

EFFECTS OF GREEN MARKETING STRATEGIES ON SALES VOLUME OF GREEN CARS

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Abstract

This empirical study aims to investigate the influence of green marketing strategy on sales growth of green cars in Jordan. The study analyses the data of 332 car dealers during 2010-2014. The results reveal both positive (green product, green promotion and green process) and negative (green price, green physical evidence, green people, green distribution on sales growth) influence of green marketing strategy on sales growth. The study further finds that adoption of green marketing strategy may significantly increase the sales volume of green cars. However, the adoption of marketing strategies may decline the sales volume of non-green cars comparing with the green cars.

Key words: Green marketing strategies, sales growth, car dealerships, Jordan.

1.1. Introduction

Fuentes (2015) highlights the dominance of green marketing in management studies. The author discusses the understanding of efficient and profitable marketing strategy of the green products. Green cars are an example of green products which are sold in market. They are considered to be environmental friendly cars which limit, reduce and/or correct harmful environmental affects in air. These green products are best in both resolving problems such as wastage, noise and common harms to environment and serving as an opportunity to generate beneficial products (Tomasin et al, 2013). Today organizations are highly concern for green products which are lucrative for them because they provide the economic gains to these organization such as reduced cost ((Handfield et al., 1997; Carter and Dresner, 2001), improved processes and quality (Handfield et al., 1997; Pil and Rothenberg, 2003), improved financial performance (Sisodia et al., 2007), and improved company performance (Sarkis, 2003; Zeng et al., 2010, 2011).

The avenue for the future research on green products includes focusing on analyzing market signals which have the relation with green product qualities relative to traditional product qualities (Rex and Baumann 2007). The authors further suggest evaluating the needs of consumer's and potential market opportunities in addition to influence of viable promotional strategies by realizing the behavior of consumers.

Prior research has identified the necessity to understand the green issues and value creation in better way (Niinimäki and Hassi, 2011). Another research conducted by Tomasin et al, (2013) addresses the issue of green marketing strategy model. The model must address the type of support which increase the sales growth as well as how a firm may grow the financial performance of green products. The present study aims to fill the gaps in the literature (Niinimäki and Hassi, 2011; Rex and Baumann, 2007; Tomasin et al., 2013) of green marketing strategies and provide acumen for optimizing of green products particularly green cars. The research answer the question “How can the green marketing strategies (green product, green price, green distribution, green promotion, green people, green process, and green physical evidence) increase the sales of green cars in the Jordanian car market?”.

The prior literature refer the deteriorated effects of bio-physical environment to be mainly responsible for a growing number of car dealers adapting a better and efficient strategic stance for developing opportunities related to green products (Leonidou et al, 2015). Firms may consider green marketing strategies as a value-added opportunity for both their business and the society. Nevertheless, to be successful in green marketing strategy, the vital role is the positive outcomes for the firms such as growing the volume of sales. Firms may avail the green marketing strategy as a competitive edge for them. They may take it as an edge over the competitors. This strategy will not only improve the market share but also a profit in their financial reports (Dean and McMullen 2007; Patzelt and Shepherd 2011). It is indeed a fact that there are many advantages which may be accrued if recognized and exploited environmental related opportunities. Though prior researches have investigated this topic from different perspective, there is still the avenue for research which may be filled by conducting some empirical investigation (Cronin et al., 2011). Leonidou et al., (2013) further limits the scope for the research and suggest the need of addressing the adoption of green marketing strategies which may influence the firm’s financial performance. The extensive research has been on mainly conducted on manufacturing firms which input and outs sternly affect the environment. Other avenues require to be investigated include clean production, energy efficient and green vehicles which may reduce the dependence of many economies on fossil fuels and help reducing CO2 emissions. Hence there is a clear indication for green marketing studies on the transport sector.

Almost 20% of the global energy supply contributing more than 20% emissions is consumed by transportation of passenger and cargo (Koetse and Hoen, 2014). A huge amount of operating vehicles has also increase the local energy demand. The emitted pollution from these vehicles are responsible to deteriorate the environment. The case is more clearly seen in Amman-Zarqaregion which is in the middle of Jordan, having houses approximately 60% of the total population and 70% of the urban population (Al-Ghandoor, 2013). According to Al Ghandoor (2013) about 82.85 registered vehicles are privately owned. These vehicles have conventional internal combustion engines. Hence we can confidently say that Jordan may be capable of achieving the long term climate goals and reducing its dependence on fossil fuels by the replacement of old vehicles with the alternative fuel vehicles (Koetse&Hoen, 2014).

