

# Exploring the role of content marketing as a sustainability communication strategy in online audience engagement: Scoping review

TRIBAK Imad

DOI: [10.29180/978-615-6886-27-9\\_16](https://doi.org/10.29180/978-615-6886-27-9_16)

## Abstract:

This paper explores the role of content marketing as a sustainability communication strategy and its impact on online audience engagement. Through a comprehensive scoping review of 62 peer-reviewed studies published between 2012 and 2025, the research maps existing literature to identify how sustainability-focused content marketing strategies influence engagement, consumer behaviour, trust, and brand perception in digital spaces. Drawing on theoretical frameworks such as the Elaboration Likelihood Model, Social Exchange Theory, and the Theory of Planned Behaviour, the study finds that content marketing enhances engagement when messages are emotionally resonant, visually compelling, and aligned with consumers' values and social norms. The results highlight several key drivers of engagement, including storytelling, authenticity, interactivity, and influencer credibility. Enhanced engagement was observed in 24 studies, with content that promoted transparency, relevance, and community involvement resulting in increased likes, shares, comments, and brand advocacy. Additionally, sustainability content fostered stronger brand perception and trust in 15 studies, while 10 studies linked such content to positive behavioural changes toward eco-friendly consumption. Conversely, content perceived as inauthentic or misleading, particularly in cases of greenwashing, often triggers scepticism and reduces engagement. The review also identifies gaps in the literature, such as the limited exploration of business-to-business and customer-to-customer contexts and the predominance of cross-sectional designs, which restrict causal inference. The paper concludes by recommending the strategic integration of credible, dialogical, and value-driven content into sustainability marketing efforts to foster deeper digital engagement and promote sustainable consumer behaviours.

**Keywords:** Content Marketing, Sustainability Communication, Online Audience Engagement

**JEL Classification:** M31, Q56

## Introduction:

In recent years, sustainability has transitioned from a peripheral concern to a core principle in corporate strategy, driven by increased consumer awareness and the demand for environmental accountability (Braga et al., 2024). This shift has compelled organisations to adopt innovative communication strategies to convey their sustainability initiatives effectively. Among these, content marketing has emerged as a pivotal tool, leveraging storytelling and value-driven narratives to engage online audiences and foster sustainable consumer behaviours (Ebrahimi et al., 2023).

Social media platforms have become instrumental in this paradigm, offering interactive channels that facilitate two-way communication between brands and consumers. The dialogical nature of social media enables companies not only to disseminate information but also to engage in meaningful conversations about sustainability, thereby enhancing consumer trust and loyalty (Chen et al., 2023). Studies have shown that sustainability messages incorporating dialogical features, such as responsiveness, openness, and mutuality, significantly boost social media engagement, brand affinity, and purchase intentions (Chen et al., 2023).

Moreover, the effectiveness of content marketing in promoting sustainability is amplified when messages are perceived as informative, entertaining, and relevant (Ebrahimi et al., 2023). Eco-friendly content that resonates with consumers' values not only increases their knowledge about sustainable products and practices but also enhances their willingness to share information and make environmentally conscious purchasing decisions (Zafar et al., 2022). Visual elements, emotional appeals, and personalised narratives further augment the persuasive power of sustainability communication, making content more engaging and memorable (Li & Xie, 2020).

The Uses and Gratification Theory (UGT) (Katz et al., 1973) posits that individuals actively seek out media content to satisfy specific needs, such as information, entertainment, and social interaction. In the context of sustainability communication, content marketing that provides informative, engaging material can fulfil these needs, thereby enhancing audience engagement. For instance, Febrian and Husna (2023) found that informative content significantly increases social media engagement, suggesting that audiences are drawn to content that gratifies their desire for knowledge and practical information.

Social Exchange Theory (SET) (Blau, 1964; Homans, 1958), on the other hand, suggests that social behaviour results from an exchange process aimed at maximising benefits and minimising costs. In online sustainability communication, when audiences perceive that engaging with branded content provides them with valuable information or social capital, they are more likely to interact and share that content. Zafar et al. (2022) highlighted that consumers are more inclined to engage with brands that offer valuable and trustworthy sustainability content, reinforcing the reciprocal nature of the brand-consumer relationship.

Furthermore, Relationship Marketing Theory (RMT) (Berry, 1983; Grönroos, 1994) focuses on building long-term relationships between businesses and consumers. In the field of sustainability, content marketing serves as a tool to foster trust and loyalty by consistently communicating a brand's commitment to sustainable practices. Zafar et al. (2022) emphasised that relationship marketing strategies are pivotal in engaging consumers in sustainable consumption, as they encourage ongoing interaction and emotional connection with the brand. As content marketing continues to expand, particularly through social media, understanding how consumers process messages is crucial. The Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986) explains how people process persuasive messages through two routes: central and peripheral. In sustainability content marketing, messages that present strong, logical arguments (central route) can lead to lasting attitude change. At the same time, those that use appealing visuals or endorsements (peripheral route) can also influence attitudes, albeit more temporarily. Mardhatilah et al. (2023) demonstrated that both routes are effective in increasing audience engagement on social media platforms, suggesting that a combination of informative content and aesthetic appeal can enhance the persuasiveness of sustainability messages.

Additionally, the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991) provides a strong framework for understanding how attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control influence individuals' intentions and behaviours. In the context of sustainability communication, this framework helps explain how content marketing can shape pro-environmental intentions and actions among online audiences. Sustainability content that highlights the positive outcomes of sustainable behaviour, such as reducing waste and supporting ethical brands, can strengthen attitudes toward those behaviours. When such content reflects the expectations and behaviours of peers, influencers, or social groups, it reinforces subjective norms, making individuals more likely to conform to perceived social expectations (Vermei & Verbeke, 2008). Furthermore, content that showcases practical steps, tools, or easy-to-adopt behaviours enhances the audience's perceived behavioural control, empowering them to act (Kim et al., 2020).

With the dominance of digital platforms, motivation-driven engagement plays a significant role in the success of content marketing. The Self-Determination Theory (SDT) centres on the motivation behind choices people make without external influence, highlighting the importance of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. In sustainability communication, content that empowers audiences to make informed decisions and connects them to a community of like-minded individuals can enhance intrinsic motivation (Huang et al., 2022). For example, content that showcases actionable steps toward sustainability can satisfy the need for competence, while community-driven initiatives fulfil the need for relatedness (Ryan et al., 2019). This approach aligns with the principles of SDT, fostering deeper engagement.

Despite the growing body of research on sustainability communication, there remains a need to explore the strategic integration of content marketing within this context. Understanding how content marketing can effectively convey sustainability messages and drive online audience engagement is crucial for organisations and businesses to align their marketing efforts with environmental objectives (Rocca et al., 2024). This paper examines the role of content marketing as a sustainability communication strategy, analysing its impact on online audience engagement and identifying best practices to foster sustainable consumer behaviours. Firstly, the paper begins with a brief chapter highlighting the importance of content marketing on social media in sustainability communication strategies. Secondly, the method used to examine the correlation between content marketing as a sustainability communication strategy and online audience engagement is presented in detail. Thirdly, the findings from the data collection are analysed, compiled, summarised, and reported in three tables. Finally, the results are discussed, and the research and practical implications, along with the limitations and potential research avenues, are addressed in the final chapter.

Research question: How does content marketing, when used as a sustainability communication strategy, impact online audience engagement?

### **The importance of content marketing on social media in sustainability communication strategies:**

Sustainability communication (SC) has emerged as a vital component of marketing strategies, particularly in fostering trust and legitimacy with stakeholders. Braga et al. (2024) conducted a comprehensive literature review that identified four core themes in SC: reporting sustainability, sustainability advertising, consumer relations, and promoting pro-sustainable behaviour. The study emphasises the necessity for transparent and trustworthy information dissemination to build stakeholder confidence. Notably, social media platforms play an increasingly important role in facilitating these communications, allowing organisations to engage directly and authentically with consumers.

The integration of social media into sustainability communication has been widely explored across recent studies. For instance, Du Plessis (2022) highlights that digital brand content shared on social media platforms significantly influences consumer engagement, brand trust, and purchase intentions. She stresses the importance of delivering informative, entertaining, and relevant content that aligns with consumer needs in order to nurture long-term relationships and encourage sustainable consumption. Similarly, Zahrah et al. (2024) suggested in their study that eco-friendly posts on social media enhance perceived informative and entertaining value, which in turn drives positive word-of-mouth (WOM) and stronger purchase intentions.

Building on this, Crapa et al. (2024) investigated green communication strategies in Italy's large-scale retail sector, demonstrating that green marketing content on social media effectively engages consumers and fosters sustainable behaviour. Their research also emphasises the importance of dialogical communication and interactive features that invite two-way engagement, fostering trust and a sense of community between brands and consumers.

The effectiveness of social media marketing in promoting sustainable consumption has also been examined through the lens of specific communication tools and content strategies. A systematic review by Suki et al. (2022) highlights that influencer marketing and creative, platform-tailored content play crucial roles in shaping consumer behaviour toward sustainability. Tarhan and Dursun (2024) further support this view, identifying key social media marketing strategies that help companies differentiate their offerings while promoting sustainability through valuable, relevant content.

The role of influencers in sustainability communication has attracted increasing scholarly attention. Munaro et al. (2024) conducted a systematic review demonstrating that influencers with authentic, green-oriented personas significantly shape followers' pro-environmental attitudes and intentions. Their work provides a conceptual framework illustrating the connection between influencers and pro-sustainable outcomes. Similarly, Kapoor et al. (2021) conducted a study in the hospitality industry and found that the persuasive impact of sustainability messages depends on matching message appeals (e.g., guilt or sensuality) with credible sources (e.g., eco-friendly hotels or influencers) to effectively influence travellers' intentions toward sustainable accommodations.

Complementing these findings, Pera and Aiello (2023) analysed climate change communication on YouTube and TikTok. They discovered that content creators on TikTok use more emotionally resonant and action-oriented language, enhancing audience engagement and aligning discourse with sustainability goals. This suggests that platform-specific content strategies are crucial for maximising the impact of green messaging.

Several studies have explored broader frameworks for content marketing and sustainability. Gomez (2020) reviewed how social media is used in corporate social responsibility (CSR) communication, emphasising its ability to engage stakeholders and effectively disseminate sustainability initiatives. Taiminen and Ranaweera (2019) add that value-rich digital content fosters trusted B2B relationships, highlighting its potential in green marketing and sustainable branding. Nosratabadi et al. (2019) reinforce this view through a review of sustainable business models, underlining the importance of content marketing and digital platforms in achieving triple bottom-line goals, namely economic, environmental, and social.

Lastly, recent research has delved into how consumers process and respond to sustainability communication. Cortis and Davis (2020) conducted a systematic review of social opinion mining, shedding light on how user-generated content (UGC) reveals public sentiment and behaviour in relation to sustainability. Furthermore, Cammarota et al. (2023) explored brand activism, offering insights into how companies publicly take stands on environmental and social issues. Their study underscores the importance of authenticity in brand messaging and its influence on consumer trust and engagement.

