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MARKETING | REVIEW ARTICLE

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Sustainability in marketing: a review using multiple correspondence analysis

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the state of sustainability in leading marketing research and proposes a bottom-up framework that involves business managers, consumers and the environment at different levels. A qualitative approach involving multiple correspondence analysis is used to examine the status of sustainability in marketing, and a solution-oriented framework based on a bottom-up approach is designed. Three dimensions are determined to be at the heart of the consumer–business–society relationship: sustainable environmental awareness and responsibility, production and consumption practices, and intercompany and industrial collaborations. Based on these dimensions, a holistic framework is developed to address the conflicts between theory and practice toward sustainability values. This study refines the market-driven concept and guides scholars through our proposed path that unites marketing and sustainability. We also design a framework by incorporating social marketing elements into businesses to achieve sustainability. Ultimately, this study offers insights into consumer research, marketing management and sustainable business practices.

IMPACT STATEMENT

This paper delves into the pivotal theme of sustainability within the realm of marketing, elucidating its current trajectory and proposing a pragmatic framework aimed at catalyzing actionable initiatives centered around consumers. Crafted by business practitioners and bolstered by the external environment, this framework underscores the significance of shared values, integral to the ethos of social marketing, in steering society toward sustainable practices. Our proposed framework emphasizes the symbiotic relationship between consumers, marketers and the broader socioeconomic landscape, highlighting the imperative of collective accountability. It advocates for the conscientious design and delivery of sustainable products and services by marketers, complemented by enhanced intercompany and industrial collaborations, as key drivers of change. Central to our contribution is the advocacy for a bottom-up approach, tailored to engage every stakeholder within society, transcending geographical boundaries and regional disparities. This approach is designed to resonate with the general public interest.

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1. Introduction

The imperative to integrate sustainability into marketing has surged to the forefront of contemporary business practices (Hult et al., 2018; Kramer, 2020). Environmental deterioration, climate change and resource depletion have been exaggerated by unsustainable marketing practices, overconsumption, profit-driven motives and inappropriate governmental oversight. The traditional top-down approach (TDA) advocating immediate systemic or institutional changes driven solely by policy and operational directives (Gallup, 2018) risks exacerbating economic disruptions, global disparities and consumer dissatisfaction.

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Across the product and service industry sectors, companies such as Unilever, Lego, REWE and Walmart have initiated efforts to clean up their supply chains, reduce emissions through technological advancements, reduce packaging waste and improve recycling materials (Gielens et al., 2018). However, the current management of sustainability remains weak. Merely addressing the environmental or social aspects of sustainability proves insufficient for fostering long-term economic and societal progress (Porter & van der Linde, 1995). The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide a blueprint for long-term development (UN, 2015).

While a TDA often originates at the global level, encompassing systems, institutions, policies and regulations, research has shown that governmental intervention alone, or solely corporate social responsibility (CSR), such as emissions restrictions and social welfare initiatives, may not fully ensure sustainable integration within each bioregion's ecosystems (Cairns, 2003; Ozanne et al., 2016; Porter & Kramer, 2006). Moreover, various obstacles impede the practice of sustainability in marketing within different institutional contexts, spanning capitalist, socialist and industrialized nations (Hunt, 2011; Maali et al., 2021; Mittelstaedt et al., 2014). A TDA may confuse countries and marketers owing to differences in product standards, industrial development levels, carbon footprints, climate change performance, consumption for basic needs in poor countries, behavior changes and anti-consumption trends in Western countries (Seegebarth et al., 2016).

In this study, we aim to address the following research questions: What is the current state of sustainability in marketing? What dimensions are integral to achieving sustainability?

This study advances marketing theory by including social marketing elements at the micro, meso and macro levels to develop a comprehensive conceptual framework for sustainability in marketing.

We contribute to marketing science by identifying three key dimensions essential for integrating sustainability: sustainable environmental awareness and responsibility (SEAR), sustainable production and consumption practices (SPCP) and intercompany and industrial collaborations (SIIC). Additionally, we propose a consumer-centric integrative framework. leveraging bottom-up perspectives and social marketing principles. These dimensions are validated through multiple correspondence analysis (MCA), offering insights for future marketing research endeavors.

2. Background and literature

Various paradigms concern the integration of sustainability in marketing (Belz & Peattie, 2012; Sheth & Parvatiyar, 2021; Thomas, 2018). Initially conceptualized by Brundtland (1987), sustainability embodies a holistic approach encompassing economic, ecological and social dimensions, which has gradually permeated the marketing domain. This integration has spurred a wealth of academic inquiry and has become a focal point for a diverse array of stakeholders (Cronin et al., 2011).