In present study we aim to analyze the influence of green marketing strategy on sales growth of green and non-green cars. With the help of market data, we evaluate the influence of the green marketing strategies on real growth of sales in context of Jordanian car dealers. In contrast to prior researches which have analyzed the influence of green marketing strategies on financial

performance using perceived scale approach, the present study analyzed the actual data that refer to sales volume of green and non-green cars sold in the market of Jordan between 2010 and 2014. Moreover, the prior studies have analyzed the influence of green marketing strategy on financial performance in general, this study investigates each strategy which effect on the sales of green and non-green cars.

1.2. Research problem

The motivation investigating the influence of green marketing strategies on sales of green and non-green cars is the theory of green marketing strategy which is at infancy stage and demands empirical investigation. Since no well-established theory is available in the literature in this domain, the present study may help developing the substantial theory which may add contribution in academic world. Conducting such scientific research in such field demands a comprehensive understanding of green marketing strategy on sales growth of green and non-green cars which are sold in context of Jordan.

1.3. Green marketing strategy

In order to achieve the strategic and financial objectives of the firms to reduce the deteriorated effect on the natural environment, there is a need of adopting the concept of green marketing strategy by firms. It is though not a new concept, consistent viewing that every marketing strategy is created and executed in such a way that it decreases the negative effects on the natural environment (Dahlstrom, 2011). We find this concept of green marketing strategy in consistent with prior researchers which have defined the concept of environmental and green marketing (Menon and Menon 1997; Leonidou et al., 2013).

Green product

Any product which is ecofriendly and having little damage to environment may be considered as “green” product. All business are having responsibility to reduce the environmental pollution in their production process. A product which is made of raw material must be designed or manufactured in such a way that it must not destroy natural resources. It is being various time discussed in previous researches that waste management is of high importance in this regard. Every business needs to develop an ecofriendly design and packaging which have the capability of minimizing pollution and hazards. This fact cannot be denied that every product has sunk costs which are significant yet, these cost may b(Arseculeratne and Yazdanifard, 2014).

Green price

It is indeed a fact that going green is expensive in respect of new technology installation and equipment, personnel training, absorbing external costs, waste conversion into products recycling. However, we find these cost added in the final product. Thus we may say that Green price is premium price that is added while increasing the promotion cost. Marketers must have the rationality for such costs. Simultaneously, customers should be encouraged to reimburse such premium price. It is only possible when these imperative actions are justified by persuasive messages in the product advertisement. However, reducing the package material may reduce the prices of green products as many businesses have already experienced in particularly context when the packaging costs constitute a huge part of the unit cost (Arseculeratne and Yazdanifard, 2014).

Green distribution

Green distribution is defined as the selection of channels in such a way which reduce the environmental damage. While the goods are under transportation, many damages to the

environment get occurred therefore, there must be a safety precautions on the delivery of product by the firms (Arseculeratne and Yazdanifard, 2014).

Green promotion

Promotion of business material is involved in green marketing. The common means of conveying to the customers include sales promotions, direct marketing, public relations (PR) and advertising which convey the core message of greenness to the customer. PR and advertising are two well-known approaches which are mainly used to project the green outlook of the firm. To give the message of going green, PR initiative is mostly used to bridge between business and community. Product publicity and rationalizing the product features and prices are two major objectives which may be achieved through advertising (Arseculeratne and Yazdanifard, 2014).

Green physical evidence

The lack of information causes most customers to become unaware of the significance of green products. Businesses can fill this void using various green promotional strategies. Customers specifically require concrete information on the capacity of green products to solve and avoid environmental problems (Arseculeratne and Yazdanifard, 2014). In other words, customers should be provided with physical evidence of the overall efficacy of greenness across the system, from the organizational operations and strategies to the products sold in the market (Larashati et al., 2012).

Green people

People use green communication (Solvalier, 2010) to carry out the responsibility for developing green services or products. The provider must inculcate a green mindset and be adept in implementing this thinking in the daily activities (Larashati et al, 2012). By contrast, green people pertain to staff members who are educated on and involved in green matters or green corporate culture (Solvalier, 2010).

