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Impact of marketing policies and strategies on the advancement of sustainable development goals: a systematic review

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Abstract: Through this research study, we aim to shed light into the discussion on the role that marketing strategies and policies plays in the attainment of SDGs. Companies that promote sustainability through their marketing initiatives have been proven to achieve greater appreciation than those that do not. Moreover, actions performed by organisations in different sectors within the sustainability framework demand the need to create a clear and comprehensive scheme that helps combine and clarify the typology of these actions and their contribution to SDGs. The main objective of this research is to understand the specific role played by marketing strategies in the achievement and progress towards a more sustainable world using the systematic review methodology. The major finding is to understand where the research on the topic is focused regarding the economic sector (secondary sector), the addressed goal (Goal 12), and the main marketing strategies and actions considered (being ‘marketing orientation’ the most mentioned and ‘price’ the least). In addition, this study provides some implications for researchers, managers and policy makers, related to the understanding of the SDGs, the actions to be taken and the relevance of citizens’ education.

Keywords: SDG; 2030 Agenda; sustainable development goals; SDGs; marketing.

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1 Introduction and literature review

In recent years the topic of sustainability has received increasing attention from both researchers and practitioners (Chabowski et al., 2011; Bolton, 2020) and is one of the most discussed and relevant concepts worldwide (Fonseca and Carvalho, 2019). Global and local environments raise many challenges (economic, social, environmental, educational, sanitary, cultural, etc.) that make it imperative to find solutions to balance, social and economic prosperity while protecting the environment (Lozano, 2008; Hult et al., 2018; Jones et al., 2018). The Sustainable Development Goals (hereafter, SDGs) of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development emerged in 2015, as a result of an unprecedented global consensus, with the aim to develop and implement a plan of worldwide action in favour of people, the planet, and prosperity. Seventeen goals and 169 targets were introduced to combine the agendas for development and sustainability (Gupta and Vegelin, 2016). The implementation of the sustainable development program for 2030 is challenging and requires societal commitment as a whole, involving not only governments and the public sector but the private sector, organisations and citizens as well (Jones et al., 2018; Kolk and Van Tulder, 2010; Compass, 2015).

Among different functional business areas, this study focuses on marketing, as there is “a pressing need to understand marketing’s role within for-profit organizations in addressing sustainability and the SDGs” (Bolton, 2021). Marketing involves creating, communicating and delivering high-value products and services to meet consumer needs better than the competition, while generating long-term profitable relationships with all stakeholders (Kotler et al., 2018). Marketing involves a strategic orientation as well as a series of actions to implement that philosophy. At the strategic level, it is essential to determine the market orientation, consumer research, as well as the definition of segmentation, targeting and positioning strategies (Kotler et al., 2018). At the operational level, it is essential to manage the tools of the marketing mix (product, price, place and promotion) (Kotler et al., 2018). Today, marketing philosophy encourages organisations and marketing managers to recognise consumers as the power and key to obtain sustainable, competitive, and profitable business outcomes (Kuada, 2016; Dzogbenuku

and Keelson, 2019), while taking into account stakeholder impact (Mitchell et al., 2010; Palakshappa and Dodds, 2020). However, the two-way relationship between marketing and SDGs is complex and presents different problems and trade-offs (Peattie, 2001). Many current patterns of production, consumption, and purchase are not sustainable, thus harming the accomplishment of social, environmental, and economic balance (Burroughs, 2010; Kautish et al., 2020). At the same time, marketing strategies can be designed to create awareness regarding sustainability among consumers and help accomplish SDGs (Amoako et al., 2020; Campo et al., 2020; Palakshappa and Dodds, 2020; Singh and Pathak, 2020). Through marketing strategies and tools, companies can develop products, packages, prices, and communication strategies that emphasise social and sustainable development ideas.

Companies that promote sustainability through their marketing initiatives have been proven to achieve greater appreciation than those that do not. Sustainability positioned brands generate higher purchase intention, willingness to pay a premium price, and more recommendation intentions (Hepner et al., 2020). Moreover, companies that encourage social responsibility generate a positive impact on their product image and their relationship with the stakeholders, achieving good financial results and access to a well-qualified workforce (Kartikawangi, 2017). Nevertheless, several authors argue that sometimes the efforts of organisations toward behaving more ethically and responsibly do not reflect a real concern, but rather an aesthetic strategy that allows them to be positively perceived by consumers and society (White et al., 2019). The concept of greenwashing, for example, refers to the discrepancy between the real action and the symbolic one, suggesting that companies promote their sustainable actions without significantly investing in projects that reduce environmental impact (Pimonenko et al., 2020; Siano et al., 2017).

When analysing the relationship between marketing and sustainability, a bidirectional relation between companies and consumers appears as well. On one hand, companies can implement sustainable initiatives to differentiate from competitors and offer more value, changing and shaping consumer behaviour through their marketing policies and actions (Hult et al., 2018). On the other hand, the way consumers decide, buy, use and dispose of products has changed a lot in the past few years and also affects marketing decisions and strategies (D'Souza et al., 2020; Palakshappa and Dodds, 2020). Some authors indicate that consumers are not indifferent to sustainability and demand that companies understand and facilitate sustainability comprehension and its implications (Claro et al., 2013; Kautish et al., 2020; Prothero et al., 2011). Green lifestyle, which has become increasingly popular, has also contributed to companies developing more sustainable and responsible strategies (Nair and Little, 2016; Pimonenko et al., 2020). But Hult et al., (2018) concluded that although around half of consumers often state that they consider sustainability in their purchasing and consumption decisions, only one-fourth end up selecting sustainable products. Lehner and Halliday (2014) indicated that ultimately, the responsibility of sustainable consumption and production is balanced between consumers and companies, considering consumers as inherent and necessary parts of this process.