Controversies and skepticism persist regarding the compatibility of marketing with sustainable development (Robinson, 2004; Varey, 2010). Marketing, often viewed as inherently rooted in market capitalism, has faced criticism for its perceived immorality and adverse environmental impact, raising doubts about its alignment with sustainability objectives. Within this discourse, the anthropocentric theory posits human beings as central actors within the market, with the dominant social paradigm assessing quality of life (QOL) and well-being through the lens of escalating consumption. Another part of the theoretical background is Elkington's triple bottom line, which is formed by three pillars: economy, environment and society (Elkington, 2004). It comprises economic, environmental and social pillars and underscores the imperative of balancing long-term environmental preservation, sustainable economic growth and societal welfare, with a fourth dimension highlighting the human aspect (Benn et al., 2014).

Sustainability has received wide political support and promotes the adoption of sustainable corporate business development and accountability. However, problems arise in its implementation in specific contexts, such as diversified institutions, market environments, country/economy scales, public policies and firms that are characterized by particular structures and dominant marketing notions. Firms may need to make decisions while facing risks, incurring costs and dealing with adverse outcomes.

Other researchers have emphasized that generating economic value is the *raison d'être* of corporations (Porter & Kramer, 2006) and a key objective in pursuing sustainability (Grimmer et al., 2016). Concurrently, the service-dominant logic concept highlights the significance of service ecosystems and value co-creation among multiple stakeholders in fostering environmental and social sustainability (Vargo & Lusch, 2017).

Within environmental economics, the concept of green marketing (Polonsky, 1994), while beneficial, is often critiqued for its narrow focus, potentially leading to limited sustainability outcomes. Consequently, researchers have sought to integrate ecological, environmental and green marketing principles into broader frameworks such as sustainable marketing (Lunde, 2018; van Dam & Apeldoorn, 1996) and sustainability marketing (Belz & Peattie, 2012). Yet, defining sustainable consumption remains a challenge, as conventional indicators of QOL and well-being may not fully capture its essence (Sirgy, 1998). Marketing theory incorporates social units and their human actors with markets' flexible responses vis-à-vis value creation and allocation (Kotler, 1972). Theoretical paradoxes have been extended to marketing constructs, thus evoking criticism (Mittelstaedt et al., 2014). This study thus aims to review the current landscape of mainstream marketing research while synthesizing social marketing elements to construct a comprehensive conceptual framework for sustainable marketing practices.

3. Methodology

3.1. Review procedure

To comprehensively review the contemporary research on sustainability in marketing, we adopted a rigorous methodology combining influential theoretical discussions in macromarketing with strategic applications within micromarketing contexts, focusing on top-tier journals. Following the approach outlined by Morgan et al. (2019) and Baumgartner and Pieters (2003), we selected six of the 10 most influential marketing journals for inclusion in this study, ensuring both representativeness and superior quality of the reviewed studies. The selected journals are as follows: *Journal of Marketing (JM)*, *Journal of Marketing Research (JMR)*, *Journal of the Academy and Marketing Science (JAMS)*, *Industrial Marketing Management (IMM)*, *Journal of Business Research (JBR)* and *International Journal of Research in Marketing (IJRM)*. The papers published between 2000 and 2020 in these leading journals were identified for inclusion in our review. Each article's title, abstract and keywords were scrutinized to assess its relevance to the topic. Additionally, citation information was retrieved from the Social Sciences Citation Index. Our inclusion criteria encompassed articles on sustainability that presented insightful arguments about marketing and were highly cited by other journals (Baumgartner & Pieters, 2003). Ultimately, our final sample consisted of 111 relevant cases, with a significant proportion originating from *IMM*, *JBR, JAMS* and *JM*.

3.2. Keyword content analysis and coding procedure

We employed a keyword content analysis coupled with a coding procedure, utilizing MCA. Initially, a pilot analysis was conducted to summarize keywords and establish a coding framework. This pilot analysis involved a keyword summary method aimed at condensing the volume of analytic content while retaining essential information and ensuring manageability. To accomplish this, we utilized Voyant tools to provide an overview of keyword frequencies and trends, identifying the most commonly used items and their collocation groups. Subsequently, all keywords were systematically coded for content analysis based on their frequencies across the articles. In total, 476 keywords were identified across 111 studies, with over 50% appearing only once. Recognizing the potential variability in reliability associated with infrequently used keywords, we categorized the frequently appearing keywords into 15 distinct categories, as previous literature proposed (Furrer et al., 2008; Kolbe & Burnett, 1991; van Dam and Apeldoorn, 1996), which defines green marketing from a micromarketing perspective as a systemic approach that considers the nonlinear relationship