Green process

The green processes of a company and the greenness commitment of its upper management commitment must be prioritized. A shaded green or extreme green strategy becomes viable in an organizational environment that successfully differentiates a brand in an honest, credible, and enduring manner (Solvalier, 2010). Examples of green processes include the eco-labeling of stores, eco-certifying warehouses with ISO 14000, launching the brand "I love Eco," which is consistent with the tenets of eco-labeling, and greening the entire service life cycle, including raw materials, production, logistics, transportation, warehouses, stores, and offices (Solvalier, 2010). Process, which denotes the methodology for providing the services, demands serious attention, such that the process can be executed properly and in accordance with the principal objectives. The greenness of the entire system should be prioritized to ensure the successful implementation of a comprehensive green marketing strategy (Larashati et al., 2012).

Firm performance (sales growth)

A critical concern for firms is performance. Unique, invaluable and difficult to imitate resources are considered to be the major drivers to succeed for any firm. (Holsapple and Wu, 2011). Excellence in performance is a main and competitive advantage for any firm. Many scholars have defined the performance in similar way yet, there is a variation in measuring performance criterion. Thus researchers of the study must determine the performance measurement index for this study (Evans and Davis, 2005).

Performance measurement is commonly used method for rewarding and punishing for any firm. The selection of most suitable measurement index has been more significant than before. Financial measures such as ROE and ROS are limited in measuring firm performance (Chakravarthy 1986). Furthermore, these traditional measures which mainly focus on financial variables such as ROI, EPI may be the misleading indicator from innovation and continuous improvement perspective (Kaplan et al, 1996). Another author has also discussed the performance importance in firms' planning and control process (Mustafa et al 2012). Prior researchers have mainly chosen the financial performance as a measure for evaluating firm's performance (Mishra and Suar, 2010).

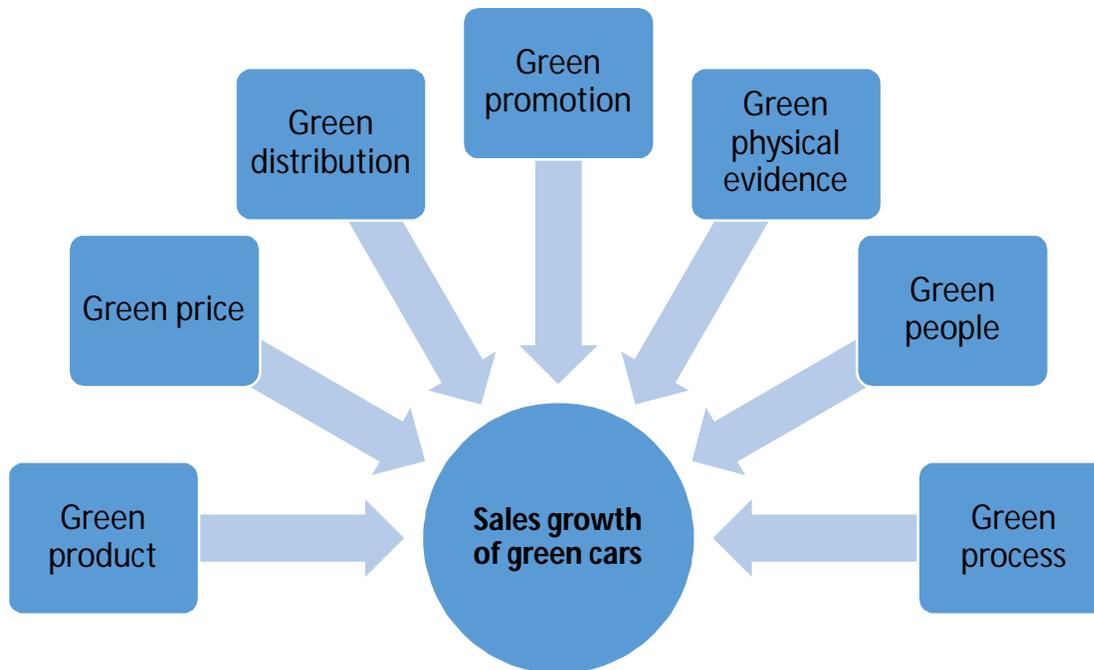
Hasan& Ali (2015) defines the firms performance from perceived benefits perspective which may be achieved through integration of integration of environmental management in their business operations. Psomas et al (2011) also supports the concept of green strategies for increasing business efficiency. The literature has discussed various perceived benefits including good image of corporation, waste control, and cost minimization, increasing customer satisfaction, increasing productivity, better goodwill, raising market share, sales improvement and undoubted profitability.