## **Methodology**

A scoping review was used as a method in this research to comprehensively map the existing literature on content marketing and its impact on online audience engagement in the context of sustainability communication. Researchers often use a scoping review to identify knowledge gaps, clarify concepts, review a body of literature, or examine complex or heterogeneous literature (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005; Levac et al., 2010; Munn et al., 2018). Also, it was crucial to explore the range of evidence on the correlation between content marketing and online audience engagement in sustainability communication, which is often challenging to find amid the large, complex subject area (Peters et al., 2021). The scoping review was guided by the principles of the Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI) Methodological Guidelines (Aromataris & Riitano, 2014; Peters et al., 2021), which also aligns with the PRISMA-ScR framework (Tricco

et al., 2018). The review is presented in accordance with the five-phase framework proposed by Arksey and O'Malley (2005).

Phase 1: Formulating the research question

This scoping review attempts to answer the following main research question: How does content marketing, when used as a sustainability communication strategy, impact online audience engagement?

This question led to three sub-questions:

- **Sub-question 1:** How can we characterise the studies available on this topic?
- **Sub-question 2:** What is the evidence of the correlation between content marketing as a sustainability communication strategy and online audience engagement?
- **Sub-question 3:** Which range of methodologies was used in these studies?

Phase 2: Identifying the relevant studies

The studies in this review were identified using key concepts relevant to sustainability communication, content marketing, and online audience engagement with environmentally focused messages. A comprehensive search was conducted across reputable academic databases, including Scopus, ScienceDirect, Web of Science, EBSCO/Business Source Ultimate, JSTOR, and Google Scholar. These databases were selected due to their broad coverage of business, management, and communication disciplines, as well as their inclusion of peer-reviewed journals that publish research on sustainability communication strategies. Multiple databases were utilised to ensure broad coverage of the literature, following best practices for systematic searches as recommended by MacFarlane et al. (2022).

The following Boolean search commands were used to query these databases:

- (“Sustainability communication” OR “green marketing” OR “eco-friendly content”) AND (“online audience engagement” OR “online consumer engagement” OR “digital audience engagement”)
- (“Sustainability communication” OR “green content marketing” OR “eco-friendly branding”) AND (“attracting environmentally conscious consumers” OR “green audience” OR “green customers”)
- (“Sustainability messaging” OR “eco-friendly marketing” OR “sustainable brand content”) AND (“engaging online audience” OR “digital audience engagement”)
- (“Sustainability communication” OR “green content”) AND (“affects online consumer behavior” OR “green purchase decision”)
- (“Sustainable marketing” OR “eco-brand content”) AND (“influences consumer attitudes” OR “online audience perception”)
- (“Green content marketing” OR “sustainability messaging”) AND “online engagement”
- (Impact OR effect) AND (“sustainability communication” OR “eco-friendly marketing”) AND (“digital audience” OR “online consumer engagement”)
- (“Sustainable content” OR “green content marketing”) AND (“online audience engagement” OR “brand trust” OR “eco-brand loyalty” OR “social media interaction”)
- (“Sustainability messaging” OR “eco-friendly marketing”) AND (“consumer engagement” OR “brand perception” OR “green brand attachment”)
- (“Green content marketing” OR “eco-brand content”) AND (“consumer engagement” OR “customer relationships” OR “environmental brand loyalty”)
- (“Eco-marketing” OR “sustainable content marketing”) AND (“customer engagement” OR participation OR involvement OR “green word of mouth” OR “eco-purchase intention”)
- (“Sustainability communication” OR “sustainable content marketing”) AND (“social media” OR “digital platforms”) AND (“consumer behavior” OR “environmental interaction”)

- (“Green content marketing” OR “eco-friendly content”) AND (“audience engagement” OR “brand interaction”) AND (“case study” OR “empirical research” OR “systematic review”)
- (“Sustainable content marketing” OR “eco-friendly content OR “sustainability communication”) AND (“return on investment” OR “Key performance indicators” OR “conversion rates”) AND (“online audience engagement” OR “brand awareness”)

To simplify and enhance the search for unique documents in our dataset, we used Boolean operators. Specifically, the “AND” operator was applied to ensure that all terms appeared in the search results, thereby narrowing the search and reducing irrelevant results. In contrast, the “OR” operator retrieved results that contained at least one of the specified terms, thus expanding the search by including synonyms or related terms. Furthermore, parentheses were employed to group search terms and maintain the correct order of operations, thereby preventing the search engine from misinterpreting the logic. Additionally, quotation marks were used to force the search engine to look for an exact phrase or a concept consisting of two or three words rather than separate words, ensuring more precise results.

The development of these Boolean search strings was guided by the main conceptual dimensions of this research, namely sustainability communication, content marketing, and online audience engagement. Preliminary keywords were derived inductively from prior systematic review (e.g., Braga et al., 2024; Du Plessis, 2022) and from recurring terminology within the abstracts of foundational papers identified during an initial scan. For instance, “green marketing,” “eco-friendly content,” and “sustainability messaging” frequently co-occurred in studies focusing on corporate environmental communication, whereas “online audience engagement” and “digital interaction” were dominant in the engagement literature. As the search process evolved, related terms such as “green audience”, “eco-brand loyalty”, and “social media interaction” emerged through iterative database queries and backward citation tracking. These refinements helped ensure conceptual alignment between sustainability-focused marketing strategies and audience engagement, while maintaining sufficient breadth to capture interdisciplinary perspectives. Thus, each Boolean combination reflects a link between sustainability communication constructs and engagement outcomes observed across marketing and communication research.

In addition to the comprehensive Boolean search strategy outlined above, further measures were taken to reduce the risk of excluding relevant studies.

Despite efforts to expand and diversify the search strategy, we acknowledge the inherent risk of missing relevant studies due to variations in terminology and indexing across different databases. To mitigate this risk, we adopted a multi-pronged approach. First, we deliberately selected a broad set of databases spanning sustainability communication, marketing management, and business research. Second, we formulated an inclusive set of Boolean search queries incorporating synonyms and related constructs, including “green content marketing”, “eco-friendly content”, “sustainability communication”, “green marketing”, and various forms of “audience engagement”. Third, we complemented this systematic approach with manual techniques, including backward citation tracking (examining references in selected papers) and forward citation analysis using tools such as Google Scholar to identify newer studies that cited key articles. These steps were particularly helpful in identifying studies that may not have used standard terminology in titles or abstracts. Lastly, we reviewed the reference lists in existing systematic reviews and conceptual papers on content marketing in the context of sustainability communication to ensure that no significant study was unintentionally excluded. While it is impossible to guarantee full coverage in any review, these steps were designed to maximise the inclusiveness and comprehensiveness of our literature base.

Phase 3: Inclusion and exclusion criteria

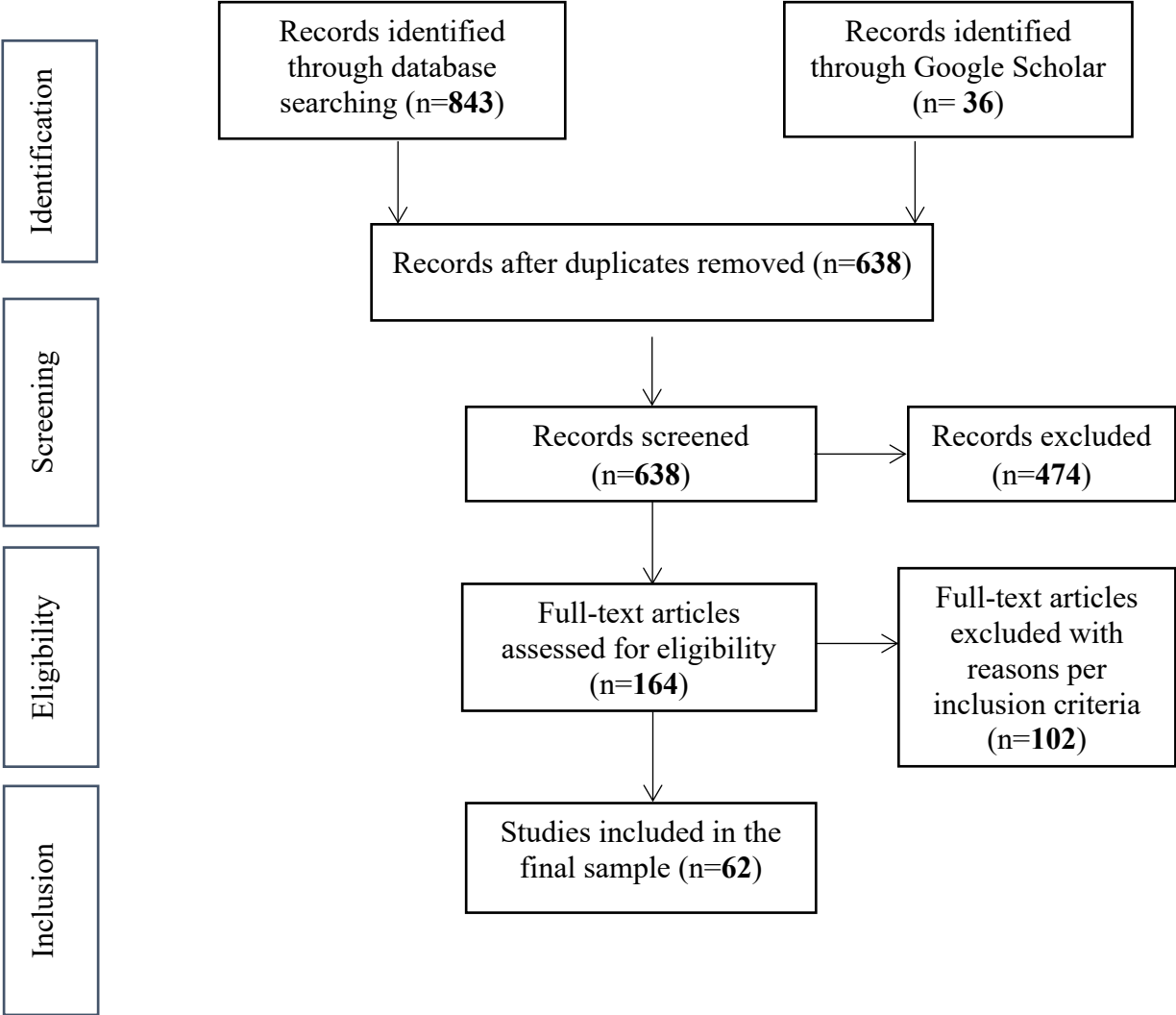
The inclusion and exclusion criteria for the study were determined using a methodological protocol. To be selected, the publications had to meet the following inclusion criteria:

- An empirical or conceptual study
- Peer-reviewed journal articles
- Conference proceedings
- Scientific research with any research design
- Published in English
- Published from 2012 to 2025
- Addressed the impact on online audience engagement with sustainability-related content
- Referred to content marketing and sustainability communication in the title and/or abstract and/or body of the paper

The search process varied slightly across the aforementioned databases, depending on the features and filters available. Firstly, in Scopus, advanced search options were employed to ensure a precise search. The terms were entered in the title, abstract, and keyword fields to capture the most relevant studies. Boolean operators such as “AND” and “OR” were used to combine terms such as “green marketing”, “sustainability communication”, “eco-friendly content”, “online audience engagement”, and “eco-brand loyalty”. Additionally, filters were applied to limit the search to articles published between 2012 and 2025 and within peer-reviewed journals. Moreover, document types were filtered to include only articles, reviews, and conference papers. Similar advanced search functions were employed in Science Direct and Web of Science, focusing on sustainability, business and marketing journals, with date and document type filters applied. Likewise, in EBSCO/Business Source Ultimate, searches were conducted using both basic and advanced search functions, applying filters for full-text, peer-reviewed articles in sustainability communication, business and green marketing. On the other hand, the search in JSTOR was performed using its advanced search capabilities, with Boolean operators applied to combine key terms and filter for academic journals in sustainability, business, and the social sciences from 2012 to 2025. Lastly, for Google Scholar, the search was broader, as the platform does not allow for as many specific filtering options. Search terms entered with quotation marks to capture exact phrases (e.g., “sustainability content marketing”), customising the data range to (from 2012 to 2025). Boolean operators were used to combine terms and related synonyms. Although Google Scholar does not offer extensive filtering, results were manually refined based on relevance and citation count, and only articles published within the last 13 years were considered. Finally, the results were manually screened to ensure relevance, focusing on peer-reviewed articles and academic publications.