between sustainability and marketing (Thomas, 2018). These categories were further refined through a pre-experiment involving 17 initial keyword groups, resulting in the creation of subcategories for keyword classification. Therefore, 15 keyword groups (KW1 to KW15) were created (Furrer et al., 2008). To ensure the reliability of our findings, two potential keyword group classifications were compared by reading each study to ascertain whether its content aligned with the corresponding keywords and warranted inclusion in a specific category (by ID number). Finally, a keyword/case matrix approach was implemented via SPSS, following established methodologies (Furrer et al., 2008; Kolbe & Burnett, 1991), to facilitate further analysis and interpretation of the data.

3.3. MCA

MCA was employed to uncover the underlying components of a set of keyword variables. This analytical approach is advantageous as it does not rely on any assumptions about linear relationships within categorical data, offering a robust method for exploring complex relationships. Our dataset comprises 476 keywords across the studies. It is noteworthy that the mean number of keywords per study was 4, reflecting the breadth of topics covered within the literature. Figure 1 illustrates the distribution of studies across four 5-year periods spanning from 2000 to 2020.

Figure 1 illustrates the distribution of papers published in the top six marketing journals from 2000 to 2020. Notably, *IMM* contributed the highest proportion of the articles at 34%, followed by *JBR* at 23% and *JAMS* at 19%. *IJRM* and *JMR* made relatively smaller contributions. We conducted a pilot text analysis to present an overview of the keyword segments. Figure 2 presents the results of the pilot text analysis, offering an overview of the frequency and segments of keyword items extracted from the keyword collocations. This analysis provides valuable insights into the thematic segments prevalent within the reviewed literature, guiding subsequent analyses and interpretations.

Figure 2 presents the trends for the six most frequently appearing items in the keyword collocations across 111 articles: *sustainability* (68), *marketing* (61), *environmental* (40), *green* (38), *social* (23) and *corporate* (22). These items also serve as keyword components, reflecting their significance within the reviewed literature. Each item is visualized with a trend representing the frequencies of the term across text groups, based on its mode. The trends of these elements within the 15 segments exhibit diverse dynamics. The segments represent the dominant groups based on the weights of the distributions in the text. *Sustainability* and *marketing* display similar variation structures across all 15 segments. *Environmental* and *green* exhibit identical trends in 13 segments. *Social* and *corporate* activities show patterns analogous to *marketing,* distributed across 15 segments. This pilot text analysis offers an initial perspective on the distribution patterns of the keyword items within the sample studies. Leveraging these findings, the pilot keyword group list was utilized as input for the main analysis. To ensure accurate keyword allocation, a rigorous verification process was undertaken. The first coding procedure was based on the given keywords, while the second involved an extensive review of all titles, abstracts and papers lacking keywords or with vague discussions. Table 1 presents the finalized keyword groups (K1–K15), derived from the comprehensive analysis of the literature.

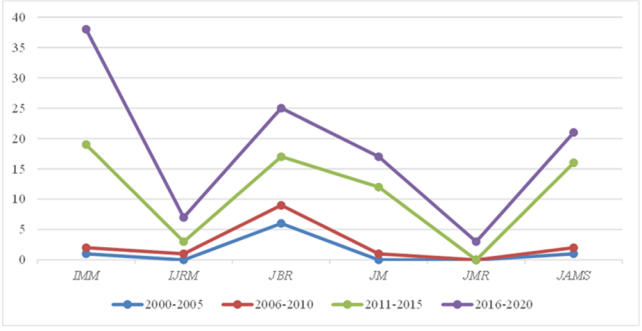

Figure 1. Number of papers in the four 5-year periods from 2000 to 2020.

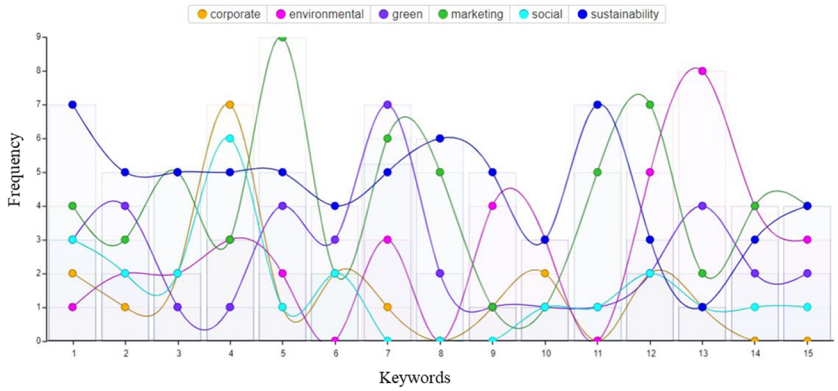

Figure 2. Relative frequency and segments of elements in the keywords.