Prior research has found a positive relationship between environmental practices in the service industry like green marketing practices and performance (Wanjohi et al, 2013). Today's world business are regularly focusing on sustainability. They are giving the much attention to sustainable practices for strengthening reputation, boosting employee morale, realizing cost saving and giving benefits to the environment. Considering a continuous shifting in environment firms are regularly reviewing their performance now.

A strong correlation is found between environmental issues, capability to integrate and financial performance in form of ROI, earning growth and sales growth and market share in a study conducted by Klassen and McLaughlin (1996). Adopting the natural environmental orientation also has a positive influence on market and financial performance (Menguc and Ozanne 2005). In sum, a study of Martin-Tapia et al. (2008) also show the SMEs adopting proactive strategies have a significantly positive financial performance as opposed to those that are characterized by reactive behavior.

For this study, financial performance is defined as sales growth of green and non-green vehicles which are sold by car dealers in Jordan between the year 2010 and 2014.

1.4. Research framework and Research hypotheses



Research hypotheses

Derived from the research framework, the following hypotheses were formed:

H₁: Adopting the green product strategy by the car dealers will effect positively on their sales growth.

H₂: Adopting the green price strategy by the car dealers will effect positively on their sales growth.

H₃: Adopting the green distribution strategy by the car dealers will effect positively on their sales growth.

H₄: Adopting the green promotion strategy by the car dealers will effect positively on their sales growth.

H₅: Adopting the green physical evidence strategy by the car dealers will effect positively on their sales growth.

H₆: Adopting the green people strategy by the car dealers will effect positively on their sales growth.

H₇: Adopting the green process strategy by the car dealers will effect positively on their sales growth.

1.5. Methodology

The conceptual framework of this research uses positivist philosophical stance with quantitative approach. The data was used using survey method with the help of questionnaire addressing

different levels of study. For testing our hypotheses we used advanced statistical methods such as Structure Equation Modeling (SEM). The sample size of the study was 332 Jordanian car dealers selected using random sampling technique from the sampling frame of 550 Jordanian car dealers. The list of the dealers was arranged from the management of free zone in Jordan including only car dealers selling green and non-green cars. The researcher's designed the questionnaire that refers to the number of green and non-green cars that sold by Jordanian car dealers from 2010 to 2014.

1.6. Research findings

The results of the descriptive analysis revealed that over 61873 cars were sold in Jordan between 2010 and 2014 out of which 25696 were green cars and 36177 were non-green cars. These figures show that the number of non-green cars is greater than that of the green ones during the said period.

By looking at the descriptive statistics, it concluded that adoption of green marketing strategy by car dealers is still limited in Jordan suggesting the marketing managers and government to coordinate for motivating the dealers for adopting green marketing strategy hence greening the stakeholders such as managers and government may help firms to adopt this new marketing strategy.

Table 1, Descriptive Results of the Research Variables

	Overall sales growth	Growth of green cars	Growth of Non-green cars
Mean	160.2927	66.5699	93.7228
Std. Deviation	82.77800	39.09265	48.52953
Minimum	57	11	21
Maximum	433	225	252
Sum	61873	25696	36177

The coefficient parameters estimates are then examined to test the hypothesized direct effects of the variables. The path coefficients and the results of examining hypothesized direct effects are displayed in Table 2.

Table 2, Examining Results of Hypothesized

Path	Unstandardized Estimate		Standardised Estimate	c.r.	P-value	Hypothesis Result
	Estimate	S.E.	Beta			
PRD →SG	16.364	6.691	0.185*	2.446	0.014	H1) Supported
PRC →SG	10.673	6.94	0.108	1.538	0.124	H2) Rejected
DST →SG	-4.543	8.596	-0.045	0.529	0.597	H3) Rejected
PRM →SG	17.559	7.27	0.19*	2.415	0.016	H4) Supported
PEV →SG	8.82	7.705	0.069	1.145	0.252	H5) Rejected
POP →SG	-5.602	8.128	-0.056	0.689	0.491	H6) Rejected
PRS →SG	15.926	7.939	0.137*	2.006	0.045	H7) Supported

*p<0.05 , **p< 0.01, ***p< 0.001

As shown in Table 2, 3 paths from product, promotion and process on the sales growth were statistically significant as their p-values were all below the standard significance level of 0.05. Thus the hypotheses H1, H4 and H7 were supported.