The past 13 years have seen significant evolution in sustainability communication and green content marketing, driven by the rapid growth of social media platforms, influencer marketing, and data-driven strategies to promote environmentally conscious behaviours. Choosing 2012 as the starting point enables a comprehensive analysis of how digital transformation has reshaped the way organisations communicate sustainability messages and engage eco-aware audiences. Since 2012, businesses and brands have increasingly relied on engagement metrics, such as likes, shares, comments, and online interactions, to assess the effectiveness of green messaging and digital campaigns. This timeframe captures the rise of key technological developments, including programmatic advertising, AI-driven content personalisation, and interactive media, all of which have enhanced the delivery and impact of sustainability-focused content. Analysing studies from this period offers insights into how content marketing strategies evolved in response to technological innovation and shifting consumer expectations. Additionally, this timespan aligns with a growing scholarly focus on digital consumer engagement and sustainable branding, ensuring that the review includes

contemporary and relevant research. Studies published prior to 2012 largely emphasised traditional marketing approaches, while the post-2012 era marks a clear transition to digital-first and purpose-driven communication strategies. Extending the review through 2025 allows for the inclusion of the latest tools, trends, and best practices in sustainability communication, while also identifying current research gaps and future directions in green content marketing.



**Figure 1:** *Article selection process*  
**Source:** *Own research and edition, 2025*

As illustrated in Figure 1, the article selection process followed a structured, systematic, and transparent approach. Initially, 843 records were retrieved from academic databases, with an additional 36 records identified through Google Scholar. All references were imported into Mendeley reference management software (version 2.108.0), where duplicates were automatically and manually removed, resulting in 638 unique records. These records were screened at the title and abstract level based on broad inclusion criteria focused on content marketing, sustainability communication, and online audience engagement. At this stage, 474 records were excluded for failing to meet topical relevance or publication-type standards. The remaining 164 full-text articles were imported into ATLAS.ti software (version 24) for structured coding and evaluation. A deductive coding framework was applied to assess alignment with the inclusion criteria, including clarity of research objectives, relevance to digital content strategies, sustainability communication, green marketing, the presence of empirical or conceptual analysis, and the extent to which online audience engagement was

examined. Each article was coded across several dimensions, including research methodology (quantitative, qualitative, and conceptual), industry, context, geographic focus, and engagement outcomes. A codebook was developed and refined during a pilot coding phase to ensure consistent application across studies.

To enhance methodological rigour, an audit trail was maintained throughout the coding process, including memos for borderline cases, detailed justifications for inclusion or exclusion, and logs of decision-making. When ambiguity arose, a secondary reviewer was consulted to reach a consensus. Based on this process, 102 articles were excluded, most commonly due to insufficient methodological quality or weak alignment with the review's focus. The final sample comprised 62 studies, including journal articles and conference proceedings.

Phase 4: Extracting and analysing the relevant data.

Two summary tables (1 and 3), covering the authors, year of publication, journal, objectives, research methodology and approach, context and industry, study's location, impact of content marketing as a sustainability communication strategy on online audience engagement, and the reason for impact, were used to systematically extract the content of the articles in the final sample. Subsequently, the data were categorised based on the research's three sub-questions.

Phase 5: Compiling, summarising, and reporting

During this stage, a quantitative process was used first to quantify and classify the raw data. The data were then qualitatively interpreted using a deductive approach to provide meaning that aligns with the sub-questions of the study. Therefore, mapping our current knowledge of the relationship between content marketing and online audience engagement in the context of sustainability communication was essential, as was summarising the results for future research.

## Results

In this scoping review, 62 primary studies explored content marketing and online audience engagement through various epistemological perspectives and methodological approaches. Recent scholarly focus has evolved from defining the core components of content marketing to examining its effectiveness as a strategic tool, particularly in sustainability communication. Increasingly, research investigates how content marketing facilitates meaningful online engagement on sustainability issues, aiming to establish a clearer connection between content-driven strategies and audience participation in environmental and social discourse.

The results section is structured to provide a clear response to the study's primary research question by systematically addressing its sub-questions. The first segment, which outlines the characteristics of the included studies, provides a comprehensive overview of the selected research, highlighting key attributes such as objectives, methodologies, industry, and contexts. This foundational understanding then leads to evidence of the correlation, in which the relationship between content marketing as a sustainability communication tool and online audience engagement is examined, yielding empirical findings that support or challenge this connection. Finally, the research methodologies used detail the analytical approaches employed across studies, providing insight into the reliability and validity of the results, which can be interpreted as follows:

Table 1 demonstrates a general description of the key characteristics and findings of the 62 studies included in this scoping review. The data was collected from 26 countries and geographic contexts, namely the United States (n=7), Italy (n=4), Germany (n=3), France (n=3), United Kingdom (n=3), Australia (n=3), South Korea (n=3) China (n=2), Spain (n=2), Belgium (n=2), Finland (n=2), and one study per country for Jordan, Romania, Switzerland, Netherlands, Turkey, Singapore, Europe as one geographic context, Sweden, and India. On the other hand, 6 studies did not specify the study's location, focusing on a global scope. Moreover, the studies

were published in 42 academic journals (Table 2). Of these studies, 6 were published in the *Journal of Business Ethics*, 4 in the *Journal of Sustainability*, 4 in the *Journal of Business Research*, and 3 in the *Journal of Marketing*

A regional analysis highlights varying research emphases on sustainability communication. Studies from Western economies (e.g., the US, UK, and Australia) often examined how sustainability communication via content marketing influences brand engagement and word-of-mouth (WOM). These studies typically analysed the effectiveness of corporate messaging and consumer engagement through sustainability-themed content. In contrast, Asian studies (e.g., Singapore, South Korea, and China) focused on integrating sustainability communication within digital transformation frameworks, emphasising the role of social media and online platforms in fostering consumer awareness and engagement with sustainable practices. Notably, studies from South Korea examined the hospitality sector's use of eco-friendly content to build consumer loyalty. European studies, particularly from Germany, France, and Italy, predominantly explored corporate social responsibility (CSR) communication, the strategic use of green branding, and storytelling to enhance brand perception and consumer interaction. These studies highlighted the need for transparency and consistency in sustainability messaging, particularly in sectors such as energy, fashion, and FMCG. Emerging markets, such as India and Jordan, explored how sustainability communication impacts trust-building and customer decision-making in digital content contexts. Global studies aimed to develop a holistic understanding of how sustainability communication varies across cultural and industrial contexts, addressing both challenges and best practices.

This geographical distribution suggests that sustainability communication strategies via content marketing are tailored to regional market dynamics. Western research prioritises measurable marketing outcomes and engagement metrics, whereas Asian and emerging market studies place emphasis on technological innovations and customer relationships.

The regional variation suggests that cultural and national norms significantly shape how sustainability communication is practised and studied. For instance, Western economies often emphasise transparency, corporate ethics, and measurable engagement outcomes, reflecting individualistic and accountability-oriented cultural values. Conversely, studies from Asian contexts highlight collectivist tendencies, focusing on community participation, relational trust, and technological innovation in sustainability messaging. Emerging economies, such as India and Jordan, frequently frame sustainability communication around developmental narratives and trust-building. These cultural and institutional differences underline how sustainability discourse adapts to local expectations and social norms.

The selected studies conducted from 2012 onwards illustrate an attempt to clarify the impact of content marketing as a sustainability communication tool on online audience engagement, with more conclusive evidence. This was done by concentrating on the role of sustainability-themed content in online audience engagement in different industries, namely 14 studies in the context of social media and digital marketing as a whole, 19 in which the industry was not specified, and 38 studies in other industries, including consumer goods and retail, fashion and luxury goods, tourism, energy, hospitality and tourism, higher education, manufacturing, technology and telecommunications, professional services, and agriculture and food.

The findings demonstrate that, while the literature on this topic up to 2018 remains insufficient, the growth of studies since then has been evident. Interestingly, only 4 studies addressed online audience engagement in the business-to-business (B2B) context, 49 in the business-to-consumer (B2C) context, and 9 in both contexts (Table 1). This illustrates that over the last 13 years (2012 to 2025), more research on content marketing in the B2C context was conducted due to increased focus on its impact on audiences.

B2B studies predominantly employed qualitative methodologies, such as case studies, literature reviews, and in-depth interviews, reflecting the complexity of business relationships and content marketing strategies within professional and manufacturing sectors. However, few B2B studies adopted quantitative methodologies, thereby limiting generalizability across industries. In contrast, B2C studies extensively used quantitative approaches, leveraging surveys, statistical modelling, content analyses, and experimental designs, emphasising consumer engagement metrics, attitude shifts, and behaviour patterns. Qualitative approaches, such as literature reviews and thematic analysis, were also present, primarily in studies on CSR communication and storytelling. Furthermore, studies combining both contexts often employed mixed methods, integrating quantitative data (surveys) with qualitative insights (case studies) to provide a comprehensive understanding of content marketing dynamics in both consumer and professional environments. Therefore, B2C studies tend to prioritise empirical, data-driven research methods to capture consumer reactions, while B2B studies favour in-depth qualitative analysis to explore strategic applications and relationship dynamics.