Table 1. List of keyword variables.

Keyword code	Label	Keyword code	Label
K1	Sustainability	K9	Corporate environmentalism
K2	Green marketing	K10	Corporate capability and resource
K3	Environmental consciousness	K11	Organizational performance
K4	Sustainable consumption	K12	Supply chain and B2B marketing
K5	Consumer behavior	K13	Technology and innovation
K6	Social marketing	K14	Product
K7	Sustainable marketing and value	K15	Industrial marketing and public policy
K8	Corporate social responsibility		

Table 1 presents the keyword group variables along with their corresponding labels. These groups were established through a comprehensive coding process, with results compared before and after filtering to assess interrater agreement (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Miles et al., 2014). The obtained Cohen's kappa value of 0.5 indicates a moderate level of adjustment, as per established criteria (Landis & Koch, 1977). Coding with 15 keyword groups yielded significantly improved results, aligning with the outcomes of the pilot text analysis. An extended coding table for the keyword groups is available upon request. To optimally scale the dimensions, we used a common space plot to create a visual representation of the relationships among the variables. Figure 3 plots the discrimination measures of the three reduced dimensions.

The objects depicted in Figure 3 represent the coordinates associated with the keyword groups within each dimension, embedded in the matrix. This analysis serves to elucidate the similarities and differences among the groups, facilitating the interpretation of thematic relationships within the dataset. The final coordinates of the objects in dimensions 1 and 3 are plotted in the lower left corner of the scatterplot matrix. Dimension 1 (*x*-axis) exhibits a correlation with the keyword groups 'industrial marketing and public policy' and 'supply chain and B2B marketing', which are positioned farther from the centroid and exhibit greater distinctiveness compared to other groups along this dimension. Dimension 3 (*y*-axis) displays a high correlation with the 'environmental consciousness' (K3) and 'consumer behavior' (K5) groups, indicating their influence within this dimension.

From left to right, dimension 1 separates the macromarketing and micromarketing items, with 'consumer behavior' (K5) and 'corporate capabilities and resources' (K10) positioned centrally. The increasing values along this axis from the bottom to the top correspond to relatively influential terms.

The final coordinates of the objects in dimensions 2 and 3 are plotted on the middle-right side of the scatterplot matrix. The second dimension (along the *y*-axis) corresponds to the variable degree, and the larger values along this axis correspond to the groups' 'organizational performance', 'technology and innovation' (K13) and 'green marketing' (K2), which are positioned farther from consumer behavior research.

This analysis validates the three relational dimensions of our framework, elucidating the degrees of sustainability achieved through organizational-level efforts and the technological and innovation development required to connect consumers through micro- and macromarketing endeavors.