According to the report 'Better business, a better world', developed by the Business and Sustainable Development Commission (2017), SDGs constitute an important business opportunity for companies. Fulfilling the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development could generate many business opportunities, materialise 12 trillion dollars, and provide employment for 380 million people. This has led to a strong demand for sustainable projects within organisations. Companies need to rethink their marketing

philosophy and adapt their marketing strategies to new trends by renewing their product offerings (greener and more sustainable), implementing cleaner and more environmentally-friendly processes, developing packaging with a lower footprint or setting up ad-hoc communication policies. Academic research should provide a sound foundation for these changes (Bolton, 2019, 2020, 2021). Although considerable progress has been made to understand the importance of sustainable business practices in marketing, the multifaceted nature and extreme complexity of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the greater purpose of marketing of improving individual, organisational, societal and environmental well-being makes more research development necessary (Bolton, 2019, 2020, 2021; Castro et al., 2021; Chabowski et al., 2011).

This paper aims to shed light into the discussion on the role that marketing strategies and policies play in the attainment of SDGs. It addresses the objective of exploring and organising marketing actions and strategies performed by companies to advance in the fulfilment of SDGs. To do so, a systematic review has been conducted, as it provides a broad look at all existing research related to a particular research question, thus enabling the discipline to evolve in a robust way, grounded in the existing basis of knowledge. Systematic reviews make new research stronger by identifying limitations of previous research, detecting research gaps, providing new empirical evidence and basis for discussion, and suggesting new research topics for the future (Gough et al., 2017; Littell et al., 2008).

This research structures, synthesises, and analyses the literature published between 2014 and 2020 regarding the role of companies in marketing strategies and tools when accomplishing SDGs. Actions performed by organisations in different sectors within the sustainability framework demand the need to create a clear and comprehensive scheme that helps combine and clarify the typology of these actions and their contribution to SDGs. Moreover, in a social context where there is a need to move toward more sustainable societies, proposing concrete marketing actions that help companies achieve the SDGs is a current and vital subject.

2 Materials and methods

To conduct this research, a systematic review of literature published in two of the most relevant databases for research and diffusion of research has been conducted: Web of Science (WoS) and Scopus (Zhu and Liu, 2020).

Systematic reviews are “scientific research wherein the analysis unit is the original primary study, from which the aim is to try to answer a clearly formulated research question using a systematic and explicit process” (Ferreira González et al., 2011). To accomplish this aim, one of the processes is to follow a clear, methodical, and replicable procedure. In our case, the guidelines of Gough et al. (2017) and the methodology developed by the Evidence for Policy and Practice Information and Coordinating Center were followed. Furthermore, the recommendations of PRISMA (Moher et al., 2009) and the verification list of the Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI) (Lockwood et al., 2015) were considered to offer transparency, validity, and duplicability of the study. In order to clearly present our research method, we have followed the procedures proposed by Arksey and O’Malley (2005) that comprise five steps:

- 1 research question
- 2 identification of relevant studies
- 3 studies selection
- 4 data mapping
- 5 results.

2.1 Research question

To establish the research question (hereafter after RQ) for this systematic review, we followed the Patient, Intervention, Comparison, and Outcome strategy (PICO). In this case, we considered three of the fundamental elements, and the following RQ is proposed: What marketing actions and strategies (interventions) are being undertaken by organisations (population) to advance in the fulfilment of SDGs (outcome)?

The keywords resulting from this RQ are Marketing, 2030 Agenda, SDGs, and its acronym, SDGs. Table 1 shows the results of the different searches of keywords in the two databases that were consulted.

Table 1 Search terms and fields in the databases

<i>Search terms</i>	<i>Search fields in Scopus</i>	<i>Search fields in Web of Science</i>
SDGs, 2030 Agenda, Sustainable Development Goals	TITLE/ABS/KEY	TOPIC (title, abstract, and keywords)
Marketing	TITLE/ABS/KEY	TOPIC (title, abstract, and keywords)

2.2 Identification of relevant studies

The search yielded a list of 69 articles shown in Table 2 in the WoS and Scopus bibliographic databases after eliminating the repetitions.

Table 2 Searches and results obtained

<i>Searches</i>	<i>No. of documents</i>
Scopus search: SCOPUS: [TITLE-ABS-KEY (sdg* OR '2030 Agenda' OR 'sustainable development goal' OR 'sustainable development goals') AND TITLE-ABS-KEY ('marketing')]. [Eliminating proceedings, chapters, books, and business articles (news)].	66
Web of Science search: WoS: [SUBJECT: (SDG* OR '2030 Agenda' or 'sustainable development goal' or 'sustainable development goals') AND SUBJECT: ('marketing')]. (Eliminating proceedings, chapters, and editorial materials).	46
Total list of articles (with repetitions)	112
Total list of articles (without repetitions)	69

2.3 Studies selection

Once the documents have been identified using the key words and in order to select the studies for our systematic review, we have used different criteria for inclusion and exclusion (Phase I). To acquire relevant answers for our RQ, we must determine the criteria that can weaken our results with studies that differ from our research objective.

First, we decided to exclude articles that are not directly related to SDGs (Criterion 1), not exclusively about marketing and communication strategies (Criterion 2), and unrelated to any company or institution (Criterion 3). Thus, with these three criteria, we excluded all studies referring to sustainability ‘in general’. However, we included studies that specifically address the 2030 Agenda, studies that focus on a business perspective other than marketing, and studies conducted in the public/political spheres. Therefore, we included articles that are directly related to SDGs, that refer to marketing and communication strategies, and that are related to the entrepreneurial sphere.