***The characteristics of the studies included in the final sample:***

**Table 1:** *The characteristics of the studies included in the final sample*  
**Source:** *Own research and edition, 2025*

<b>Study</b>	<b>Author(s)</b>	<b>Journal/ conference proceeding</b>	<b>Objective(s)</b>	<b>Methodology</b>	<b>Context / Industry</b>	<b>Study's location</b>
1	Braga et al. (2024)	RAUSP Management Journal	Systematically review the literature on sustainability communication in marketing and propose a future research agenda.	Systematic literature review, qualitative	B2C and B2B, not specified industry	-
2	Du Plessis (2022)	SAGE Open	Provide a broad synopsis of studies on the effect of content marketing on online consumer behaviour over 12 years.	Scoping review, qualitative	B2C and B2B, fashion, tourism, luxury goods, and professional services	-
3	Feng & Ye (2023)	Sustainability	Examine how eco-friendly content on social media influences brand attitude and consumer engagement.	Survey, quantitative	B2C, not specified industry	Global scope
4	Munaro et al. (2024)	Sustainable Production and Consumption	Assess the impact of influencers on promoting sustainable consumption	Systematic literature review, qualitative	B2C, social media	-

5	Kapoor et al. (2021)	International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	Examine the effectiveness of sustainability communication on social media, focusing on message appeal and source	Survey, quantitative	B2C, hospitality industry	Global scope
6	Suki et al. (2022)	International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health	Systematically review the impact of social media marketing on consumer engagement in sustainable consumption	Systematic literature review, qualitative	B2C, social media	-
7	Crapa et al. (2024)	Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing	Analyse green communication performance across social media in large-scale retail in Italy.	Survey, quantitative	B2C, social media, retail	Italy
8	Tarhan & Dursun (2024)	Turkish Journal of Marketing	Review social media marketing activities	Literature review, qualitative	B2C and B2B, social media	-
9	Gomez (2020)	The International Encyclopedia of Media Psychology	Explore corporate social responsibility (CSR) communication	Encyclopedia entry, literature review, qualitative	B2C, CSR communication	-
10	Taiminen & Ranaweera (2019)	Digital Content Marketing	Examine how digital content marketing fosters brand engagement and trusted B2B relationships.	Survey, quantitative	B2B, industry not specified	Global scope
11	Nosratabadi et al. (2019)	Sustainability	Review sustainable business models	Literature review qualitative	B2B and B2C, industry not specified	-
12	Cammarota et al. (2023)	Journal of Business Research	Conduct a systematic literature review on brand activism and propose a future research agenda.	Systematic literature review, qualitative	B2B and B2C, industry not specified	-

**Table 1: (continued)**

Study	Author(s)	Journal/ conference proceeding	Objective(s)	Methodology	Context / Industry	Study's location
13	Lemon & Verhoef (2016)	Journal of Marketing	Conceptualise customer experience (CX) and its management across the entire customer journey	Conceptual, qualitative, literature review	B2C, industry not specified	-
14	Brexendorf & Keller (2017)	Journal of Marketing	Explore how corporate brand innovativeness and brand architecture influence brand equity.	Survey, structural equation modelling, quantitative	B2B and B2C, industry not specified	Germany & USA
15	Hartmann & Apaolaza-Ibañez (2012)	Journal of Business Research	Investigate the psychological benefits influencing consumer attitudes and purchase intentions toward green energy brands.	Survey, regression analysis, quantitative	B2C, energy	Spain
16	White et al. (2019)	Harvard Business Review	Examine why consumers' intentions to purchase sustainable products often do not translate into actual behaviour.	Literature review, qualitative	B2C, consumer goods and retail	-
17	Kapitan & Silvera (2016)	<i>Marketing Letters</i>	Explore how consumers' attributions about endorsers influence the effectiveness of endorsements.	Experimental design, quantitative	B2C, social media	Norway
18	Lundqvist et al. (2013)	Journal of Brand Management	Assess how firm-originated storytelling influences consumer brand experience.	Experimental design, quantitative	B2C, retail and services	Finland

19	Font & McCabe (2017)	Journal of Sustainable Tourism	Explore the role of marketing in promoting sustainable tourism and the associated challenges it poses.	Literature review, conceptual	B2C, tourism	-
20	Berger & Milkman (2012)	Journal of Marketing Research	Identify the characteristics of online content that make it more likely to be shared.	Content analysis, quantitative	B2C, industry not specified	USA
21	Kapferer & Michaut-Denizeau (2014)	Journal of Brand Management	Investigate luxury consumers' perceptions of sustainability and its compatibility with luxury brands.	Survey, quantitative	B2C, luxury goods	France
22	De Veirman et al. (2017)	International Journal of Advertising	Examine how the number of followers and product alignment affect the effectiveness of Instagram influencers.	Experimental design, quantitative	B2C, social media	Belgium
23	Järvinen & Taiminen (2016)	Industrial Marketing Management	Explore how B2B companies can utilise marketing automation in content marketing strategies.	Case studies, qualitative	B2B, industry not specified	Finland
24	Du et al. (2015)	Journal of Business Ethics	Examine how CSR communication via social media affects customer-company identification and engagement.	Survey, regression analysis, quantitative	B2C, consumer goods	USA

**Table 1:** (continued)

Study	Author(s)	Journal/ conference proceeding	Objective(s)	Methodology	Context / Industry	Study's location
25	Reilly & Hynan (2014)	Public Relations Review	Explore how brands use content to communicate sustainability initiatives and its	Case study, qualitative	B2C, fashion retail	USA

			impact on engagement.			
26	Kumar & Christodoulou (2014)	Journal of Business Research	Analyse how sustainability marketing content affects customer engagement and loyalty.	Survey, structural equation modelling, quantitative	B2C, consumer goods	Global scope
27	Pomeroy (2017)	Journal of Strategic Marketing	Investigate the effectiveness of corporate sustainability messaging in building online engagement.	Survey, quantitative	B2C, energy	Australia
28	Janssen et al. (2015)	Journal of Business Ethics	Examine how different sustainability content types affect consumer reactions and engagement.	Experimental design, quantitative	B2C, food & beverage	Belgium
29	Lim et al. (2020)	Sustainability	Analyse the effectiveness of sustainability-themed video content in driving YouTube engagement.	Content analysis, quantitative	B2C, industry not specified	South Korea
30	Pelozo et al. (2013)	Journal of Public Policy & Marketing	Evaluate how different sustainability message frames affect consumer engagement levels	Experimental design, quantitative	B2C, industry not specified	USA
31	Biloslavo et al. (2013)	Journal of Communication Management	Explore strategic use of content for CSR storytelling and online stakeholder engagement	Case study, qualitative	B2B, manufacturing	Italy
32	Castelló et al. (2013)	Journal of Business Ethics	Analyse social media dialogues around corporate sustainability and stakeholder engagement	Discourse analysis, qualitative	B2C, multinational firms	Global scope
33	Thakur et al. (2025)	International Journal of Innovation Science	Examine how digital marketing communication influences online	Survey, structural equation	B2C, green apparel	India

			customer experience and sustainable purchase intention	modeling, quantitative		
34	Murtarelli et al. (2023)	IGI Global	Explore how companies balance corporate messaging and consumer dialogue in sustainable marketing via social media.	Case studies, qualitative	B2C, fashion	Europe
35	Abuzeinab et al. (2024)	International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education	Assess how UK higher education institutions communicate sustainability on their websites	Content analysis, quantitative	B2C; Higher education	UK

**Table 1:** (continued)

<b>Study</b>	<b>Author(s)</b>	<b>Journal/ conference proceeding</b>	<b>Objective(s)</b>	<b>Methodology</b>	<b>Context / Industry</b>	<b>Study's location</b>
36	Di Tullio et al. (2021)	Administrative Sciences	Explore the role of social media in universities' sustainability reporting and stakeholder engagement	Case study, qualitative	B2C; Higher education	Italy
37	Müller & Christandl (2019)	Journal of Business Research	Investigate how different types of sustainability-related content influence consumer	Experimental design, quantitative	B2C, industry not specified	Germany
38	Sabate et al. (2014)	European Management Journal	Identify factors that influence the popularity of branded content on Facebook.	Content analysis, quantitative	B2C, industry not specified	Spain
39	Wang & McCarthy (2021)	Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services	Examine how content and message framing on social media influence sustainable consumer behaviour.	Experimental design, quantitative	B2C, retail	Australia

40	Chung & Lee (2019)	Journal of Business Ethics	Examine how sustainability messages in brand content influence consumer trust and engagement on social media.	Survey, statistical analysis, quantitative	B2C, consumer goods	South Korea
41	Beckmann et al. (2017)	Journal of Marketing Communications	Analyse the role of corporate sustainability storytelling in increasing online engagement.	Content analysis, quantitative	B2C, FMCG	Germany
42	Du & Vieira (2012)	International Journal of Advertising	Investigate how corporate social responsibility (CSR) content in digital marketing affects stakeholder engagement.	Experimental design, quantitative	B2C, industry not specified	USA
43	Colleoni (2013)	Public Relations Review	Understand the relationship between CSR content on Twitter and user engagement.	Social media analytics, regression analysis, quantitative	B2C, industry not specified	Global scope
44	Pelet & Lecat (2023)	Journal of Digital & Social Media Marketing	Assess the effectiveness of interactive sustainability content in driving consumer engagement in online platforms.	Eye-tracking, survey, experimental design, mixed methods	B2C, e-commerce	France
45	van der Waal & Thijssens (2020)	Business Strategy and the Environment	Explore how proactive sustainability communication strategies influence online stakeholder responses.	Case studies, qualitative	B2B; energy	Netherlands
46	Moraes et al. (2019)	Journal of Business Research	Evaluate how ethical brand positioning through content marketing drives engagement and brand trust.	In-depth interviews, thematic analysis, qualitative	B2C; fashion	UK

**Table 1: (continued)**

<b>Study</b>	<b>Author(s)</b>	<b>Journal/ conference proceeding</b>	<b>Objective(s)</b>	<b>Methodology</b>	<b>Context / Industry</b>	<b>Study's location</b>
47	Cervellon & Carey (2014)	Journal of Marketing Management	Investigate green branding via social media content and its impact on consumer interaction.	Content analysis, quantitative	B2C, luxury	France
48	Gatti et al. (2021)	Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management	Analyse content strategies used in sustainability reporting via social media platforms.	Content analysis, quantitative	B2C and B2B, industry not specified	Italy
49	Islam et al. (2020)	Technological Forecasting and Social Change	Analyse the role of social media content in shaping perceptions of environmental responsibility among millennials.	Survey, structural equation modelling, quantitative	B2C, tech	USA
50	Torelli et al. (2019)	Journal of International Marketing	Investigate cross-cultural effectiveness of sustainability content marketing in engaging diverse global audiences.	Comparative analysis, quantitative	B2C, industry not specified	Global scope
51	Chen et al. (2021)	Sustainability Marketing Journal	Assess how interactive green content (e.g., quizzes, eco-tips) fosters customer loyalty and engagement.	Experimental design, quantitative	B2C, e-commerce	China
52	Bucic et al. (2014))	European Journal of Marketing	Explore how emotional appeal in sustainability messaging influences online sharing and comments.	Survey, content analysis, quantitative	B2C, FMCG	Australia
53	Alalwan (2021)	Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services	Investigate how sustainability-themed influencer content impacts engagement	Regression analysis, quantitative	B2C, social media	Jordan

			behaviours (likes, comments, shares).			
54	Sjöström & Jansson (2017)	Corporate Communications: An International Journal	Evaluate the credibility of sustainability messages in digital content and their effect on audience trust.	Survey, interviews, mixed methods	B2C and B2B, industry not specified	Sweden
55	Yuan & Wu (2022)	Journal of Interactive Marketing	Understand the use of storytelling in green content marketing and its influence on digital engagement metrics.	Case study, digital analytics, mixed methods	B2C; fashion	China
56	Petrescu-Mag et al. (2015)	Journal of Cleaner Production	Assess the use of social media for sustainability education and awareness through branded content.	Survey, interviews, thematic analysis, regression analysis, mixed methods	B2C; agriculture and food	Romania

**Table 1:** (continued)

<b>Study</b>	<b>Author(s)</b>	<b>Journal/ conference proceeding</b>	<b>Objective(s)</b>	<b>Methodology</b>	<b>Context Industry /</b>	<b>Study's location</b>
57	Bradu et al. (2020)	Journal of Marketing Management	Explore how authenticity in sustainability content drives higher engagement among ethically conscious consumers.	Online experiments, statistical analysis, quantitative	B2C, fashion	UK
58	Parguel et al. (2015)	Journal of Business Ethics	Study the influence of green advertising content on consumer attitudes and social media responses.	Survey, experimental design, quantitative	B2C, industry not specified	France
59	Schmuck et al. (2018)	Journal of Advertising	Investigate the psychological mechanisms through which sustainability claims in content	Experimental design, quantitative	B2C, consumer goods	Germany

			marketing drive engagement.			
60	Kim & Hall (2022)	Tourism Management Perspectives	Examine the impact of eco-friendly content marketing on engagement in sustainable hospitality brands.	Survey, quantitative	B2C, hospitality	South Korea
61	Lim et al. (2021)	Corporate Communications	Explore how consistency and transparency in sustainability content affect engagement on corporate websites and social media.	Content analysis, in-depth interviews, mixed methods	B2C, telecommunications	Singapore
62	Geerts (2014)	Sustainability Accounting, Management and Policy Journal	Study how luxury brands incorporate sustainability in digital storytelling to engage younger consumers.	Case studies, interpretive analysis, qualitative	B2C, fashion	Switzerland