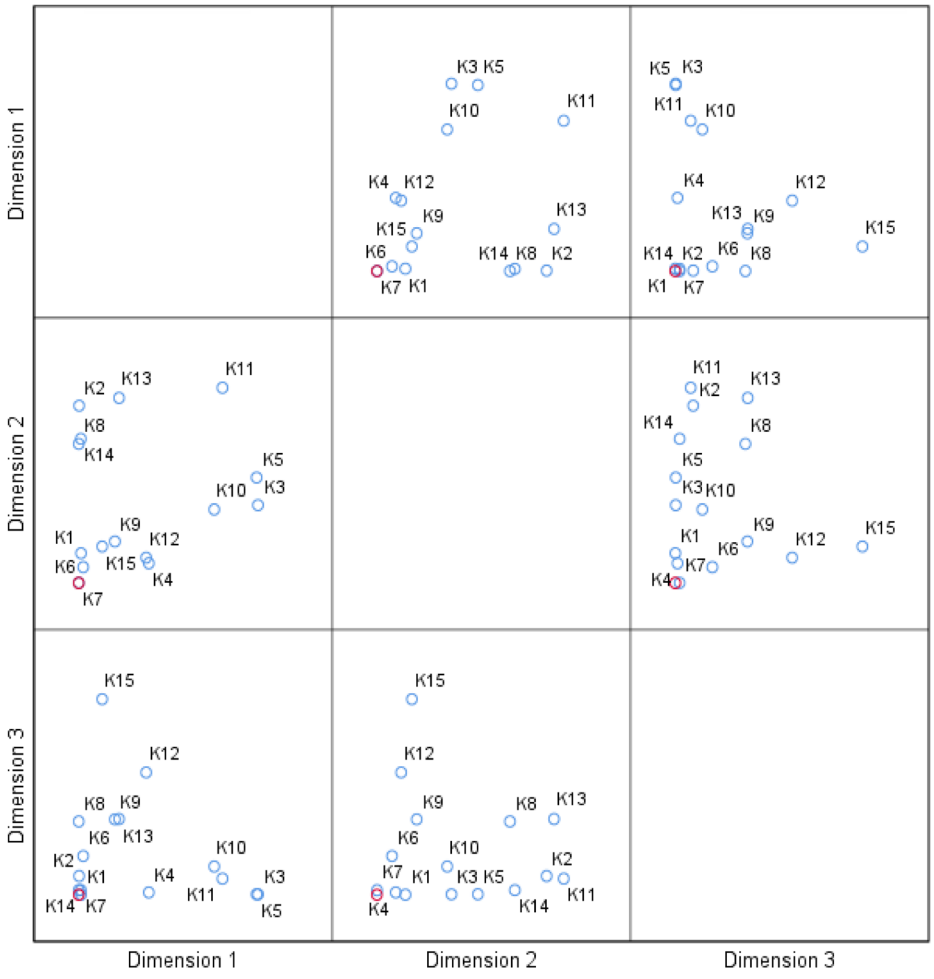

Figure 3. Discrimination measures in the three dimensions. *Note*: Dimension 1 is the SIIC. Dimension 2 is the SPCP, Dimension 3 is the SEAR.

4. Results

Our analysis reveals three pivotal dimensions that constitute the foundation for constructing an integrative framework. These dimensions serve as crucial insights for both marketing managers and consumers, elucidating the significance of a bottom-up approach in fostering sustainability within the market ecosystem. By delineating these dimensions, we provide researchers with a nuanced understanding of the intricate dynamics at play, offering valuable guidance for informed decision-making and strategic interventions.

4.1. Key dimensions

4.1.1. SEAR

SEAR signifies profound recognition of the environmental consequences of individual behaviors and the corresponding sense of responsibility. Consumers exhibit higher environmental awareness when prioritizing environmental preservation over personal utility maximization and they are aware of their relationship with the natural environment (Huang & Rust, 2011; Roberts & Bacon, 1997). Within the marketing system, consumers can have various internal and external motivations and demands and varying levels of awareness of environmental problems (Ertz et al., 2016) when they engage in certain purchase behaviors (Grimmer & Bingham, 2013; Kalamas et al., 2014; Minton et al., 2012; Naderi & Strutton, 2015). Beyond self-interest, the basic driver of consumers' responsiveness to sustainability concerns is their awareness and sense of responsibility (Schaefer & Crane, 2005; Tian & Kamran, 2023).

As Davies et al. (2020) advocated, developing individual sustainability through socio-anthropological and phenomenological approaches can help enhance sustainability in society. Beyond self-interest, consumers' responsiveness to sustainability concerns is driven by their awareness and sense of responsibility; at present, it is insufficiently emphasized in Western societies owing to their focus on individualism and a materialistic lifestyle (Kilbourne & Carlson, 2008; Kilbourne and Pickett, 2008). Individualism can underscore the inconvenience of recycling and waste disposal behavior, as such behavior centers on the individual rather than on the collective (Hartmann & Apaolaza-Ibáñez, 2012; McCarty & Shrum, 2001). If an action is considered beneficial, then consumers may take responsibility for it regardless of the type of normative appeal made (White & Simpson, 2013). Giebelhausen et al. (2016) showed how voluntary green programs based on self-interest and benefits for others affect consumers' prosocial activities differently.

Meanwhile, the consumer-citizen concept centers on the duties of individuals while positing that governmental policies and interventions that aim to reduce consumption can distort consumers' well-being and infringe on consumer sovereignty (Hansen & Schrader, 1997). Mindfulness interventions have been suggested as a means to enhance mindful consumption behavior (Lim, 2017; Sheth et al., 2011). The advantage of legislative change, including stringent regulations designed to mitigate environmental degradation, is that it can influence consumers' environmental consciousness by increasing environmental knowledge across sociodemographic groups (Diamantopoulos et al., 2003). However, knowledge is abstract and objective, awareness is subjective and temporal, and behavior is concrete and practical. Consumer practice can be encouraged by their interest or responsibility (van der Wal et al., 2018).

Voluntary simplifiers have 'more economic sustainability consciousness and share more universal values than typical exaggerated consumption groups or poor consumers' (Peyer et al., 2017). Self-accountability drives some consumers to purchase products with ethical attributes and alleviates their internal conflicts between 'being good' and feeling guilty about maximizing their utility (Peloza et al., 2013). The motivation for this behavior is consumers' awareness of what they ought to do for social well-being.

