for accepting the fact that the characteristics of the processes have an important role in maintaining the organizational stability (Meyer, 1982) and in contributing to the organizational change (Mackenzie, 1986; Quinn and Cameron, 1983). Indeed the processes are important mechanisms for the implementation of strategies (Galbraith, 1995).

The environmental literature defends the idea that there is a positive link between the level of ecological strategies and the communications addressed to the markets (Kärnä, 2003). It also admits that the organizations use the communications to respond to the pressures of the ecological groups and to influence their employees so that they may increase their awareness about environmental issues (Wiser and Pickle, 1997). The term "process" covers organizational variables such as communications and mechanisms to solve the conflicts.

4.6.3.1. Communications

The role played by the cross-unit working relations is extremely relevant in the success of the implementation of marketing decisions (Chimhanzi, 2004). Indeed, the organizational communications mean an important influence on the diffusion and the adoption of marketing strategies (Noble and Mokwa, 1999). The resultant strategies often differ from the expectations because there is a gap between what managers believed they were exposing and what the organizational members interpreted (Sashittal and Jassawalla, 1998).

In addition organizations will not be competitive if they do not assimilate the innovations required to adapt themselves to the contextual changing conditions (Fidler and Johnson 1984). The implementation of these changes generates uncertainty that leads the organizational units to resist the innovations (Katz and Khan, 1966).

Furthermore, according to the literature the communications - formal or informal - favour the certainty and facilitate the adoption of the innovations.

The ecological strategies mean innovations (Braglia and Petroni, 1999) and an uncertainty affecting the tasks of the diverse organizational departments. Therefore this study assumes that the level of the environmental responsibility of an organization is maintained by the communications aimed to promote its value as a strategy. As a result the following hypothesis is proposed:

H16: There is a positive relation between the level of a GMS and the amount of formal and informal communications supporting the activities of green marketing.

4.6.3.2. Conflicts

The organizational literature assumes that the conflicts are related to the strategic action, the power and the interchange (Pfeffer, 1981). The conflict has been studied from two different approaches. One is based on the structural conflict that refers to the lack of ability to establish or maintain the basic rules that govern human relations. The other is based on the level of disagreement in the disputes that characterize inter or intra-organizational relationships.

The model proposed in this study requires analyzing the later approach - applied to the interdepartmental level. Specifically, it refers to the tension among two or more departments caused by the incompatibility in the current and desired responses (Gaski, 1984). In the marketing literature Ruekert and Walker (1987) indicate that interdepartmental conflicts suppress the communications among them. Therefore, the model suggested assumes that the conflict inhibits the dissemination of the information concerning the need to protect the natural environmental and the potential benefits derived from it. Consequently it leads to the following hypothesis:

H17: There is a negative relation between the level of a GMS and the level of the organizational conflict.

4.7.- Summary

-	The implementation process, that includes both the planning and the administration of the organizational resources to develop it, is crucial to the success of the strategies.

-	The constructivist approach grants a role in the implementation for all the organizational members. Their capabilities, perceptions and values, in addition to those of the manager, determine the nature of the resultant strategy.

-	The implementation process is a gestalt construct that consists of a systemic relationship of its components. This systemic perspective suggests that the organizational strategy is concretized by the recurring activities of the individual members. The manager formulates the contents of the strategy that guide these behaviors and allocates the organizational resources to maintain them. Therefore hypotheses about the influence of both managerial and organizational variables on the resulting GMS are suggested.

5. - Research Methodology

5. - Research Methodology

5.1. Methods

The future analysis that would allow for an empirical validation of the model hereby proposed will use data collected from the Spanish firms that have adopted an environmental management system and that answered a questionnaire specifically designed for this research. These questionnaires were sent to the person in charge of the ecological actions of the firm as he/she is the best source of information about the marketing strategy for environmental responsibility of his/her company. Indeed the environmental managers advise the marketing department for their ecological actions. The idea of polling these managers in order to study organizational ecological marketing is supported by previous research. For example, Crane (2000) considers that the information that they provide helps study green marketing organizational strategies – given the fact that many of these marketing activities cross different functional departments. In addition Polonsky and Ottman (1998) remark that the marketing managers may not be able to report about some environmental issues such as the product development. This idea is supported by Pujari, et al. (2003) who polled environmental coordinators for information about the research on new product development.