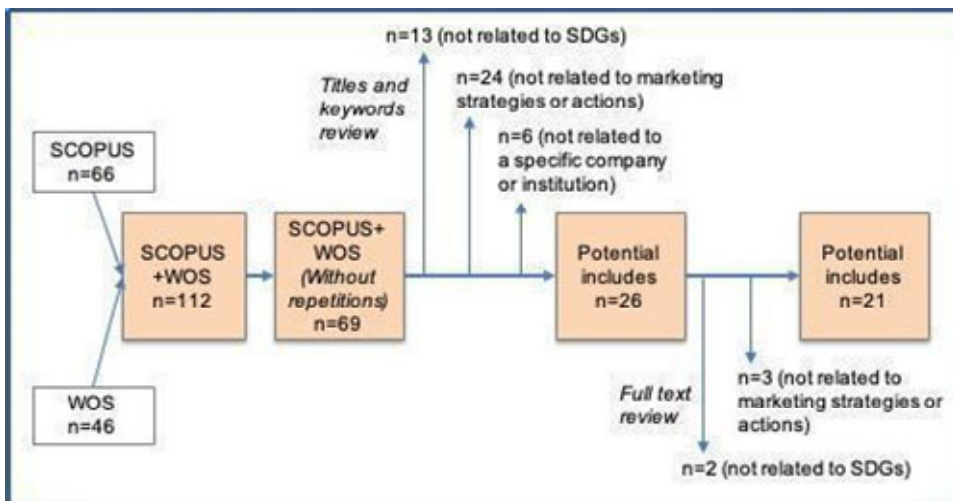
Based on these criteria of inclusion and exclusion, the three researchers independently made a review of the title, year, copyright, and summary. During the review process of the titles and summaries, articles that were not directly related to SDGs (13), that did not refer to marketing strategies or actions (24), and that did not refer to an organisation or private company (6) were rejected. Finally, 26 documents were selected.

In Phase II, after reading the entire texts, two documents based on Criterion 1 and three documents based on Criterion 2 were rejected.

2.4 Data mapping

As stated previously, based on Phase I and Phase II, the final result included 21 articles to approach the systematic review. The flow diagram in Figure 1 illustrates this systematic review.

Figure 1 PRISMA flow diagram for systematic review (see online version for colours)



2.5 Results

The quality of the selected studies was evaluated using the verification list for systematic reviews developed by the JBI (Lockwood et al., 2015). According to these authors, the results of a meta-aggregation review are explicitly linked to the quality of the included studies, and therefore, the critical assessment is the basis for the quality and coherence of the outcome. These are established in the studies included in a meta-aggregation review. Some common questions for critical assessment of the meta-aggregation are related to “the congruity between the stated philosophical perspective and the research methodology”, “the congruity between the research methodology and RQs or objectives” and “the congruity between the research methodology and the interpretation of results”. All the studies included fulfilled at least 8 of the 10 criteria.

3 Results

After this search process, 21 articles were analysed simultaneously and coordinately for the purpose of synthesising and systematising the most relevant information of each article.

First, we have made a descriptive analysis of the articles including; the year of publication, the countries in which the analysed studies were performed, the journal indexing, the objectives and the methodology and research design of each study included in our systematic review. Secondly, we have made a thematic analysis of the content of the 21 articles included in our research, from which we were able to elaborate on the main conclusions and contributions of this study (implementation sectors, marketing strategies, tools, and the previously mentioned SDGs).

3.1 Descriptive analysis

3.1.1 Years of publication

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the main framework for the fulfillment of the SDGs, was approved in 2015 by the General Assembly of the United Nations. Therefore, no documents before that date have been considered. In fact, as indicated in Table 3, most of the analysed articles were published in 2020.

Table 3 Number of articles published in the past few years

	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
No. of papers	1	6	2	12	21

From the 21 reviewed articles, it is important to highlight that the authors' countries of affiliation include more than 27 countries and all of them have been published in English.

3.1.2 Countries included in the studies

The worldwide scope of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development stands out in our study, including a sample of 25 countries distributed globally. In Figure 2, we identify these countries by colours and differentiate them in three blocks: countries included in three research studies; countries included in two studies; and countries included in only

one study. Additionally, three of these research studies do not specify the country in which the research was performed, and some research studies did so in several countries simultaneously. The US is the country with the greatest number of studies, followed by India, Italy, and Georgia.

Table 4 Journal indexing wherein the articles have been published

<i>Name of the journal (in alphabetical order)</i>	<i>No. of papers</i>	<i>Scopus position 2019</i>	<i>Web of Science position 2019</i>
<i>African Journal of Science, Technology, Innovation, and Development</i>	1	Q3 Development	----
<i>American Journal of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene</i>	1	Q1 Medicine	Q2 Public, environmental, and occupational health
<i>Asia Pacific Journal of Innovation and Entrepreneurship</i>	1	-----	Emerging Sources Citation Index
<i>Bulletin of the Georgian National Academy of Sciences</i>	1	Q2 Multidisciplinary	----
<i>International Journal of Retail and Distribution Management</i>	1	Q2 Marketing	Q3 Business Q3 Management
<i>Journal of Macromarketing</i>	2	Q2 Marketing	Q3 Business
<i>Journal of Public Affairs</i>	1	Q3 Political science and international relations	----
<i>Journal of Public Policy and Marketing</i>	1	Q1 Marketing	Q3 Business
<i>Journal of Sustainable Tourism</i>	1	Q1 Tourism, leisure, and hospitality management	Q1 Hospitality, leisure, sport, and tourism
<i>Marketing Intelligence and Planning</i>	5	Q2 Marketing	Q3 Business
<i>PLoS ONE</i>	1	Q1 Multidisciplinary	Q2 Multidisciplinary sciences
<i>Problemy Ekorozwoju</i>	1	Q3 Management, monitoring, policy, and law	Q4 Environmental studies
<i>Public relations review</i>	1	Q1 Marketing	Q2 Communication
<i>Sustainability</i>	3	Q2 Management, monitoring, policy, and law	Q2 Environmental sciences
<i>Total</i>	<i>21</i>		

3.1.3 Journals indexing

To measure the quality and recognition of the analysed studies, one of the parameters that we considered relevant was the journal indexing wherein the analysed articles have been published, and the results are shown in Table 4.