4.1.2. SPCP

SPCP encapsulates the nexus between organizational activities, environmental sustainability and consumer behavior. Production falls within the purview of organizations, and consumption falls within the purview of social marketing. It emphasizes the need for organizations to embed ethics and sustainability into their decision-making processes, influencing production practices and green marketing initiatives. Sustainable consumption encompasses responsible, anti- and mindful consumption (Desmond & Crane, 2004). With its foundations in the resource-based and natural resource-based views of firms and the concepts of enviropreneurial marketing and corporate environmentalism (Banerjee, 2002; Bansal & Roth, 2000; Hart, 1995; Menon & Menon, 1997), the natural environmental orientation (NEO) construct is positive for corporate performance. The dimensions of the NEO construct are entrepreneurship and a commitment to the natural environment. Firms, individuals and the environment are connected by sustainable value propositions through SPCP and sustainable innovation (Varadarajan, 2017).

Consumption is a series of social practices that affect organizations, cultural identities, social structures, institutions and habitual lifestyle choices (Hargreaves, 2011). The theoretical modes of sustainable consumption are responsible, anti- and mindful consumption (Lim, 2017). These notions have influenced green marketing strategies and have led to enviropreneurial efforts to produce eco-friendly goods and services (Menon & Menon, 1997). The extent to which sustainable consumption is practiced relies on the level of effort exerted by firms toward conserving resources (Wang et al., 2017), and the perceived marketing influence of consumers mediates the relationship between their concerns and practices (Leary et al., 2014). Sustainable consumption covers consumer sovereignty, which involves household consumption, and the value stream of manufacturers in the production process, including their ability to reduce carbon emissions from processing raw materials, use clean energy and avoid plastic packaging (Little et al., 2019). Government interventions, such as taxation and pricing policies, can further incentivize sustainable consumption practices (Stevens, 2010) in exchange activities (Hunt, 1983).

Critical marketing contributes to sustainability (Burton, 2001; Gordon et al., 2011). It provides a framework in which to monitor, control and correct marketing efforts, shifting the aim of marketing to demotivating aggressive consumption. However, its theoretical foundations integrate structuralism,

deconstruction, Marxism and other radical theories that seek to change society and pose threats to profit maximization in a capitalist business environment. This theory argues that 'a remedy for damage brought by unsustainable consumption' is demarketing (Kotler, 2011; Little et al., 2019; Yakobovitch & Grinstein, 2016). This approach, applied to a firm's sustainable production, falls under the dimension of ethics.

Understanding how the interactive marketplace influences production and consumption guides 'firms and policymakers [to protect and encourage] sustainable consumption behavior' (Leary et al., 2014). The market is 'a complex social mechanism for coordinating production, distribution and consumption decisions' (Dowling, 1983). Models of alternative consumption must be improved. These efforts facilitate 'the transformation of the dominant socioeconomic systems toward a model capable of promoting a sustainable future' (Davies et al., 2020).

An increasing number of corporations are incorporating consumers' long-term benefits into their missions and culture to secure competitive advantages (Peattie, 2001) and minimize resource depletion (Porter & van der Linde, 1995) in production. One important component of this approach is cooperation with environmental specialists for sustainable new product development (NPD) in production practices (Genç & Di Benedetto, 2015). This approach involves investments in key technology and innovations in NPD and broader life cycle assessment. Sustainable, innovation-oriented production aims to improve the NPD cycle and modification processes and the efficiency of resource use and to enhance knowledge, beliefs and understanding related to the need to reduce environmental impacts and unintended pollution (Fuller & Ottman, 2004) in enterprises and all functional areas (Varadarajan, 2017). Such efforts can transform sustainability practices into intra- and inter-organizational marketing activities and lead toward a sustainable consumption lifestyle while delivering value to customers.

SPCP can vary from country to country with different antecedents and consequences for subjects at the end of the value stream. In practice, consumer behavior can be changed by public policy (Porter & Kramer, 2006). SPCP is a relational dimension of sustainability in marketing connected by social elements.