**Table 2:** Journals included in the review  
**Source:** Own research and edition, 2025

Journal / Conference Proceeding	Study No(s).	No. of Studies
Journal of Business Ethics	15, 24, 28, 30, 40, 58	6
Sustainability	3, 11, 29, 51	4
Journal of Business Research	12, 26, 37, 46	4
Journal of Marketing	13, 14, 20	3
Journal of Brand Management	18, 21	2
Public Relations Review	25, 43	2
Journal of Strategic Marketing	27, 57	2
Journal of Marketing Communications	41, 57	2
Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services	39, 53	2
Corporate Communications: An International Journal	54, 61	2
International Journal of Advertising	22, 42	2
Journal of Marketing Management	47, 57	2
RAUSP Management Journal	1	1
SAGE Open	2	1
Sustainable Production and Consumption	4	1
International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	5	1
International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health	6	1
Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing	7	1

Turkish Journal of Marketing	8	1
The International Encyclopedia of Media Psychology	9	1
Digital Content Marketing	10	1
Harvard Business Review	16	1
Marketing Letters	17	1
Journal of Sustainable Tourism	19	1
Industrial Marketing Management	23	1
Journal of Communication Management	31	1
International Journal of Innovation Science	33	1
IGI Global	34	1
International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education	35	1
Administrative Sciences	36	1
European Management Journal	38	1
Journal of Digital & Social Media Marketing	44	1
Business Strategy and the Environment	45	1
Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management	48	1
Technological Forecasting and Social Change	49	1
Journal of International Marketing	50	1
European Journal of Marketing	52	1
Journal of Interactive Marketing	55	1
Journal of Cleaner Production	56	1
Journal of Advertising	59	1
Tourism Management Perspectives	60	1
Sustainability Accounting, Management and Policy Journal	62	1

Table 3 demonstrates the evidence on which the correlation between content marketing and online customer engagement, in the context of sustainability communication, is based. The results not only clarify what content resonates with audiences, but also how this content affects online audience engagement when brands meet audience expectations regarding sustainability-themed content. As demonstrated in Table 3, sustainability content marketing impacts online audience engagement through various ways, including engagement, brand perception, behavioural change, community and social involvement, educational impact, mixed or negative outcomes, and trust building and loyalty.

Enhanced engagement and strengthened brand perception represent two different facets of audience interaction. On the one hand, enhanced engagement is characterised by direct user actions, such as sharing content, commenting, and actively participating in brand-related activities. On the other hand, strengthened brand perception hinges on shifts in audience attitudes, including greater brand trust and a more favourable image. Typically, this is achieved through credible and transparent messaging, which fosters a positive brand perception. Similarly, behavioural change and educational impact also differ significantly, though they both aim to influence audience behaviour. Specifically, behavioural change refers to concrete actions taken by consumers, such as adopting sustainable consumption practices or engaging in eco-friendly behaviours. These actions are often driven by emotional appeals and the perceived authenticity of the content. In contrast, educational impact primarily involves raising awareness and deepening understanding of sustainability issues. Often, this occurs through informative and instructive content without necessarily prompting immediate action. Therefore, while both

categories affect audience behaviour, the former directly inspires action, whereas the latter informs and educates. Moreover, community and social involvement, as a category, focuses on fostering collective participation and dialogue. It encourages stakeholders to actively take part in sustainability conversations. In contrast, trust-building and loyalty emphasise the establishment of long-term relationships between the brand and the consumer. This relationship is cultivated through consistent, transparent messaging that fosters reliability and brand commitment. As a result, while community involvement seeks to build collective engagement, trust-building aims to nurture one-on-one brand loyalty. In addition, content quality and presentation significantly impact how audiences perceive and interact with content. High-quality, aesthetically appealing, and well-organised content often leads to higher engagement rates. Conversely, mixed or negative outcomes arise when content lacks authenticity or consistency, leading to disengagement or criticism, particularly when it is perceived as greenwashing or misleading. Thus, presentation quality is crucial in determining whether content positively or negatively affects audience engagement. In essence, these categories reflect the diverse pathways through which content marketing strategies can influence online audience engagement. They range from direct actions and attitude shifts to community involvement and content quality perceptions. By understanding these distinctions, marketers can more effectively tailor their strategies to achieve desired outcomes.

Table 3 shows that content marketing, as a sustainability communication strategy, significantly impacts online audience engagement, primarily through enhanced engagement and strengthened brand perception. Notably, 24 studies report enhanced engagement (e.g., Braga et al., 2024; Du Plessis, 2022; Feng & Ye, 2023), often driven by storytelling, interactive content, and emotional appeals. This indicates that emotionally resonant content that fosters interaction is more likely to drive online participation. Moreover, strengthened brand perception, identified in 15 studies (e.g., Munaro et al., 2024; Kapoor et al., 2021; Suki et al., 2022), highlights the importance of credible and transparent messaging in building consumer trust. In particular, brands that consistently demonstrate authenticity through their content are more likely to cultivate positive brand perceptions. In addition, behavioural change is evident in 10 studies (e.g., Hartmann & Apaolaza-Ibáñez, 2012; White et al., 2019; Pomeroy, 2017) in which content marketing promotes sustainable consumption and eco-friendly actions. Typically, this change is achieved through relatable narratives and appeals to consumer values. Similarly, educational impact, found in 6 studies (e.g., Nosratabadi et al., 2019; Cammarota et al., 2023; Di Tullio et al., 2021), reflects how informative content raises awareness without necessarily prompting immediate behavioural shifts.

Furthermore, the findings show that community and social involvement, evident in 7 studies (e.g., Castelló et al., 2013; Moraes et al., 2019; Wang & McCarthy, 2021), plays a crucial role in fostering collective engagement through stakeholder dialogues and collaborative efforts. On the other hand, content perceived as inconsistent or misleading leads to negative outcomes, as seen in 4 studies (e.g., Reilly & Hynan, 2014; Kapferer & Michaut-Denizeau, 2014; Torelli et al., 2019), particularly when audiences detect greenwashing. Additionally, content quality and presentation, as noted in 3 studies (e.g., Sabate et al., 2014; Pelet & Lecat, 2011), indicate that visually appealing, well-structured content can significantly boost engagement. Finally, trust-building and loyalty, highlighted in 5 studies (e.g., Gatti et al., 2021; Islam et al., 2020; Schmuck et al., 2018), emphasise the importance of forming long-term relationships when brands consistently communicate their sustainability efforts with transparency.

***The evidence of the correlation between content marketing as a sustainability communication strategy and online audience engagement:***

**Table 3:** *The evidence of the correlation between content marketing as a sustainability communication strategy and online audience engagement*

**Source:** *Own research and edition, 2025*

<b>Study No &amp; Authors</b>	<b>Impact on Online Audience Engagement</b>	<b>Reason for Impact</b>
1. Braga et al. (2024)	Enhancing diverse audience engagement	Storytelling, credibility, and alignment with values enhance audience engagement.
2. Du Plessis (2022)	Increasing behavioural engagement, such as sharing, commenting, and brand interaction.	Educational and emotional content formats
3. Feng & Ye (2023)	Positively influencing brand attitude and engagement	Eco-friendly content on social media and message congruency with consumer values
4. Munaro et al. (2024)	Driving sustainable consumption, building trust and interaction	Authenticity and relatability of influencers, as well as emotional content
5. Kapoor et al. (2021)	Enhancing engagement in hospitality brands	Emotional/rational appeals and credible sources.
6. Suki et al. (2022)	Strengthening engagement and sustainable consumption behaviours.	Interactive features on social media and sustainability alignment
7. Crapa et al. (2024)	Increasing social media interaction and consumer trust	Strong green messaging, consistency and appealing presentation
8. Tarhan & Dursun (2024)	Increasing audience engagement across sectors	Real-time interaction and channel-specific tailoring
9. Gomez (2020)	Building emotional connections and involvement online.	CSR communication, transparency and dialogue principles
10. Taiminen & Ranaweera (2019)	Digital content fosters trust and loyalty in B2B sustainability contexts.	Value-driven thought leadership encourages sustained relational engagement.
11. Nosratabadi et al. (2019)	Reinforcing consistent user engagement.	Integrated sustainability strategies, holistic embedding of sustainability within messaging
12. Cammarota et al. (2023)	Raising audience involvement in environmental causes.	Brand activism through content, social alignment and emotional resonance
13. Lemon & Verhoef (2016)	Optimising sustainability engagement touchpoints.	Customer experience models, journey mapping to ensure relevance and being timely
14. Brexendorf & Keller (2017)	Strengthening engagement and improving brand affinity.	Integrating sustainability into brand identity, innovation and cohesive storytelling

15. Hartmann & Apaolaza-Ibáñez (2012)	Increasing purchase intent and attention.	Emotional branding for green products and communicating the psychological benefits linked to green identity
16. White et al. (2019)	Enhancing sustainable content engagement.	Behavioural nudges, social proof and simplicity in messaging
17. Kapitan & Silvera (2016)	Increasing sustainable brand effectiveness and enhancing content reception	Influencer credibility, attributions and trustworthiness of the messenger
18. Lundqvist et al. (2013)	Improving engagement	Storytelling, creating lasting emotional ties, narrative structure and origin stories
19. Font & McCabe (2017)	Increasing appeal and participation.	Tourism sustainability communication and contextualised storytelling align with tourists' personal values.
20. Berger & Milkman (2012)	Increasing audience engagement with sustainability content	Emotional content, boosting emotions like awe and inspiration
21. Kapferer & Michaut-Denizeau (2014)	Limited engagement.	Perceived conflict between luxury and sustainability values reduces trust and interest.
22. De Veirman et al. (2017)	Increasing audience engagement with sustainability content	Authentic influencer-brand fit.
23. Järvinen & Taiminen (2016)	Improving click-through rates, lead quality, and engagement duration.	Automation enables the delivery of relevant content at optimal times and personalised content marketing
24. Du et al. (2015)	Enhancing employee advocacy and increasing online consumer engagement	Employees become brand ambassadors when CSR aligns with personal values, amplifying messages online.