Data gathering for the pilot study of this research was carried out in two phases. First 10 "face to face" interviews with environmental managers served to test the comprehensibility of the items that would measure the diverse constructs. The objective was to ensure that the questions were widely understood and therefore reduce the potential biases.

Secondly, based on the impressions obtained in the previous stage, a pilot questionnaire was elaborated and tested with 25 environmental managers. The resulting data allowed for depurating the scale to be used in the final research. Annex 1 shows the resulting questionnaire.

Finally the analysis of the first 100 questionnaires received shows a Cronbach's alpha higher than 0, 7 for all the constructs which would predict a satisfactory level of reliability when analysing the whole sample of this study.

5.2. Sampling

This study uses both the Eco-Management & Audit Scheme (EMAS) and the international standard ISO 14001 as the criterion to determine the population of the Spanish firms that have introduced some ecological policies in their activities. It was also presumed that these organizations would be more interested in collaborating with this study and that they would be more willing to answer the questionnaire.

Both standards are voluntary and market-driven approaches to improve the environmental performance. Though companies may adopt various national and international environmental standards, the EMAS – in the European context – and the ISO 14001 – with a worldwide projection - are two of the most commonly used (Saha and Darton, 2005).

It should be noted that the International Standard Organization (ISO) does not itself issue certificates of conformity to ISO 14000. Certification is carried out independently of ISO by several certification bodies in each country. Therefore there is no official central database of ISO 14001 certificates and the ISO does not hold lists of names or any other information about the certified organizations. However the ISO compiles annual statistics on the number of certifications and publishes it as "The ISO Survey of Certifications". The latest edition of The ISO Survey - covering the period up to and including 2005 - contains the regional share of ISO 14001 certificates expressed country-by-country breakdowns of the number of certificates. According to it there are in Spain 8.620 organizations certified with ISO 14001 (http://www.iso.org, 2006).

Therefore as there is not any register that includes contact information about these organizations, collecting this data required getting through the 16 certificating bodies that exist in Spain, according to the national accreditation organization (http://www.enac.es, 2006). Only 12 of them provided us with some data about the

organizations that they have certified with ISO 14001. Moreover the data supplied by 5 of these certificating bodies was insufficient to contact the companies because it lacked the address and/or the fiscal identification code - that would allow for finding the address. Overall 1.972 questionnaires were sent to these organizations.

Collecting information about the Spanish companies that have adopted EMAS resulted much easier as the Spanish Environmental Ministry is responsible for elaborating an official register that is available to the public and that contains address details. In January 2006, when the first questionnaires were sent, this list contained 555 organizations. Therefore the total target population of this study is 2.527 firms (ISO 14001 and EMAS).

5.3. - Data Analysis

This study will analyze the data with the LISREL Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) software. As recommended by Anderson and Gerbin (1988), it will develop a two-stage analysis. While in the first stage the observed variables will be linked to the latent variables to confirm the measurement models, the second stage will test how well the structural model fits the data. For evaluating the measurement and the structural models, this study will examine Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI), Incremental and Relative Fit Index (IFI and RFI), and Root Mean Squared Error of Approximation (RMSEA) indexes of model fit (Hu and Bentler, 1995; Mueller, 1996). It will not include the chi-square statistic in the analysis as it is problematic with large samples (Cheung and Rensvold, 2002). Following common practice, it will consider a value greater than .90 and SRMR of 0.8, or lower, to indicate that the model is adequately specified (Hatcher, 1994).

This research will require extensive control variables to partial out contextual factors in the results. Considering that the use of control variables could cause some problems to the structural equation modeling, this study will follow a multiple step process as suggested by Jaccard and Wan (1996). These authors recommend running a separate model to include the control variables in the SEM model, since this procedure is analogous to using a covariate variable under ANOVA. Thus, if the goodness fit index is the same in step 1 and step 2, then it is concluded that the control variable has

no effect and should be omitted from the model. Since the $\Delta\chi2$ as the index of difference in the fit has been criticized because of its sensitivity to sample size, Cheung and Rensvold (2002) determined that a ΔCFI value higher than .01 was indicative of a significant drop in fit.