4.1.3. SIIC

SIIC incorporates sustainable intercompany relationships and collaborations among governments, institutions and companies. Intercompany relationships connect firms and their suppliers. Industrial collaborations denote open sustainability-oriented cooperation among governments, academic and industrial partners with superior technology and open innovators (Chakrabarti et al., 2020; Inigo et al., 2020). Firms can affect the stakeholder value of suppliers by implementing sourcing sustainability regulations and mandates (Gielens et al., 2018). In association with sustainable alliance capabilities and resources delivering sustainability-related value, a trade-off exists between independence and interdependence. When businesses cooperate globally, a sustainable, eco-friendly and green supply chain guarantees that manufacturers, retailers and intermediaries adhere to social and environmental standards for end products (Villena & Gioia, 2020) that improve internal and external environment-oriented corporate performance at the B2B and B2C levels (Hoejmose et al., 2012). Such cooperation can also strengthen stakeholder-oriented sustainability practices (Kumar & Christodoulopoulou, 2014).

In the manufacture of climate-friendly alternatives, the downstream suppliers of raw materials, marketing itself and the delivery of demanded consumer products can generate unexpected pollution in the environment (Fuller & Ottman, 2004) or lead to greenwashing dilemmas owing to failures in the evaluation of sustainability criteria for supply partners (Kapitan et al., 2019). A multidimensional integration of SIIC is therefore needed.

Industrial collaboration requires multilateral relationships and coordination within a broader system. Technology and innovations require collaborations across governments, institutions and firms. Responsibility for sustainability has been transferred from firms and governments to consumers and all stakeholders (Humphreys, 2014). This transformation demonstrates a trend in distributing responsibility for the environment at the social level. Collaborations between governments and firms facilitate the coordination of consumer behavior in the realm of public interest and corporate sustainability in the integrative marketing system (Fransson & Gärling, 1999; Geiger et al., 2018; Gleim et al., 2013; Perera et al., 2018).

Building partnerships among the government, industry and society in this collaborative relationship system is imperative. For example, government procurement from corporations and research and development are relevant for the improvement of infrastructure and the enactment of legislation intended to improve recycling and resource use and address overconsumption (Sun & Trudel, 2017) and overproduction. Against this background, corporations play an important role in managing exchange relationships with consumers (Brown, 1982; Hult, 2011; Hult et al., 2018). Shultz (2017) emphasized institutional entrepreneurship to integrate organizational behavior into sustainability practices within a complex system (Connelly et al., 2011).

4.2. The integrative framework

In sum, SEAR, SPCP and SIIC are solid pillars for an integrative framework, which can integrate individual/consumer and corporate environmental responsiveness, corporate sustainability goals, sustainable supply chain inputs and public policy efforts in marketing practice.

Therefore, we present this conceptual framework derived from our analysis, employing a bottom-up approach that spans from a social perspective (e.g. individual units/consumers) to micromarketing activities/managers and then progresses to macromarketing coordination (e.g., government and policymakers), ultimately striving to achieve SDGs and sustainability values. This approach underscores the interactive roles of actors across different sectors, fostering a virtuous cycle of sustainability practices. Figure 4 shows the proposed integrative framework, highlighting those key dimensions: SEAR, SPCP and SIIC as keys to support sustainability.

Micromarketing pertains to understanding and addressing the demand and satisfaction of consumers as social individuals (Perreault & McCarthy, 2002). In contrast, macromarketing involves the provision of goods and services to society at large. Innovations and technologies are stimulated by both activities in meso-level regimes. These dimensions span from the individual and consumer levels to broader societal and environmental considerations—from micro to meso levels to the macro level. Together, they form an interconnected chain linking various stakeholders, including individuals, corporations, suppliers, governments and the environment, with the overarching goal of enhancing well-being and fostering sustainable behavior, ultimately generating economic value to safeguard corporate sustainability (Hahn et al., 2015).

Central to this framework is the pivotal role of consumers within the system. Consumer well-being and the motivation for sustainable consumption behavior hinge on the perceived benefits and values offered by designed products or services, which, in turn, are contingent upon technological advancements and innovations at the meso level. These innovations not only serve as a means for companies to enhance their corporate value and profitability but also contribute to societal well-being. Moreover, the concerted efforts of governments and industrial collaborations are instrumental in creating an enabling environment for promoting social welfare and sustainability initiatives. Thus, these entities forge a symbiotic connection driven by their shared commitment to sustainability values.