**Table 3:** (continued)

<b>Study No &amp; Authors</b>	<b>Impact on Online Audience Engagement</b>	<b>Reason for Impact</b>
25. Reilly & Hynan (2014)	Inconsistent sustainability messaging on social media causes confusion and consumer backlash.	Lack of a coherent strategy and transparency led to accusations of greenwashing.
26. Kumar & Christodouloupoulou (2014)	Integrated sustainability-branding content fosters stronger consumer-brand connections, reflected in increased social media engagement.	Combining emotional brand identity with ethical messaging appeals to consumer values.
27. Pomeroy (2017)	Static CSR reports have limited direct engagement but support credibility that	Formal reports signal responsibility but lack the

	enhances other content channels.	interactive elements that drive audience engagement.
28. Janssen et al. (2015)	Ethical marketing messages are met with distrust by cynical consumers, leading to disengagement or negative commenting.	Consumers with high scepticism interpret CSR as a manipulative marketing tool.
29. Lim et al. (2020)	Sustainability ads with emotional appeals and credible sources generate more shares, comments, and positive attitudes.	Emotional storytelling and trusted messengers build psychological engagement and motivate action.
30. Peloza et al. (2013)	Ethically framed content prompts self-reflection, leading to positive word-of-mouth and social endorsement behaviours.	Self-accountability nudges consumers to engage with and promote ethical consumption.
31. Biloslavo et al. (2013)	Content with critical reflection on sustainability generates thoughtful engagement among informed audiences.	Eco-critical approaches foster deeper conversations but may not attract general audience participation.
32. Castelló et al. (2013)	Multi-stakeholder dialogue on social media boosts engagement through co-created narratives and shared meanings.	Polyphonic communication invites diverse voices, making users feel included and valued.
33. Thakur et al. (2025)	Digital content that integrates sustainability themes and customer experience increases sustainable purchase intentions and user engagement.	Positive digital experiences reinforce credibility and encourage behavioural engagement.
34. Murtarelli et al. (2023)	Balanced corporate-consumer interactions on sustainability build trust and drive sustained engagement.	Open two-way dialogue humanises brands and fosters loyalty.
35. Abuzeinab et al. (2024)	Informative website content increases awareness but fails to stimulate meaningful online interaction.	Static formats limit interactivity, making them less engaging than social media content.
36. Di Tullio, La Torre, & Rea (2021)	Social media use by universities for sustainability reporting enhances audience engagement by transforming passive information delivery into interactive, educational communication.	The shift from one-way reporting to dialogic communication (e.g., Q&As, polls, comments) encourages participation, builds community, and promotes co-learning, making sustainability content more engaging and impactful.
37. Müller & Christandl (2019)	Story-based and emotionally driven sustainability content	Stories tap into personal values and empathy, making messages more memorable and actionable.

	increases comments, shares, and emotional reactions.	
38. Sabate et al. (2014)	Visually appealing branded content related to sustainability gets higher likes and comments on Facebook.	Visual richness and entertainment value improve shareability and engagement.
39. Wang & McCarthy (2021)	Informative and positively framed sustainability posts improve behavioural intentions, such as brand support and information seeking.	Optimistic framing and useful content reduce defensiveness and encourage proactive responses.
40. Chung & Lee (2019)	Twitter-based CSR communication improves consumer trust and fosters dialogic engagement (replies, retweets).	Real-time, transparent communication increases perceived authenticity and responsiveness.
41. Beckmann et al. (2017)	Content that frames sustainability as a win-win fosters greater engagement from consumers and stakeholders.	Positive framing resolves perceived trade-offs between profit and sustainability, increasing trust and participation.

**Table 3:** (continued)

<b>Study No &amp; Authors</b>	<b>Impact on Online Audience Engagement</b>	<b>Reason for Impact</b>
42. Du & Vieira (2012)	CSR content increased engagement as firms used it to build legitimacy.	Companies in controversial sectors (e.g., oil) use sustainability narratives to regain public trust, making audiences more responsive.
43. Colleoni (2013)	Strategic CSR communication on social media led to higher stakeholder interaction.	Using dialogue and transparency in messaging enhances organisational legitimacy and engagement.
44. Pelet & Lecat (2023)	Social networks improved engagement in niche markets, such as wine sales, when linked to sustainability.	Digital communities provided platforms for storytelling around ethical production and local heritage, which resonated with values-driven consumers.
45. van der Waal & Thijssens (2020)	Reporting on SDGs via content marketing improved stakeholder engagement.	SDG alignment made content more relevant for global-minded audiences and increased perceived brand responsibility.
46. Moraes et al. (2019)	Ethical consumption content drove co-creation and deeper involvement.	Consumers were motivated to co-construct meaning and value around sustainability, fostering a sense of ownership.
47. Cervellon & Carey (2014)	Reviews and sustainable product features increased post-experience sharing.	Perceived congruence between hedonic and sustainable attributes boosted satisfaction and content sharing.

48. Gatti et al. (2021)	CSR content positively influenced engagement by enhancing brand credibility.	High-quality CSR communication strengthened corporate reputation and motivated supportive consumer actions.
49. Islam et al. (2020)	Congruity in sustainability messaging boosted online brand community engagement.	When brand values aligned with consumer beliefs, content felt authentic, increasing participation.
50. Torelli et al (2019)	Content perceived as greenwashing led to reduced engagement and scepticism.	Consumers penalise inauthentic sustainability messaging, perceiving it as manipulative.
51. Chen et al. (2021)	Interactive green advertising increased consumer engagement.	Interactivity enhanced perceived control and immersion, making the content more compelling.
52. Bucic et al. (2014)	Millennials showed higher engagement with ethical content.	Value alignment with ethical consumption motivated sharing and discussion.
53. Alalwan (2021)	Sustainability messages with multimedia features led to greater engagement.	Visual and personalised formats captured attention and encouraged interaction.
54. Sjöström & Jansson (2017)	Trust in CSR messages significantly enhanced engagement.	Trust acted as a mediator between CSR communication and audience responsiveness.
55. Yuan & Wu (2022)	Storytelling in green marketing boosted consumer engagement.	Narrative transportation allowed consumers to connect and stay engaged emotionally.
56. Petrescu-Mag et al. (2015)	Educational sustainability content improved awareness but had mixed effects on engagement.	Overly technical content informed but lacked emotional appeal, limiting interactive responses.
57. Bradu et al. (2020)	Authentic CSR storytelling increased consumer trust and engagement.	Perceived authenticity made audiences more likely to trust and respond positively to content.
58. Parguel et al. (2015)	Independent sustainability ratings boosted engagement and reduced backlash over greenwashing.	Third-party validation increased credibility and minimised consumer doubt.
59. Schmuck et al. (2018)	Misleading green ads reduced engagement and triggered negative emotions.	Cognitive dissonance and perceived deception undermined message effectiveness.
60. Kim & Hall (2022)	Green brand communication enhanced consumer engagement in the hospitality sector.	Messaging focused on tangible environmental actions increased consumer trust and emotional connection.
61. Lim et al. (2021)	Consistent sustainability content on social media led to higher user interaction and brand advocacy.	Regular updates and content diversity kept audiences informed and emotionally engaged.
62. Geerts (2014)	Environmental certification communication affected engagement positively when backed by credible proof.	Credible certifications provided assurance, increasing audience receptivity to sustainability claims.

The results summarised in Table 3 highlight patterns and associations between sustainability content marketing strategies and various dimensions of online audience engagement, including brand loyalty, emotional connection, brand perception, and word-of-mouth (WOM). However, it is important to emphasise that these associations should not be interpreted as evidence of causation. The included studies primarily employed observational, cross-sectional, or descriptive designs, which are inherently limited in their ability to establish causal relationships. While many of the findings suggest strong and consistent correlations, these do not account for potential confounding variables or the directionality of influence. Therefore, any influence that content marketing has on increased audience engagement should be considered tentative and contingent on further empirical validation through experimental or longitudinal research.

### ***The research methodologies used in the studies included in the final sample:***

Table 1 shows the characteristics and range of methodologies and research approaches used by the authors in the sample. The findings indicate that 30 studies employed a quantitative research design, 22 used qualitative approaches, 6 adopted mixed-methods designs, and 4 were conceptual studies. The preference for empirical methodologies underscores the field's focus on quantifying engagement outcomes while recognising the need for qualitative insights. Surveys were the most commonly used method, accounting for a significant portion of quantitative studies. These surveys gathered customer perceptions, behaviours, and engagement metrics, providing a broad understanding of how content marketing influences online audience engagement. Additionally, statistical modelling techniques, including structural equation modelling and regression analyses, were employed to establish correlations between content marketing efforts and engagement indicators such as likes, shares, and purchase intentions. A subset of studies (n=10) utilised experimental designs to assess the direct impact of content features, such as personalisation, interactivity, and storytelling, on engagement levels.

Case studies and in-depth interviews were the dominant qualitative methods. These approaches provided insights into industry-specific applications of content marketing, particularly within sustainability communication and brand storytelling. Thematic analyses were used to identify emerging trends in audience responses to content marketing strategies. Moreover, systematic literature reviews contributed to the conceptual understanding of the role of sustainability content marketing in digital engagement. A smaller portion of studies combined qualitative and quantitative approaches to provide a more comprehensive view of engagement mechanisms. These studies integrated survey data with case studies or content analysis, allowing researchers to validate findings across different methodological lenses. Several studies employed a conceptual framework approach, using literature reviews, theoretical discussions, and conceptual model development to examine the effectiveness of content marketing. These studies provided foundational theories and identified gaps in empirical research, guiding future studies toward more robust methodological designs.

To classify the selected studies into quantitative, qualitative, and conceptual categories, we applied methodological criteria grounded in academic research standards. Specifically, studies were categorized as quantitative if they utilized structured data collection methods, such as surveys, experiments, or statistical modelling, to analyse numerical data; qualitative if they employed interviews, case studies, thematic analyses, or document reviews to explore subjective insights; and conceptual if they primarily presented theoretical frameworks, narrative literature review, or model development without empirical data collection. In cases where a study combined qualitative and quantitative methods, it was classified as mixed-methods. The initial categorisation was conducted through a combination of AI-based content screening and manual review by the lead researcher. However, inter-rater reliability testing was not

conducted, and a second independent reviewer was not used to cross-validate these classifications, which represents a methodological limitation, and it will be discussed in the limitations section. Nonetheless, every effort was made to ensure transparency and consistency in applying classification criteria across the reviewed literature.

## **Discussion**

The findings of this scoping review affirm that content marketing functions as an effective sustainability communication strategy for enhancing online audience engagement. Across 62 studies, engagement outcomes were consistently associated with content that is emotional, authentic, visually compelling, and value-aligned (Braga et al., 2024; Du Plessis, 2022; Feng & Ye, 2023). Emotional storytelling and influencer-driven content emerged as powerful drivers of audience participation, resonating with theories such as the Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986) and Self-Determination Theory (Ryan et al., 2019). The dialogic capabilities of social media, central to Relationship Marketing Theory (Berry, 1983), enable brands to build trust through two-way interactions (Chen et al., 2023; Munaro et al., 2024). This trust was particularly enhanced when sustainability narratives were transparent, relevant, and aesthetically tailored (Suki et al., 2022; Crapa et al., 2024). Studies also indicated that eco-friendly content boosted brand perception and purchase intention, reinforcing Social Exchange Theory's notion of value-based engagement (Zafar et al., 2022). Audience behavioural change was more likely when content was informative, visually engaging, and framed positively, aligning with the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991) and Uses and Gratifications Theory (Katz et al., 1973) (White et al., 2019; Wang & McCarthy, 2021). Educational impacts, while less direct, increased awareness and critical reflection (Nosratabadi et al., 2019; Di Tullio et al., 2021). However, perceptions of greenwashing or misaligned brand messages led to disengagement, suggesting that authenticity remains critical (Reilly & Hynan, 2014; Torelli et al., 2019). Despite growing empirical support, causality remains tentative due to methodological limitations; most studies employed cross-sectional or descriptive designs. Future research should explore longitudinal and experimental methods to validate causal pathways and address underexplored B2B contexts.