Figure 3 gathers all the articles published in the quarter where each journal is indexed. Thus, we observe that in the case of WoS, most articles are published in journals positioned in Q3, and in the case of Scopus, most of them are positioned in Q2.

Figure 2 Countries included in the subject matter research (see online version for colours)

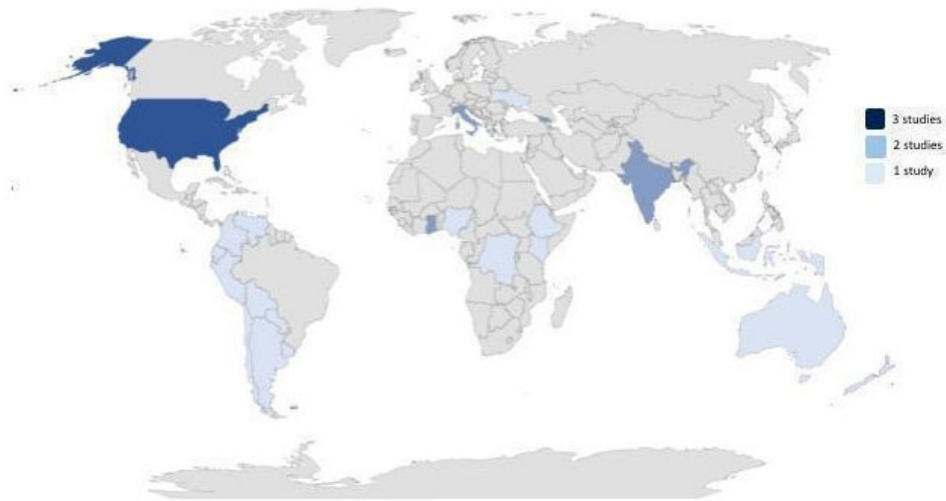
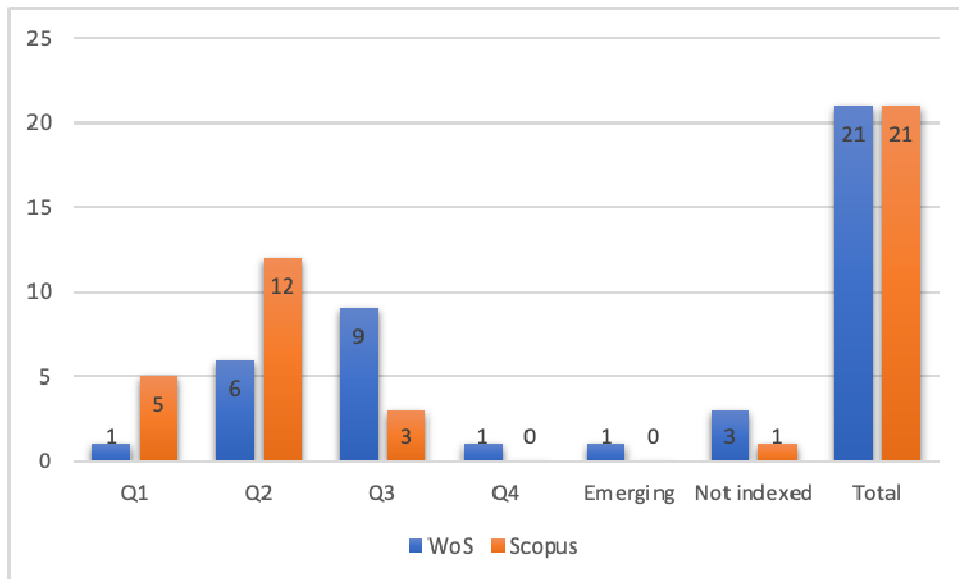


Figure 3 Indexing of articles (see online version for colours)



3.1.4 Objectives, methodology and research design of each study

In the process of any type of research, all the necessary steps for its implementation are crucial, but just as Malhotra (2020) indicated, achieving the objective is fundamental. This aspect means raising the main problem and identifying its specific components. Considerable research specifically fails for not accurately defining the objectives. Moreover, depending on the objective's nature, a quantitative, qualitative, or mixed investigation should be performed should be performed. Table 5 gathers the main

research objectives, organising the authors of the 21 articles of our analysis by their type of study: 11 quantitative, 7 qualitative, 2 mixed, and 1 theoretical.