Conversely, the effects of price, distribution, physical evidence and people on sales growth were not found as statistically significant as their p-values were all above the standard significance level of 0.05. Thus the hypotheses H2, H3, H5 and H6 were rejected. The following section discusses the results of path analysis in relation to the above hypotheses in the structural model:

H1. Adoption of green product strategy by the car dealers relates to sales growth.

Table 2 shows that the C.R and p-value of Green Products in predicting sales growth are 2.446 and 0.014 respectively. It indicates that the probability of getting a critical ratio as large as 2.446 in absolute value is 0.014. In other words, the regression weight for Green Products in the prediction of sales growth is significantly different from zero at the 0.05 level (two-tailed). Thus, H1 was supported. Further, the standardized estimate of Beta was 0.185, indicating a positive relationship indicating as Green Products goes up by 1 standard deviation, sales growth goes up by 0.185 standard deviations.

H2. Adoption of green price strategy by the car dealers relates to sales growth.

The beta coefficient of the independent variable of green price strategy is 0.108 showing insignificant relationship between the Green Price and sales growth; critical ratio being 1.538 and p value 0.124 thus rejecting the H2.

H3. Adoption of green distribution strategy by the car dealers relates to sales growth.

The results showed no significant relationship between the Green Distribution and sales growth; being $\beta = -0.045$, C.R. = -0.529, $p = 0.597$. Thus, H6.3 was rejected.

H4. Adoption of green promotion strategy by the car dealers relates to sales growth.

The C.R and p-value of Green Promotion in predicting sales growth were 2.415 and 0.016 respectively. Indicating the probability of getting a critical ratio as large as 2.415 in absolute value is 0.016. In other words, the regression weight for Green Promotion in the prediction of sales growth is significantly different from zero at the 0.05 level (two-tailed). Thus, H6.4 cannot be rejected. Further, the standardized estimate of Beta is 0.19, indicating a positive relationship. It means, when Green Promotion goes up by 1 standard deviation, sales growth goes up by 0.19 standard deviations. Hence we find that the strongest and the most influential factor out of the four green marketing factors is the Green promotion having standardized estimate of 0.19.

H5. Adoption of green physical evidence strategy by the car dealers relates to sales growth.

The results showed no significant relationship between the Green Physical Evidence and sales growth; $\beta = 0.069$, C.R. = 1.145, $p = 0.252$. Thus, H6.5 was rejected.

H6. Adoption of green people strategy by the car dealers relates to sales growth.

The results showed no significant relationship between the Green People and sales growth; $\beta = -0.056$, C.R. = -0.689, $p = 0.491$. Thus, H6.6 was rejected.

H7. Adoption of green process strategy by the car dealers relates to sales growth.

As shown in **Table 2**, the C.R and p-value of Green Process in predicting sales growth were 2.006 and 0.045 respectively. Indicating the probability of getting a critical ratio as large as 2.006 in absolute value is 0.045. In other words, the regression weight for the independent variable of Green People in the predicting the sales growth is significantly different from zero at the 0.05 level (two-tailed). Thus, we cannot reject the H6.7. Furthermore, the standardized estimate of Beta was 0.137, indicating a positive relationship. It means, when Green People goes up by 1 standard deviation, sales growth goes up by 0.137 standard deviations.

1.7. Discussion

The adoption of green marketing strategies is essential for the growth in sales of green cars as suggested by the finding of the study. It is difficult to increase the sale if the adoption of the green marketing strategy is ignored. To increase the sale of green products the product specifications have to be superior to those of the non-green ones. The adoption of green strategies is thus the most important for firms to grow their sales.

There is a serious need for the adoption of green marketing strategies by the firms so the new sales may generate. The literature indicates that most of the firms of in the world just mention that they have green strategy however it is the fact that they have not adopted any green strategy.

The question raised by the companies today is, Can we be green, clean, and profitable all at the same time?. As many of the firm have been promoting a greener strategy, some of them have been unable to live up to their claims. So consumer scepticism of “green hype” is an

understandable reaction, while the firms attempt to associate themselves with environmental issues without a substantial improvement in their environmental performance or that of their products.

There are seven dimensions of green marketing strategy including green product, green price, green distribution, green promotion, green people, green process, and green physical evidence. The quantitative analysis of the data shows that there is a significant positive relationship between the green marketing strategies and the sales growth of the firm however these relationships differ across individual components of the marketing strategy. While testing for H1 to H7 we found that green product, green promotion, green process positively relates to the sales growth while green price, green physical evidence, green people, and green distribution has a negative relationship with the sales growth.