The results of this empirical research will be reported in three sections: descriptive measures and correlations, test of reliability and construct's validities, and hypothesis testing.

6. - Contributions

6. - Contributions

This research aims at soundly explaining the nature of the implementation of a GMS. In addition it analyses the academic literature about the green marketing concept in order to allow for a comprehensive approach to this subject.

Adopting the institutional theory as a framework opens way to a broad understanding of the reasons behind the implementation of a GMS while fitting the constructivist approach to the implementation process that this work suggests. Overall this theoretical basis serves to propose a multilevel theoretical model of the implementation of a GMS that considers the effects of the individual, organizational and social variables on the resulting strategy. Finally this study introduces the first methodological steps developed in order to conduct a future empirical research to validate this model.

The specific relationships that this model proposes will contribute to the existent literature adding knowledge about both the links between the managerial characteristics and the resulting GMS and the effects of the organizational variables - structures, systems and processes - on a GMS performance. Indeed the concepts generated by this analysis may be incorporated into public and corporative policies to promote the ecological responsibility of the firms. The results will also be eminently relevant for the design of a Spanish industry environmental policy. Furthermore this study intends to help managers address institutional demands and implement a GMS as appropriate.

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7.- Bibliography

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8.- Appendix 1:

Cuestionario Sobre Prácticas Medioambientales

APPENDIX 1: *CUESTIONARIO SOBRE PRÁCITICAS MEDIOAMBIENTALES*

ÁMBITO DE ACTIVIDAD DE LA EMPRESA	
Código CNAE _____	Descripción:

Nº DE TRABAJADORES EN LA EMPRESA			CIFRA DE NEGOCIOS (Millones de euros)			¿SU EMPRESA PERTENECE A UN GRUPO?		SU EMPRESA COTIZA EN LA BOLSA?	
0-49	50-249	250 o más	0-10	11-50	51 o más	CENTRA L ❑	NO	SI	❑
❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	FILIAL ❑	❑	NO	❑

PRINCIPALES CLIENTES (Es posible marcar más de una opción)				¿CUÁL ES SU POSICIÓN EN LA EMPRESA?	DEPARTAMENTO DONDE TRABAJA
Consumidores	Otras empresas	Gobiernos	Minoristas		
❑	❑	❑	❑		

AÑOS DE ESTUDIOS SUPERIORES			AÑOS EN EL PUESTO			EDAD			SEXO	
0-2	3-5	+ de 5	1-4	5-10	+ 10	25-35	36-45	+ 46	M	❑
❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	F	❑

1. ACCIONES PARA LA RESPONSABILIDAD ECOLÓGICA DE LA EMPRESA

Por favor, indique las acciones desarrolladas en los dos últimos años:

En la estrategia general de nuestra empresa:	NIVEL DESARROLLADO				
	Nulo 1	2	Medio 3	4	Alto 5
Integramos la política medioambiental en la planificación y toma de decisiones	1	2	3	4	5
Controlamos el comportamiento medioambiental de los departamentos	1	2	3	4	5
Potenciamos la investigación y desarrollo de tecnologías más limpias	1	2	3	4	5
Promovemos al exterior de la empresa la protección del medio ambiente	1	2	3	4	5
Tenemos una estrategia competitiva basada en el medio ambiente	1	2	3	4	5
Organizamos un departamento de medio ambiente	1	2	3	4	5
Favorecemos la responsabilidad medioambiental entre el personal	1	2	3	4	5

En el campo del marketing y la distribución	NIVEL DESARROLLADO				
	Nulo 1	2	Medio 3	4	Alto 5
Analizamos el mercado potencial de productos ecológicos	1	2	3	4	5
Informamos sobre la fabricación de productos ecológicos	1	2	3	4	5
Analizamos el comportamiento ecológico de competidores	1	2	3	4	5
Analizamos el comportamiento ecológico de clientes	1	2	3	4	5
Usamos información de mercado para el desarrollo de productos ecológicos	1	2	3	4	5
Satisfacemos las necesidades ecológicas del mercado	1	2	3	4	5
Adaptamos el precio a las decisiones medioambientales	1	2	3	4	5
Desarrollamos acciones de comunicación y publicidad medioambiental	1	2	3	4	5
Usamos el ecoetiquetado	1	2	3	4	5
Elegimos a los distribuidores mediante criterios ecológicos	1	2	3	4	5