Table 5 Objectives by the type of study

<i>Author(s)</i>	<i>Research objectives</i>
<i>Quantitative studies (11 papers)</i>	
Amoako et al. (2020)	To identify how sustainable marketing strategies contribute to attaining SDGs in Ghana
Campo et al. (2020)	To explore how food companies could improve their products by basing their marketing strategy on food quality and strengthening their own image without generating hesitation from consumers
D'Souza et al. (2020)	To develop a theoretical model of fair-trade buying behaviour, addressing the role of just-world beliefs, normative influences, self-identity, and altruistic values
Dzogbenuku and Keelson (2019)	To evaluate the interconnection between marketing and entrepreneurial performance in emerging markets
Hepner et al. (2020)	To explore whether sustainability-oriented luxury consumers are aware of the sustainability efforts from their preferred luxury brands and if these efforts create a competitive advantage by improving the ranking of the most sustainable luxury brands
Hult et al. (2018)	To examine these macro–micro (country–company) dynamics, company costs, consumer costs, and price sensitivities on the effects of sustainability on companies' performance
Kautish et al. (2020)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 To examine the importance of terminal and instrumental values on consumers' sustainability consciousness and behavioural intentions in light of SDG endorsement 2 To explore the mediating role of consumers' sustainability consciousness between value orientation and behavioural intentions for environment-friendly products in SDG endorsement 3 To evaluate the relationships between consumer values regarding environment-friendly products and the relative significance of value orientation (terminal versus instrumental) in SDG endorsement
Testa et al. (2018)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 To explore the interaction of a message of social norms and preexisting attitudes toward local food, and the core hypothesis in predicting intentions to purchase local foods 2 To investigate the potential of social messaging communicated by a meso level actor to influence consumer behaviour
Wang and Chou (2020)	To introduce theoretical framework that emphasises the mediating role of personal norms and consumer attitudes toward fair trade product purchases and the effects of subjective norms and consumer social responsibility on consumer purchase intention toward fair trade products
Riley et al. (2018)	To engage the private sector to increase modern contraceptive access and choice
Pimonenko et al. (2020)	To check the impact of greenwashing on the green brand of the company

Table 5 Objectives by the type of study (continued)

<i>Author(s)</i>	<i>Research objectives</i>
<i>Qualitative studies (seven papers)</i>	
Al Sidawi et al. (2020)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 To investigate the dynamics of the dairy food value chain by examining the relationship between the stakeholders 2 To analyse the dairy production policies (in Georgia) 3 To explore the impact of the socioeconomic factors on the smallholder dairy farmers when marketing their products 4 To investigate the best mechanisms to be implemented to empower better management in the dairy value chain of smallholder dairy farmers (in Georgia)
Aluko and Okuwa (2018)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 To find out what determines the innovative outcomes of women's empowerment in a marginalised community 2 To explore the role of the university in community interactions that foster women's empowerment 3 To analyse the implication of this interaction for sustainable development
Finkler and Higham (2020)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 To determine whether the key stakeholder is responsible for 'crafting' the way whale-watching is presented to the public. If they could find mutually agreeable common ground to promote sustainable whale-watching practices 2 To test how best to communicate such sustainability messages arising from these key 'provider' stakeholders to influence the attitudes and purchasing behaviour of the 'user' stakeholders in the whale-watching industry: the whale-watching public
Kartikawangi (2017)	To examine how multinational corporations in Indonesia adjust/adapt to the local wisdom to attain their corporate social responsibilities
Palakshappa and Dodds (2020)	To explore the role of branding and brand co-creation in promoting sustainable consumption and production patterns
Singh and Pathak (2020)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 To understand the role of cause-related marketing (CRM) in aiding private sector organisations to address the problems of sustainable development and thus support the SDGs in an emerging economy, India. 2 To establish the role of CRM in aiding organisations to contribute toward the achievement of SDGs in India 3 To integrate the various areas of focus of the CRM campaigns, the sustainability dimensions that were focused on, and the various SDGs supported
Shapiro et al. (2020)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 To approach teaching macro marketing through four illustrative cases to commit students to achieving the SDGs 2 To encourage students to assess various stakeholders' goals and effects and 'their place in the social fabric of the society' and to introduce the macro level of analysis
<i>Mixed studies (two papers)</i>	
Todua and Jashi (2018)	To study consumer behaviour with respect to healthy nutrition
Peletz et al. (2019)	To examine the commercial viability of plastic latrine slabs in rural Kenya by evaluating a financing and distribution model intervention, documenting household slab sales to date, and assessing consumer exposure and perceptions

Table 5 Objectives by the type of study (continued)

<i>Author(s)</i>	<i>Research objectives</i>
<i>Theoretical reflection (one paper)</i>	
Jones et al. (2018)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 To outline the SDGs and the business engagement with them 2 To review the sustainably strategies and achievements currently being publicly reported by the six leading advertising and marketing companies 3 To offer some reflections on some of the challenges these companies will face in contributing to the SDGs

For each reviewed study, we have provided the following information on Table 6, Table 7 and Table 8: the sample taken, the instrument used for data collection, and the analysis technique used for data processing. Table 6 describes the characteristics of the 11 quantitative studies reviewed.

Table 6 Characteristics of quantitative studies

<i>Author(s)</i>	<i>Sample</i>	<i>Data collection instrument</i>	<i>Analysis method</i>
Amoako et al. (2020)	622 consumers in Ghana who have experience with the green marketing and sustainability issues	Questionnaire	Structural equation modelling
Campo et al. (2020)	8 panelists (consumers)	Experiment	Measurement of panelists' evaluations
D'Souza et al. (2020)	217 consumers	Online survey	Path analysis
Dzogbenuku and Keelson (2019)	113 micro, small and medium enterprises	Questionnaire	Multiple regression analysis
Hepner et al. (2020)	285 luxury consumers	Questionnaire	Rankings development and non-parametric correlation analysis
Hult et al. (2018)	4,051 companies in 10 different countries	Questionnaire	Hierarchical multiple regression
Kautish et al. (2020)	410 educated adults (graduates and postgraduates) from three cities across Rajasthan in India who were aware of sustainable practices	Structured questionnaires	Structural model
Testa et al. (2018)	Studio 1: Consumers in Italy; 316 participants randomly assigned	Questionnaire	Multivariate analysis of variance
	Studio 2: Consumers in USA; 1,405 participants; longitudinal study	Questionnaire	CETSCALE
Wang and Chou (2020)	413 university students	Questionnaires	Structural equation modelling Mediation analysis