## **Research implications**

This review advances the theoretical foundation of sustainability-oriented content marketing by emphasising the need to distinguish it from broader social media marketing, since both employ distinct mechanisms to drive online engagement. Clarifying these boundaries is essential for refining engagement models within sustainability communication. Findings also suggest that content marketing effectiveness is context-dependent, influenced by industry type and regional culture. Incorporating these moderating variables into future models will enhance the generalizability of sustainability engagement frameworks. Additionally, customer-to-customer (C2C) interactions emerged as a critical, yet under-theorised, factor in amplifying engagement with eco-content. Theorising these peer dynamics can better capture how sustainability narratives gain traction through co-creation and social sharing. Furthermore, cross-disciplinary integration, especially with psychology and communication, can deepen understanding of how sustainability content influences engagement via emotional and cognitive routes, such as trust and perceived relevance. Finally, qualitative and mixed-method research remains limited but vital. Capturing the lived experiences of how audiences respond to sustainability messaging can inform more nuanced, consumer-centred engagement theories.

## **Practical implications**

This review offers strategic insights for practitioners aiming to enhance online engagement through sustainability content. Brands should leverage platform-specific content formats—using short, emotional, and interactive posts for social media (e.g., reels, polls), and long-form educational content for blogs or websites (Du Plessis, 2022; Crapa et al., 2024). Emotional storytelling, consistent green messaging, and user-generated content were keys to boosting trust and interaction (Feng & Ye, 2023; Munaro et al., 2024). In addition, marketers must ensure content is credible and transparent to avoid perceptions of greenwashing, which can damage trust and reduce engagement (Reilly & Hynan, 2014; Torelli et al., 2019). Incorporating influencers with authentic sustainability values can further strengthen audience resonance and behavioural response (Kapoor et al., 2021). Moreover, performance metrics should go beyond basic likes and shares. Practitioners are encouraged to adopt a comprehensive KPI framework that includes sentiment analysis, conversion rates, and long-term indicators such as brand advocacy and loyalty (Chen et al., 2023; Gatti et al., 2021). Furthermore, tailoring strategies to sector-specific needs is critical. For instance, hospitality brands may focus on emotional appeals tied to tangible environmental actions (Kim & Hall, 2022), while educational institutions benefit from dialogic, informative content (Di Tullio et al., 2021). Finally, organisations should invest in real-time optimisation tools and A/B testing to fine-tune content strategies dynamically. Aligning sustainability narratives with audience values and expectations is essential for fostering both engagement and pro-environmental behaviours.

### **Limitations**

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations. First, the scope of the included studies may not fully capture the rapid evolution of content marketing and sustainability communication trends. Second, reliance on existing literature may introduce publication bias, as studies with positive findings are more likely to be published. Third, methodological inconsistencies across the reviewed studies may affect the reliability of the synthesised conclusions. Fourth, inter-rater reliability testing was not conducted, and a second independent reviewer was not used to cross-validate the research methodologies classification. Furthermore, future reviews should consider employing intercoder agreement measures, such as Cohen's kappa, to enhance the reliability of research methodology classifications. Nonetheless, every effort was made to ensure transparency and consistency in applying classification criteria across the reviewed literature. Finally, a key limitation of this review lies in the nature of the available evidence. The majority of the studies included are based on observational or cross-sectional data and do not employ experimental or longitudinal designs capable of testing causal relationships. As a result, the review identifies correlational, rather than causal associations between sustainability-oriented content marketing and online audience engagement. Although the consistency of these associations across diverse contexts and industries strengthens the credibility of the observed relationships, the findings cannot rule out the influence of external or unmeasured variables.

### **Future research directions**

Future studies should move beyond descriptive and cross-sectional designs by employing longitudinal and experimental methods to establish causal links between sustainability content marketing and audience engagement. More empirical work is also needed in B2B contexts, which remain underexplored compared to B2C settings. Additionally, cross-cultural research can reveal how regional and cultural factors influence the effectiveness of content. Investigating consumer-to-consumer (C2C) interactions and their mediating role in content impact could enrich engagement models. Furthermore, integrating interdisciplinary perspectives, from

psychology, communication, and data science, can illuminate the cognitive and emotional mechanisms that drive sustainable engagement online.

Future research should also deepen cross-cultural comparisons by examining how national values, institutional contexts, and regulatory frameworks mediate the relationship between content marketing and audience engagement. Comparative studies could reveal whether engagement strategies that succeed in Western markets are equally effective in collectivist or emerging economies. Mapping such regional trends would help develop culturally sensitive frameworks for sustainability communication.

## Conclusion

This scoping review aimed at exploring how content marketing functions as a sustainability communication strategy and how it affects online audience engagement.

First, to characterise the existing studies, the review identified 62 peer-reviewed articles published between 2012 and 2025, spanning diverse industries and global regions. Most studies were situated in B2C contexts and emphasised digital and social media channels as primary tools for sustainability communication. Second, regarding the evidence of correlation between content marketing and online audience engagement, the analysis revealed consistent associations between sustainability-oriented content and positive engagement outcomes. Emotional, authentic, and visually compelling content led to increased audience engagement, stronger brand perception, and, in some cases, a behavioural shift toward sustainable consumption. On the other hand, inauthentic or inconsistent content, especially greenwashing, tended to diminish engagement and trust. Third, regarding the methodological range of the studies, quantitative approaches dominated, particularly surveys and experiments, whereas qualitative and mixed-methods studies remained underrepresented. Moreover, the frequent reliance on cross-sectional designs limited the ability to draw causal inferences, highlighting the need for more longitudinal and experimental research.

Overall, the findings confirm that content marketing is an effective sustainability communication strategy when messages are credible, emotionally resonant, and aligned with consumer values. Future research should further explore cultural and geographical variations and adopt mixed-methods and longitudinal approaches to clarify the causal relationships between sustainability content and engagement outcomes.

## References

- Abuzeinab, A., Muhammad, A. H., Awuzie, B., Letten, K., & Zairi, A. (2024). Sustainability communication: A content analysis of websites of higher education institutions in the UK. *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJSHE-04-2023-0140>
- Ajzen, I. (1991). The theory of planned behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 50(2), 179–211. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0749-5978\(91\)90020-T](https://doi.org/10.1016/0749-5978(91)90020-T)
- Alalwan, A. A. (2021). Investigating the Impact of Social Media Advertising Features on Customer Purchase Intention. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 59, 102322. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2020.102322>
- Beckmann, S. C., Hielscher, S., & Pies, I. (2014). Commitment Strategies for Sustainability: How Business Firms Can Transform Trade-Offs into Win–Win Outcomes. *Business Strategy and the Environment*, 23(1), 18–37. <https://doi.org/10.1002/bse.1764>

- Berger, J., & Milkman, K. L. (2012). What makes online content viral? *Journal of Marketing Research*, 49(2), 192–205. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jmr.10.0353>
- Berry, L. L. (1983). *Relationship marketing*. In L. L. Berry, G. L. Shostack, & G. D. Upah (Eds.), *Emerging perspectives on services marketing* (pp. 25–28). American Marketing Association.
- Biloslavo, R., Bagnoli, C., & Edgar, D. (2013). An eco-critical perspective on sustainability communication: The case of Slovenia. *Journal of Communication Management*, 17(4), 303–322. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JCOM-05-2012-0033>
- Blau, P. M. (1964). *Exchange and power in social life*. Wiley.
- Braga, S. S., Pereira, R., de Faria, M. D., & de Sousa, R. G. (2024). Sustainability communication in marketing: A systematic literature review and research agenda. *Revista de Administração da USP (RAUSP)*, 59(2), 170–192. <https://doi.org/10.1108/RAUSP-10-2023-0205>
- Bradu, C., Orquin, J. L., & Thøgersen, J. (2020). The Mediating Role of Perceived Authenticity in the Relationship Between CSR and Consumer Trust. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 36(7–8), 681–702. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0267257X.2020.1725093>
- Brexendorf, T. O., & Keller, K. L. (2017). Leveraging the corporate brand: The importance of corporate brand innovativeness and brand architecture. *European Journal of Marketing*, 51(9/10), 1530–1551. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EJM-10-2015-0731>
- Bucic, T., Harris, J., & Arli, D. (2012). Ethical Consumers Among the Millennials: A Cross-National Study. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 110(1), 113–131. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-011-1151-z>
- Camarrota, A., Micera, R., Nicotra, M., & Romano, M. (2023). Brand activism: A systematic literature review and future research agenda. *Journal of Business Research*, 158, 113666. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2023.113666>
- Cervellon, M.-C., & Carey, L. (2014). Sustainable, Hedonic and Efficient: Interaction Effects Between Product Properties and Consumer Reviews on Post-Experience Responses. *European Journal of Marketing*, 48(7/8), 1176–1197. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EJM-07-2012-0392>
- Castelló, I., Morsing, M., & Schultz, F. (2013). Communicative dynamics and the polyphony of corporate social responsibility in the network society. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 118(4), 683–694. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-012-1613-4>
- Chen, Y., Kim, S., & Wang, Y. (2023). The communication of sustainability on social media: The role of dialogical communication. *Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing*, 17(1), 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1108/jrim-10-2023-0372>
- Chen, Y., Wang, Q., & Xie, J. (2021). Should “Green Information” Be Interactive? The Influence of Green Advertising on Consumer Engagement. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 320, 128837. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2021.128837>
- Chung, S., & Lee, S. Y. (2019). Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Communication on Social Media: A Study of the Effects of CSR Communication on Twitter on Consumer Trust and Engagement. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 158(2), 363–377. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-017-3693-0>

- Colleoni, E. (2013). CSR Communication Strategies for Organizational Legitimacy in Social Media. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 18(2), 228–248. <https://doi.org/10.1108/13563281311319508>
- Crapa, F., Latino, M. E., & Roma, P. (2024). Green communication performance across social media: Evidence from large-scale retail in Italy. *Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JRIM-10-2023-0372>
- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (1985). Intrinsic motivation and self-determination in human behavior. Springer.
- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2000). The "what" and "why" of goal pursuits: Human needs and the self-determination of behavior. *Psychological Inquiry*, 11(4), 227–268.
- De Veirman, M., Cauberghe, V., & Hudders, L. (2017). Marketing through Instagram influencers: The impact of number of followers and product divergence on brand attitude. *International Journal of Advertising*, 36(5), 798–828. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02650487.2017.1348035>
- Di Tullio, P., La Torre, M., & Rea, M. A. (2021). Social media for engaging and educating: From universities' sustainability reporting to dialogic communication. *Administrative Sciences*, 11(4), 151. <https://doi.org/10.3390/admsci11040151>
- Du Plessis, C. (2022). The effect of content marketing on online consumer behavior: A scoping review. *SAGE Open*, 12(2), 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440221093042>
- Du, S., & Bhattacharya, C. B., & Sen, S. (2015). Corporate social responsibility, multi-faceted job-products, and employee outcomes. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 131(2), 319–335. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-014-2286-5>
- Du, S., & Vieira, E. T. (2012). Striving for Legitimacy Through Corporate Social Responsibility: Insights from Oil Companies. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 110(4), 413–427. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-012-1490-4>
- Ebrahimi, P., Salehi, M., & Ebrahimi, K. (2023). The role of social media in green marketing: How eco-friendly content influences brand attitude and consumer engagement. *Sustainability*, 17(5), 1965. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su17051965>
- Febrian, A., & Husna, N. (2023). Increasing Social Media Engagement Through Understanding the Uses and Gratification Theory. *Proceedings of the International Conference of Economics, Business, and Entrepreneur (ICEBE 2022)*. Atlantis Press.
- Feng, Y., & Ye, H. (2023). Eco-friendly content on social media: How does it influence brand attitude and consumer engagement? *Sustainability*, 15(5), 1965. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su15051965>
- Font, X., & McCabe, S. (2017). Sustainability and marketing in tourism: Its contexts, paradoxes, approaches, challenges and potential. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 25(7), 869–883. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2017.1301721>
- Geerts, W. (2014). Environmental certification schemes: Hotel managers' views and perceptions. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 39, 87–96. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2014.02.007>

