

THE IMPORTANCE OF SUSTAINABLE MARKETING COMMUNICATION IN A CHANGING ENVIRONMENT

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This thesis focuses on sustainable marketing communication in a digitally transformed environment. The uncertainty of the socio-economic landscape means that customers are increasingly looking for stability in their relationship with a brand and certainty during the purchasing process [1]. Appropriate and responsible brand responses to ongoing socio-political changes are increasingly directing consumers not only to the products on offer, but also to the simultaneous co-creation of the environment in which the brand thrives.

Sustainable development means looking for solutions that have value for the consumer, while also helping to minimise the negative environmental [2] and social impacts of business. Sustainable marketing activities, including communication, focus on meeting the needs of today's consumer, taking into account the economic, equity and environmental values created for them [3]. Therefore, it is not only the product that is important to the consumer, but also the brand ideals.

According to the principles of integrated marketing communication, promotional messages should remain functionally and instrumentally consistent with other elements of the company's marketing strategy [4]. Thus, in this context, sustainable marketing communication can be considered in two ways [5]: alignment of activities with market needs, compliance with audience preferences, interactivity and symmetry of the message, and balance between real and virtual space or taking into account, at the stage of planning, implementation and control of activities in the area of marketing communication, their impact on social and environmental issues.

The topic of «sustainable development» is popular in the global scientific literature. In the Web of Science and Scopus databases, 118,362 and 293,864 scientific publications are dedicated to this topic, respectively. In Web of Science, these relate to a variety of disciplines, but are mainly focused on: Environmental Sciences (25.4%), Green Sustainable Science Technology (17.1%), Environmental Studies (17.0%), while in Scopus these are Environmental Science (19.0%), Engineering (16.3 per cent) and Social Sciences (11.4%). The combination of the keywords «sustainable development» and «marketing communication» is much less popular. Publications on these

topics are available 34 in Web of Science and 85 in Scopus. Their total number of citations is 213 and 603, respectively, giving an average of 6.3 and 7.1 per paper. These papers, however, mainly deal with the communication of sustainable activities undertaken by a company. Indeed, under the heading 'sustainable marketing communication' in the databases cited, there are only 1 publication in Web of Science and 2 in Scopus. Their total number of citations is 5 and 18.

Analysing the results of the bibliometric research, it is possible to notice a significant research gap concerning both the communication of sustainability by companies and the sustainability of the system of marketing communication activities. The apparent disparity points to the need for further research in this area and can serve as an important introduction to consider the present topic.

The increasing focus on taking into account consumer needs and preferences is resulting in the development of the concept of sustainability. Its implementation applies to all areas of business, including marketing communication. However, in order for these activities to have the intended effect, they need to be considered as part of a broader business strategy.

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