Table 6 Characteristics of quantitative studies (continued)

<i>Author(s)</i>	<i>Sample</i>	<i>Data collection instrument</i>	<i>Analysis method</i>
Riley et al. (2018)	Clusters of approximately 10,000–15,000 people	Structured questionnaires	Stata14 Inverse probability of cluster selection
Pimonenko et al. (2020)	Not specified	Questionnaires	Partial least-squares structural equation modelling, content analysis, and the Fishbourne method

Secondly, we detailed the characteristics of the seven qualitative studies, indicating the sample and the data collection instrument. In this case, the information processing instrument is not specified because, according to Malhotra (2020), “compared to quantitative research, where numbers and what they stand for are the units of analysis, qualitative data analysis uses words as the units of analysis and is guided by fewer universal rules and standard procedures. The goal in qualitative research is to decipher, examine, and interpret meaningful patterns or themes that emerge out of the data. The meaningfulness of patterns and themes is determined by the research question at hand”.

Table 7 Characteristics of qualitative studies

<i>Author(s)</i>	<i>Sample</i>	<i>Data collection instrument</i>
Al Sidawi et al. (2020)	22 dairy chain experts	Semi-structured face-to-face interviews.
Aluko and Okuwa (2018)	-----	Case study. Documentary analysis and in-depth interviews of key sources from the university and the community and any other relevant stakeholders identified through a snowballing process
Finkler and Higham (2020)	19 persons: scientists, whale-watching operators, and environmental non-governmental organisations, etc.	Two 90-minute facilitated semi-structured focus groups and content analysis
Kartikawangi (2017)	Three multinational corporations in Indonesia (Aqua Danone, Unilever Indonesia, and Astra International)	Multiple case studies, including primary and secondary data <i>Primary data:</i> Interviews with multinational corporations and the government and focus group discussion with society <i>Secondary data:</i> Official websites of companies, related news in online media, literature studies in related journals, textbooks, and other professional references
Palakshappa and Dodds (2020)	Two companies	Embedded case studies
Singh and Pathak (2020)	-----	Case study
Shapiro et al. (2020)	4 macro marketing experiences	Mini-case analysis and students’ reflections

Finally, we collated the characteristics of the two studies that combine both the methodologies (quantitative and qualitative).

Table 8 Characteristics of mixed studies

<i>Author(s)</i>	<i>Sample</i>	<i>Data collection instrument</i>	<i>Analysis technique</i>
Todua and Jashi (2018)	10–12 representatives	Focus group	Structured questions
	1,200 people	Online and face-to-face surveys	Dispersion analysis ANOVA
Peletz et al. (2019)	422 households	Baseline and endline survey	Becker Degroot Marschak auction method and WTP and two sided t-test
	394 households	Real money auctions	
	322 households	Questionnaires	
	324 sales representatives	Focus group	
	111 sales representatives	In-depth interviews	
	15 key stakeholders		

3.2 *Thematic analysis*

Regarding the content of the studies and to answer our RQ, we have analysed the articles from different perspectives:

- 1 the activity sector covered by the study, in order to find out whether there are any sectors where the analysis of the SDGs might be more relevant
- 2 the marketing tool used in each research study in order to identify which ones are the most interesting in terms of moving forward in achieving the SDGs
- 3 the concrete SDG that is approached in order to establish if there is a specific one that is more related to the marketing activity.

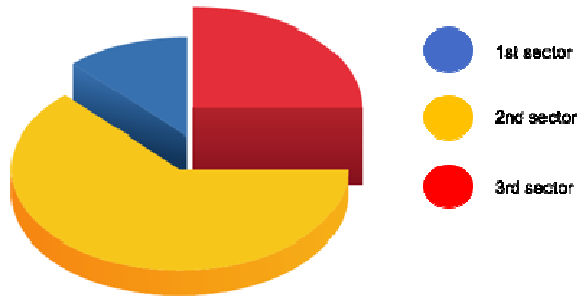
3.3 *Economic sectors*

The sectors or scopes of performance in which the 21 studies have been conducted are mostly related to the secondary sector (11 studies). As the economic literature states, “The recognition of differences among the major sectors of the economy, such as agriculture, commerce, or manufacturing, has a considerable tradition in economic thinking” (Kenessey, 1987).

We found only two studies that refer to activities related to the primary sector, particularly on dairy products (Al Sidawi et al., 2020) and agriculture, forests, fishing, and mining (Hult et al., 2018). The secondary sector, nevertheless, gathers the highest number of studies, all of them related to the fashion and luxury industry (Palakshappa and Dodds, 2020; Hepner et al., 2020), the food industry (Campo et al., 2020; Testa et al., 2018; Todua and Jashi, 2018), production and commercialisation of goods and fair trade (Kartikawangi, 2017; Kautish et al., 2020; Singh and Pathak, 2020; Peletz et al., 2019; D’Souza et al., 2020) and to the industry in general (Pimonenko et al., 2020). The tertiary sector also gathers a crucial number of studies, and seven of them highlight activities such as education (Aluko and Okuwa, 2018; Shapiro et al., 2020; Riley et al., 2018), finance, insurance, and transport (Hult et al., 2018), leisure (Finkler and Higham, 2020),

and advertising (Jones et al., 2018). Of the 21 studies, two do not specify a precise sector (Amoako et al., 2020; Dzogbenuku and Keelson, 2019).