En el campo de la producción y aprovisionamiento de materiales	NIVEL DESARROLLADO				
	Nulo 1	2	Medio 3	4	Alto 5
Usamos criterios ecológicos para seleccionar proveedores	1	2	3	4	5
Utilizamos envases y embalajes con criterios ecológicos	1	2	3	4	5
Empleamos consideraciones ecológicas para fabricar el producto	1	2	3	4	5
Buscamos reducir la emisión de contaminación- suelo, agua y atmósfera	1	2	3	4	5
Buscamos disminuir el uso de agua, materiales y energía en la producción	1	2	3	4	5
Analizamos económicamente los impactos medioambientales	1	2	3	4	5
Reciclamos y reutilizamos los materiales	1	2	3	4	5
Recuperamos los productos, envases y embalajes usados	1	2	3	4	5
Sustitución de materiales y recursos no renovables	1	2	3	4	5
Prevenimos los riesgos medioambientales	1	2	3	4	5

Indique las acciones *PUNTUALES* desarrolladas para remediar problemas medioambientales

ACCIONES PUNTUALES (REACTIVAS)	NIVEL DESARROLLADO				
	Nulo 1	2	Medio 3	4	Alto 5
Tratamiento de aguas residuales	1	2	3	4	5
Remediación/reparación de suelos	1	2	3	4	5
Restauración del paisaje	1	2	3	4	5
Tratamiento de las emisiones atmosféricas	1	2	3	4	5
Reciclaje, re-utilización o depósito de residuos sólidos	1	2	3	4	5
Proyectos/mecenazgo para mejorar la imagen verde corporativa	1	2	3	4	5
Utilización de mensajes ecológicos en el producto y envase	1	2	3	4	5
Cambio de precio por presión medioambiental	1	2	3	4	5

Evalúe la influencia/ presión, que tienen los siguientes grupos en el desarrollo de su estrategia corporativa:

GRUPOS DE PRESIÓN	NIVEL INFLUENCIA				
	Nula 1	2	Media 3	4	Alta 5
Competidores	1	2	3	4	5
Asociaciones de consumidores	1	2	3	4	5
Clientes	1	2	3	4	5
Distribuidores	1	2	3	4	5
Sindicatos	1	2	3	4	5
Organizaciones ecologistas	1	2	3	4	5
Bancos	1	2	3	4	5
Compañías de seguros	1	2	3	4	5
Acuerdos voluntarios	1	2	3	4	5
Población local	1	2	3	4	5
Normativas nacionales	1	2	3	4	5
Normativas internacionales	1	2	3	4	5
Propietarios/accionistas	1	2	3	4	5
Prensa-Medios	1	2	3	4	5
Instituciones científicas	1	2	3	4	5
Proveedores	1	2	3	4	5
Trabajadores	1	2	3	4	5

2.-POLÍTICA Y GESTIÓN MEDIOAMBIENTAL

En qué medida las siguientes razones han llevado a su empresa a acogerse a un sistema de gestión medioambiental?

RAZONES	NIVEL IMPORTANCIA				
	Nulo 1	2	Medio 3	4	Alto 5
Preservar los recursos naturales para nuestro desarrollo económico	1	2	3	4	5
Responder a las demandas de los consumidores y del mercado	1	2	3	4	5
Evitar la polución / contaminación	1	2	3	4	5
Cumplir reglamentaciones del gobierno y comunitarias	1	2	3	4	5
Evitar mayores regulaciones de los gobiernos	1	2	3	4	5
Diferenciarse de los competidores	1	2	3	4	5
Mantener una buena imagen social	1	2	3	4	5
Evitar problemas técnicos concretos	1	2	3	4	5
Incrementar los beneficios económicos	1	2	3	4	5
Preservar biodiversidad	1	2	3	4	5
Garantizar el bienestar las generaciones futuras: hijos, nietos, etc.	1	2	3	4	5
Proteger el medioambiente/naturaleza	1	2	3	4	5

¿En qué grado se han establecido las siguientes acciones en su empresa para implementar un sistema de gestión medioambiental?