Effective sales growth can be achieved by implementing a successful green marketing strategy as it has strong evidence of relationship under the condition of adopting the green strategy by firms. The growth in harmful effects on bio-physical environment has been responsible for a huge quantity of small enterprises to adopt a sophisticated strategic stance for utilising green-related opportunities. The finding of this study suggests a positive impact of green marketing strategies on the growth of sales. The industry will be motivated for adopting the internal green-marketing strategies such as green product, green price, green distribution, green promotion, green people, green process, and green physical evidence and it may be a positive outcome of green marketing. The strategy not only helps firms managing the sales of green cars more rationally but also improves corporate image reflecting in the reputation for the company. Furthermore the relationship with stakeholders may be enhanced if the firm are capable to project a sustainable image using green marketing strategy. The idea of green marketing leads firms to be more profitable by increasing their sales. This strategy may play a vital role in increasing the sales of green cars. The modifications in current marketing strategy are required especially regarding the reduction of environmental impact and increase in the efficiency of selling the various types of green cars such as hybrid and electric cars.

1.8. Implications of the study

Although the literature indicates towards the controversial findings, recent studies support the relationship between green marketing strategy and growth. In line with the recent research the present study support the view and poses that managers can look for adopting green marketing strategy for allowing their respective firms to achieve sales growth effectively by increasing the sales of green and non-green cars. It has to be kept in mind that adoption of green marketing strategy may achieve effective sales growth. By adopting green marketing strategy on the one hand the effective level of sales growth can be achieved and on the other hand, cost saving, product differentiation and other benefits such as reputation in the market can be achieved. Moreover green marketing strategies can provide through ecological products/services, collaboration with green partners, and communication of green initiatives which may be integration in the business.

If the green marketing strategy is not adopted for the purpose of increase in sales and decrease in the harmful impact on the environment the non-green marketing strategy will result in poorer sales and more harmful effects on the environment, thus the firms are suggested to develop and apply the green marketing strategy according to the available resources to them and the firms that do not have sufficient resources for implementing the strategy they may not successfully adopt the green marketing.

1.9. Limitations

The most relevant limitation of the present research is that it collected the data only from one country which cannot be generalized to the other countries. There may be the cultural differences among countries and even among the companies existing in the same country and firms' reactions to environmental pressures would be different.

Another limitation of the study is the sample only included green car dealers in Jordan, thus we cannot guarantee that the results are generalized beyond these green car dealers or in different countries. Increasing the firm in sample from other countries may provide us with the variation which may be helpful in generalizing the results.

1.10. Further research

The green marketing strategy research is relatively a new phenomenon. The present study focuses on three main areas that seem much promising to enhance understanding of this important new arena of research.

Given that this study tries to find out the relationship of green marketing strategy from a firm perspective, future research should examine the relationship of green marketing strategy from a customer perspective.

The increased globalization has made the phenomenon of green marketing strategy more important to be examined specially in the international context and taking the role of other parameters such as standardization and adaptation of green marketing strategies and cultural to be considered while evaluating the influence strategic success.

The external validity is to be obtained, the proposed hypotheses of the research need to be tested in developed countries and in developing countries to compare their green marketing strategy.

1.11. Conclusion

The car dealers have the potential to adopt green marketing strategies, provided that the appropriate resources and capabilities are available, and that the natural environment should be viewed as a competitive advantage. In this way the implementation of such strategies will help achieve desired growth levels in sales.

The findings of the research direct us towards the conclusion that there is relationship between adoption of green marketing strategies by the dealers and their sales growth. There is a clear indication growth in sales of green products cannot be achieved by ignoring the green marketing strategies, despite green marketing strategy being rarely discussed in the academic literature however few researches have discussed the differing impact of individual green

marketing strategies on the financial performance of the firm specially the sales growth of green product.

There is still little known about the relationship between green marketing strategies and sales growth of green products, the present research adds the knowledge in the existing body of literature to help managers understand and refine their marketing strategy. As the result the higher success rate may motivate the other businesses for adopting the green marketing strategies so that they may increase their sales volume of green car than that of the non-green cars. As recognized by several Malaysian Jordanian about the green issues, green car dealer in Jordan needs to emphasize over adoption of variety of green marketing strategies.

To cope up with the environmental issues in Jordan and doing something better for the upcoming generations, firms need to adopt the best green practices. Taking the growth of green products worldwide in consideration, the marketing executives must avail this golden opportunity to identify the need of best practices of green marketing and adopt them to increase their sales.

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