Figure 4 Classification of the studies by economic sectors of performance (see online version for colours)



3.3.1 Marketing mix and marketing tools

With respect to the marketing mix components, we have analysed each study, with a special focus on the product, distribution, promotion, and communication components, as well as on strategic marketing (McCarthy, 1960; Kent, 1986; Möller, 2006; Kotler et al., 2018). Table 9 presents a classification of the strategies and marketing tools analysed in the studies.

Table 9 Marketing tools used in the research works

<i>Author(s)</i>	<i>Marketing concept explicitly mentioned in the article</i>	<i>Marketing concept according to the academic literature (McCarthy, 1964; Kent, 1986; Möller, 2006; Kotler et al., 2018)</i>
Al Sidawi et al. (2020)	Value chain	Distribution
Aluko and Okuwa (2018)	Marketing innovations	Marketing strategy
Amoako et al. (2020)	Green marketing	Marketing strategy
Campo et al. (2020)	Product and packaging	Product
D'Souza et al. (2020)	Consumer behaviour analysis (segmentation)	Marketing strategy
Dzogbenuku and Keelson (2019)	Market orientation	Marketing strategy
Finkler and Higham (2020)	Marketing communication	Promotion and communication (education)
Hepner et al. (2020)	Positioning, communication, and advertising	Marketing strategy, promotion, and communication (education)
Hult et al. (2018)	Price sensitivity	Product and pricing
Jones et al. (2018)	Advertising	Promotion and communication
Kartikawangi (2017)	Corporate social responsibility strategy	Marketing strategy, product (product development), and promotion and communication
Kautish et al. (2020)	Marketing strategy and marketing communication	Promotion and communication (education)

Table 9 Marketing tools used in the research works (continued)

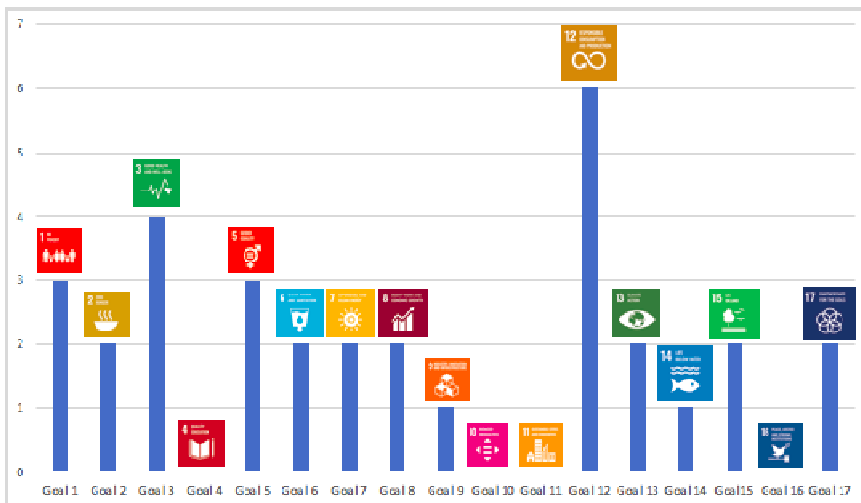
<i>Author(s)</i>	<i>Marketing concept explicitly mentioned in the article</i>	<i>Marketing concept according to the academic literature (McCarthy, 1964; Kent, 1986; Möller, 2006; Kotler et al., 2018)</i>
Palakshappa and Dodds (2020)	Branding and brand co-creation	Product, promotion, and communication
Peletz et al. (2019)	Product, price, and personal selling and communication	Product, price, promotion, and communication
Pimonenko et al. (2020)	Branding	Product
Riley et al. (2018)	Distribution	Distribution
Shapiro et al. (2020)	Macro marketing education	Promotion and communication (education)
Singh and Pathak (2020)	Cause-related marketing	Promotion and communication
Testa et al. (2018)	Advertising	Promotion and communication
Todua and Jashi (2018)	Social marketing and labelling	Marketing strategy and product
Wang and Chou (2020)	Advertising	Promotion and communication

The marketing mix component that appears the least in the studies analysed is the price.

3.3.2 SDG included

Finally, the latest analysis is based on classifying the different SDGs to which the 21 studies refer. In Figure 5, we explicitly present the objectives mentioned in each one of the studies of our analysis in the form of a graph. There are seven articles that do not explicitly indicate an SDG. From the articles specifically mentioning SDGs, we weighed the number of times that each one of them has appeared in the different studies (Figure 5).

Figure 5 Number of times that each SDG appears in the studies analysed (see online version for colours)