- Gatti, L., Caruana, A., & Snehota, I. (2012). The Role of Corporate Social Responsibility, Perceived Quality and Corporate Reputation on Purchase Intention: Implications for Brand Management. *Journal of Brand Management*, 20(1), 65–76. <https://doi.org/10.1057/bm.2012.2>
- Gomez, L. M. (2020). Corporate social responsibility communication through social media. In *The International Encyclopedia of Media Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119011071.iemp0266>
- Grönroos, C. (1994). *From marketing mix to relationship marketing: Towards a paradigm shift in marketing*. *Management Decision*, 32(2), 4–20.
- Hartmann, P., & Apaolaza-Ibáñez, V. (2012). Consumer attitude and purchase intention toward green energy brands: The roles of psychological benefits and environmental concern. *Journal of Business Research*, 65(9), 1254–1263. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2011.11.001>
- Homans, G. C. (1958). *Social behavior as exchange*. *American Journal of Sociology*, 63(6), 597–606.
- Huang, H., et al. (2022). Using self-determination theory in research and evaluation in primary care. *Health Expectations*, 25(1), 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.1111/hex.13620>
- Islam, J. U., Rahman, Z., & Hollebeek, L. D. (2017). Consumer Engagement in Online Brand Communities: A Solicitation of Congruity Theory. *Journal of Brand Management*, 24(3), 256–270. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41262-017-0036-2>
- Janssen, C., Vanhamme, J., & Lefebvre, C. (2015). How cynical consumers evaluate ethical marketing communications. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 132(2), 403–418. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-014-2323-5>
- Järvinen, J., & Taiminen, H. (2016). Harnessing marketing automation for B2B content marketing. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 54, 164–175. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.indmarman.2015.07.002>
- Kapferer, J.-N., & Michaut-Denizeau, A. (2014). Is luxury compatible with sustainability? Luxury consumers' viewpoint. *Journal of Brand Management*, 21(1), 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.1057/bm.2013.19>
- Kapitan, S., & Silvera, D. H. (2016). From digital media influencers to celebrity endorsers: Attributions drive endorser effectiveness. *Marketing Letters*, 27(3), 553–567. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11002-015-9363-0>
- Kapoor, A. P., Balaji, M. S., & Jiang, Y. (2021). Effectiveness of sustainability communication on social media: Role of message appeal and message source in the hospitality industry. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 33(6), 2050–2069. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-09-2020-0974>
- Katz, E., Blumler, J. G., & Gurevitch, M. (1973). *Uses and gratifications research*. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 37(4), 509–523.
- Kim, H., & Hall, C. M. (2022). Green Brand Communication and Consumer Engagement: Evidence from the Hospitality Industry. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 41, 100938. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2021.100938>

- Kim, Y., Njite, D., & Hancer, M. (2020). Anticipated emotion in consumers' intentions to select eco-friendly restaurants: Augmenting the theory of planned behavior. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 85, 102338. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2019.102338>
- Lemon, K. N., & Verhoef, P. C. (2016). Understanding customer experience throughout the customer journey. *Journal of Marketing*, 80(6), 69–96. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jm.15.0420>
- Li, Y., & Xie, Y. (2020). What type of social media posts about sustainable construction is better for audience engagement? *PLOS ONE*, 15(5), e0233472. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0233472>
- Lim, J. S., Sung, Y., & Lee, W. N. (2020). Effects of message appeal and perceived source credibility on consumer engagement with sustainability content in social media advertising. *Sustainability*, 12(17), 6819. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12176819>
- Lim, W. M., Ting, D. H., & Ng, P. F. (2020). Sustainable Tourism Marketing: A Content Analysis of Social Media Platforms. *Sustainability*, 12(5), 1865. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12051865>
- Lim, W. M., Ting, D. H., & Ng, P. F. (2021). Sustainability Marketing: A Content Analysis of Social Media Platforms. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 26(1), 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1108/CCIJ-04-2020-0050>
- Lundqvist, A., Liljander, V., Gummerus, J., & van Riel, A. (2013). The impact of storytelling on the consumer brand experience: The case of a firm-originated story. *Journal of Brand Management*, 20(4), 283–297. <https://doi.org/10.1057/bm.2012.15>
- Mardhatilah, D., Omar, A., & Septiari, E. D. (2023). A Literature Review on Persuasive Communication: Utilising Elaboration Likelihood Model to Understand Consumer Engagement on Social Media Platforms. *Journal of Technology Management and Business*, 10(2), 87–100.
- Moraes, C., Carrigan, M., & Szmigin, I. (2012). The Co-Creation of Ethical Consumption: Consumers' Engagement in the Construction of Ethical Value. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 107(1), 105–123. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-011-1021-9>
- Munaro, A., Santos, L. A. D., & de Oliveira, J. H. C. (2024). The impact of influencers on sustainable consumption: A systematic literature review. *Sustainable Production and Consumption*, 42, 438–451. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.spc.2024.03.006>
- Müller, J., & Christandl, F. (2019). Content marketing in the context of sustainability: How the type of content affects consumer engagement. *Journal of Business Research*, 104, 437–449. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.07.039>
- Murtarelli, G., Šimunović, D., Colleoni, E., & Romenti, S. (2023). Sustainable marketing communication via social media: Searching for a balance in corporate and consumer dialogue. In *Sustainable Marketing, Branding, and Reputation Management: Strategies for a Greener Future* (pp. 16). IGI Global. <https://doi.org/10.4018/979-8-3693-0019-0.ch007>
- Nosratabadi, S., Mosavi, A., Shamshirband, S., et al. (2019). Sustainable business models: A review. *Sustainability*, 11(6), 1663. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su11061663>
- Pelet, J.-É., & Lecat, B. (2011). Can Digital Social Networks Enhance the Online Selling of Burgundy Wine? Paper presented at the 6th AWBR International Conference.

- Parguel, B., Benoît-Moreau, F., & Larceneux, F. (2015). How Sustainability Ratings Might Deter ‘Greenwashing’: A Closer Look at Ethical Corporate Communication. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 102(1), 15–28. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-011-0901-2>
- Peloza, J., White, K., & Shang, J. (2013). Good and guilt-free: The role of self-accountability in influencing preferences for products with ethical attributes. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 50(1), 68–83. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jmr.11.0454>
- Petrescu-Mag, R. M., Petrescu, D. C., & Burny, P. (2015). Consumer Perceptions of Food Sustainability: A Literature Review. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 106, 79–94. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2014.06.006>
- Petty, R. E., & Cacioppo, J. T. (1986). *The elaboration likelihood model of persuasion*. Advances in Experimental Social Psychology, 19, 123–205.
- Pomering, A. (2017). Communicating corporate social responsibility through nonfinancial reports: A comparative study of CSR reporting by Australasian companies. *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, 25(4), 318–336. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0965254X.2016.1148768>
- Reilly, A. H., & Hynan, K. A. (2014). Corporate communication, sustainability, and social media: It's not easy (really) being green. *Business Horizons*, 57(6), 747–758. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2014.07.008>
- Rocca, L., Giacomini, D., & Bellucci, M. (2024). The performance of green communication across social media: Evidence from large-scale retail industry in Italy. *Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management*, 31(2), 456–468. <https://doi.org/10.1002/csr.2581>
- Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2017). *Self-determination theory: Basic psychological needs in motivation, development, and wellness*. Guilford Publications.
- Ryan, R. M., et al. (2019). Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation from a self-determination theory perspective: Definitions, theory, practices, and future directions. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 61, 101860. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cedpsych.2020.101860>
- Sabate, F., Berbegal-Mirabent, J., Cañabate, A., & Lebherz, P. R. (2014). Factors influencing popularity of branded content in Facebook fan pages. *European Management Journal*, 32(6), 1001–1011. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.emj.2014.05.001>
- Schmuck, D., Matthes, J., & Naderer, B. (2018). Misleading Consumers with Green Advertising? An Affect–Reason–Involvement Account of Greenwashing Effects in Environmental Advertising. *Journal of Advertising*, 47(2), 127–145. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00913367.2018.1452652>
- Sjöström, E., & Jansson, J. (2017). Consumers’ Perceptions of Corporate Social Responsibility: The Role of Trust. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 22(2), 144–156. <https://doi.org/10.1108/CCIJ-07-2016-0046>
- Suki, N. M., Suki, N. M., & Suki, N. M. (2022). Impact of social media marketing on consumer engagement in sustainable consumption: A systematic review. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 19(24), 16637. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph192416637>

- Taiminen, H., & Ranaweera, C. (2019). Fostering brand engagement and trusted B2B relationships through digital content marketing. *Digital Content Marketing (DCM)*, 35–52. [http://dcm.atu.ac.ir/article\\_14421.html](http://dcm.atu.ac.ir/article_14421.html)
- Tarhan, H., & Dursun, İ. (2024). A review on social media marketing activities. *Turkish Journal of Marketing (TUJOM)*, 9(1), 90–104. <https://doi.org/10.30685/tujom.v9i1.193>
- Thakur, A., Singla, K., Ansari, A., Mishra, A., Kaur, S., & Kaur, P. (2025). Nurturing sustainability: The interplay among digital marketing communication, online customer experience and sustainable purchase intention. *International Journal of Innovation Science*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJIS-06-2024-0166>
- Torelli, R., Balluchi, F., & Lazzini, A. (2020). Greenwashing and Environmental Communication: Effects on Stakeholders' Perceptions. *Business Strategy and the Environment*, 29(2), 407–421. <https://doi.org/10.1002/bse.2373>
- van der Waal, J. W. H., & Thijssens, T. (2020). Corporate Involvement in Sustainable Development Goals: Exploring the Territory. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 252, 119625. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2019.119625>
- Wang, Y., & McCarthy, B. (2021). Influencing sustainable consumer behavior through social media: The role of content and message framing. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 58, 102303. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2020.102303>
- White, K., Hardisty, D. J., & Habib, R. (2019). The elusive green consumer. *Harvard Business Review*, 97(4), 124–133.
- Yadav, R., & Pathak, G. S. (2017). Determinants of consumers' green purchase behavior in a developing nation: Applying and extending the theory of planned behavior. *Ecological Economics*, 134, 114–122. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecolecon.2016.12.019>
- Yuan, Y., & Wu, H. (2022). Storytelling in Green Marketing: The Role of Narrative Transportation in Consumer Engagement. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 58, 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.intmar.2022.01.001>
- Zafar, A., Qureshi, M. A., & Khan, M. A. (2022). The impact of social media marketing on consumer engagement in sustainable consumption: A systematic literature review. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 19(24), 16637. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph192416637>
- Zahrah, N., Ruzain, M. F., Sengorou, J. A., & Mat Salleh, N. S. (2024). The impact of user-generated content and electronic word-of-mouth on consumer purchase intention: Consumer engagement as a mediator. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 14(7), 460–477. <https://doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v14-i7/21981>