En nuestra empresa:	GRADO				
	Nulo 1	2	Medio 3	4	Alto 5
ESTRUCTURAS					
Redacción de una política y objetivos de sostenibilidad medibles	1	2	3	4	5
Definición de responsabilidades para implementar el programa de sostenibilidad	1	2	3	4	5
Uso de auditorías para comprobar el funcionamiento del programa de sostenibilidad	1	2	3	4	5
Delegación de autoridad en la toma de decisiones para la sostenibilidad	1	2	3	4	5
Formalización de procesos para identificar requisitos legales en sostenibilidad	1	2	3	4	5
Creación de tareas adicionales para implementar el programa de sostenibilidad	1	2	3	4	5
SISTEMAS					
Contratación de nuevo personal para tareas de sostenibilidad	1	2	3	4	5
Existencia de un programa de formación para la sostenibilidad	1	2	3	4	5
Asignación de recursos para el cumplimiento de la estrategia de sosteniblidad	1	2	3	4	5
Sistema de salarios e incentivos ligados a resultados de sostenibilidad	1	2	3	4	5
Declaración del compromiso para la sostenibilidad por parte de la alta dirección	1	2	3	4	5
PROCESOS					
Presencia de mecanismos de resolución de conflictos	1	2	3	4	5
Distribución de documentos escritos para apoyar la implementación	1	2	3	4	5
Uso de reuniones informales para apoyar la implementación de sostenibilidad	1	2	3	4	5
Publicación de un informe específico sobre la sostenibilidad	1	2	3	4	5
Inclusión de información de sostenibilidad en el informe anual	1	2	3	4	5

Indique la importancia de los siguientes impedimentos para implementar un sistema de gestión medioambiental:

IMPEDIMENTOS PARA LA IMPLEMENTACIÓN	NIVEL IMPORTANCIA				
	Nulo 1	2	Medio 3	4	Alto 5
Falta de recursos humanos y técnicos	1	2	3	4	5
Intereses contrapuestos de los grupos de interés (stakeholders)	1	2	3	4	5
Falta de apoyo financiero y gerencial	1	2	3	4	5
Falta de un sistema adecuado de incentivos	1	2	3	4	5
No provee ninguna ventaja competitiva	1	2	3	4	5
Falta de claridad en las regulaciones	1	2	3	4	5
Conflicto interdepartamental	1	2	3	4	5
Reacciones ante el control excesivo	1	2	3	4	5
Desconfianza de los directivos en el cambio organizacional	1	2	3	4	5
Falta de especificación de las acciones individuales requeridas	1	2	3	4	5

3.-OPINIONES EN RELACIÓN AL MEDIO AMBIENTE

¿Cuál es su opinión sobre las siguientes afirmaciones relacionadas con el medioambiente (MA)?

AFIRMACIONES RELACIONADAS CON EL MEDIOAMBIENTE (MA)	GRADO DE ACUERDO				
	Nulo 1	2	Medio 3	4	Alto 5
Los problemas MA se resuelven con desarrollo tecnológico	1	2	3	4	5
Los problemas MA se resuelven por mecanismos de mercado	1	2	3	4	5
Los problemas MA se resuelven con cambios sociales	1	2	3	4	5
Nuestro desarrollo debería permitir aquel de las generaciones futuras: hijos, nietos, etc.	1	2	3	4	5
Nuestro desarrollo no debería crear ningún problema / alteración MA	1	2	3	4	5
El desarrollo comporta inevitablemente problemas/ alteraciones MA	1	2	3	4	5
Las firmas con problemas MA tienen dificultades para reclutar empleados	1	2	3	4	5
Los problemas MA se resuelven con severas regulaciones	1	2	3	4	5
Los clientes aceptarán pagar más por productos verdes	1	2	3	4	5
Los problemas MA son retos importantes para la sociedad	1	2	3	4	5
Las instituciones financieras castigan a las empresas con problemas MA	1	2	3	4	5
La política MA del país aumenta la competitividad industrial	1	2	3	4	5

IDENTIFICACIÓN-*SOLO SI DESEA RECIBIR RESULTADOS*

EMPRESA: _____

DIRECCION__POSTAL _____

ATENCION A:_____

EMAIL:

TEL: FAX:

MUCHAS GRACIAS