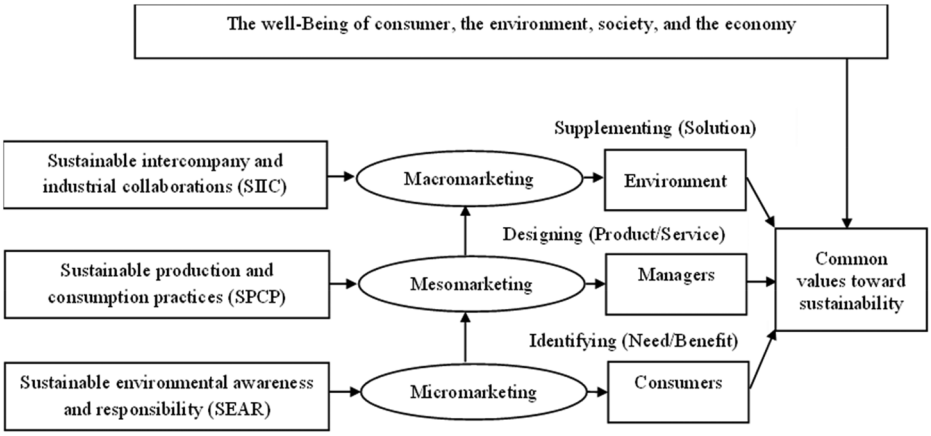

Figure 4. A framework for integrating sustainability into marketing.

5. Discussion

The findings of this study underscore a critical gap in the coherent recognition of the SDGs and sustainability within marketing research. There is a notable lack of investigation into consumer practices as a pathway toward sustainability in marketing. To address this gap and mitigate the risk of unsustainable production and consumption driven solely by marketing efforts, we propose a bottom-up framework. This framework emphasizes a cohesive, interactive relationship centered on consumer well-being across three key dimensions, facilitating the integration of sustainability into marketing practices.

Our framework not only provides avenues for further research but also offers practical implications for business practitioners. Researchers can employ it and conduct diverse qualitative and quantitative research in association with different branches of industrial and consumer goods.

The systemic design of the framework used to integrate sustainability into marketing has not been extensively explored in mainstream marketing journals and dominant academic branches. This identified gap aligns with the results of Vargo and Lusch (2017), who found trends revealing a focus on a unilateral micromarketing perspective. By incorporating social marketing elements, researchers can leverage this framework to develop comprehensive models that address diverse industrial and consumer contexts.

Additionally, for business practitioners, our framework delineates the roles of all stakeholders within the marketing system from individual consumers to organizational leaders. Firstly, managers who have long experienced the pressure of CSR can understand that responsibility for the environment is equitably acknowledged at a social level by SEAR at the individual level through a transformative process of integrating sustainability into marketing. This approach minimizes the damage caused by exaggerated consumption and alleviates the burden on the environment and nature. Consumer participation should be integrated into marketing interventions and governance initiatives to achieve sustainability goals (Kamran et al., 2021; Prothero et al., 2011).

Secondly, SPCP amends green marketing and enhances marketing strategies in the integrative process from production to consumption and vice versa at the meso level. Consumers purchase what they need; however, their reliance on what is available in the market relates to the efforts of firms to incorporate environmental practices. Market-driven production can trigger (un)sustainable consumption. A well-known example is Unilever's greenhouse gas analysis and its production practices. It sources 100% of its electricity from renewable grids. Only 1% of its carbon footprint is generated through manufacturing while 3% and 4% are generated from distribution and retail, respectively (Unilever, 2021).

Thirdly, the proposed framework suggests the usage of multilateral networks to implement sustainability strategies. SIIC describes the importance of sustainable business networks and dynamic relationships with government and institutional actors in a holistic marketing environment. Intercompany relationships focus on supply chain partners. Industrial collaborations emphasize relationships among governments, corporations and other institutions and/or organizations. Government legislation, regulations and taxes combined with incentives can motivate the transformation of production toward sustainability. In summary, the proposed framework highlights the importance of enhancing consumer awareness and responsibility, refining production and consumption practices and fostering sustainable intercompany collaborations to achieve sustainability goals.

6. Conclusions

This study contributes to the current understanding of sustainability theories and their impact on business practices in marketing. By adopting a bottom-up approach, we offer a well-balanced, solution-oriented framework that caters to the needs of business management practitioners, policymakers and academic researchers across various disciplines.

Our framework aligns micromarketing actors with responsible consumers and business managers, promoting sustainable practices and consumer well-being. By integrating mesomarketing tools with advanced technology and innovation, we advocate for a collaborative approach that engages stakeholders at all levels to realize common sustainability goals.

Moving forward, there are several avenues for future research. (1) Marketing scholars could employ meta-analysis techniques to further explore the variables within our framework and conduct prospective reviews. (2) Mixed-methods approaches, including qualitative and quantitative methods (focus group, grounded and grand theories) could be used to develop constructs for each dimension. (3) Empirical research leveraging big data from industries, consumers and policymakers could extend our framework and bridge the gap between societal and corporate sustainability practices within the broader domain of strategic management.

Disclosure statement

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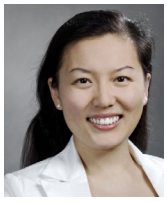

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