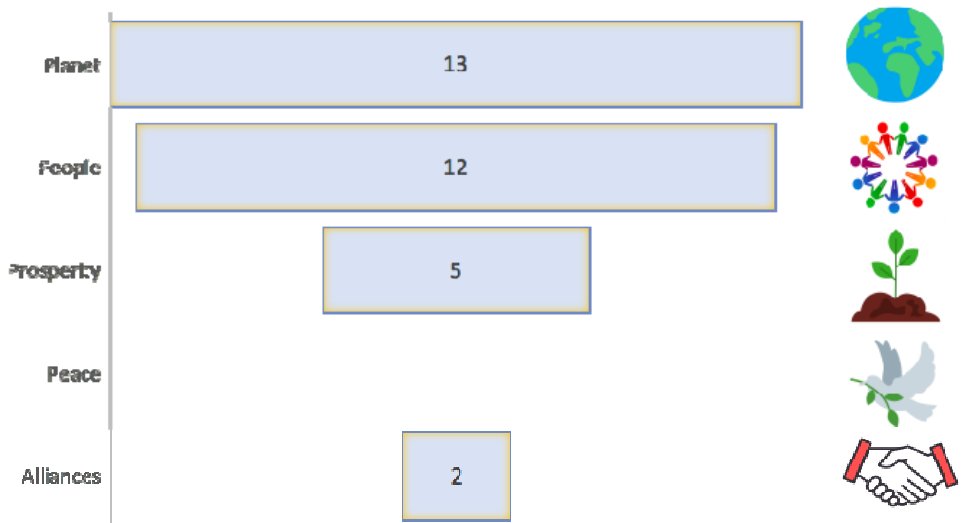
We highlight the fact that the goal that is mentioned the most in the studies analysed is goal 12, which refers to responsible consumption and production. The second place goes to goal 3 (good health and well-being), followed by goals 1 (no poverty) and 5 (gender equality).

We also note that four of the SDGs are not mentioned explicitly in any of the 21 studies reviewed: goal 4 (quality education), goal 10 (reduced inequalities), goal 11 (sustainable cities and communities), and goal 16 (peace and justice strong institutions).

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development aims to stimulate action in the five scopes of critical importance for humanity and the world: planet, people, prosperity, peace, and partnerships, also referred to as the '5 Ps' (Gusmão Caiado et al., 2018). Dividing this into five areas will in turn allow for a sub-grouping of the 17 SDGs; thus, the care of the planet is reflected in goals 6, 12, 13, 14, and 15, people are reflected in goals 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, prosperity is reflected in goals 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11, peace is reflected in Goal 16, and partnerships are reflected in goal 17.

Considering this classification, we can see that the studies included in our systematic review mainly approach SDGs related to the planet (mentioned 13 times) and people (mentioned 12 times) (Figure 6).

Figure 6 Studies related to each of the five pillars or the '5 Ps': *People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace, and Partnership* (see online version for colours)



Source: Gusmão Caiado et al. (2018).

4 Discussion

This research shows that marketing has a significant role to play in advancing the achievement of the SDGs. The studies propose diverse routes of performance with different depths and scopes.

The academic marketing literature clearly distinguishes between strategic marketing decisions and operational elements. Accordingly, the articles reviewed suggest both

interventions related to marketing strategies and to specific actions. Several authors indicate that the approach companies have toward the market sets the consideration that companies have regarding the SDGs. When these strategies are designed to generate sustainability awareness in consumers, progress is being made toward achieving the SDGs (Amoako et al., 2020).

Of all the existing strategic approaches, the marketing, social marketing, and green marketing approaches are the most important directions indicated as routes to make progress in the achievement of the SDGs. Todua and Jashi (2018), concluded that social marketing is an effective strategy to change consumer behaviour and thus generates social changes. Social marketing is a new approach that achieves changes in the population and has a positive impact on people's health and well-being. Furthermore, Dzogbenuku and Keelson (2019) studied the relationship between marketing orientation and entrepreneurial success, thereby demonstrating the positive relationship between both of them. Amoako et al. (2020) studied green marketing and its effect on purchase intention, considering price influence and brand loyalty. They concluded that a positive relationship exists between green marketing and purchase intention, which depends on price and brand loyalty. Finally, Kartikawangi (2017) concluded that companies must make efforts to better understand the needs of society, and that this understanding is essential for product development, marketing strategy, and corporate social responsibility.

Another strategic aspect is market research because studying consumer behaviour can provide the keys to conducting effective market segmentation and implementation of strategies and actions, thus enhancing the consumption of certain types of products instead of others (Malhotra, 2020). D'Souza et al., (2020) showed that exploring specific consumers' characteristics to design marketing strategies that increase the consumption of fair trade products.

Positioning strategy is one of the essential strategies alongside segmentation and targeting, since it influences the different consumer responses. Hepner et al. (2020) concluded that the positioning based on sustainability generates a competitive advantage, in the context of luxury brands.

Regarding the first variable of the marketing mix according to academic literature, the studies reviewed refer to three elements: product characteristics, brand, and label. Product policy is the centrepiece of the value proposition (Kotler et al., 2018). In this sense, Campo et al., (2020) suggested that product conceptualisation directly influences the achievement of the SDGs in the food industry, as the choice of ingredients is directly related to health issues. Palakshappa and Dodds (2020) proposed brand co-creation as a way to mobilise Goal 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), which, in turn, impacts others. Pimonenko et al. (2020) analysed the impact of greenwashing in the 'green' brand image of companies. Finally, Todua and Jashi (2018) proposed labelling as a fundamental tool to influence consumers, especially in campaigns promoting healthy eating and nutrition (goal 3).

To continue with the marketing mix components, price is the unique element that implies benefits for the company. This element is the least mentioned in the studies analysed, although it is a variable that can have a major impact on poverty, inequality, economic growth, or health (Becchetti and Cermelli, 2018). However, the notion that a company's positioning based on sustainability affects price perception is mentioned (Hepner et al., 2020; Hult et al., 2018). As indicated by Hult et al. (2018), "the more a company can nurture the 'doing good' mindset of its stakeholders and create a 'warm

glow' among its customers, the more the burden will be lessened on costs and product prices".

The third element of the marketing mix (place) consists in designing the most efficient distribution channels to reach the final consumer. As Kotler et al. (2018) states, 'value delivery network' is composed of the company, suppliers, distributors, and, ultimately, customers who partner with each other to improve the performance of the entire system.

Al Sidawi et al. (2020) studied the value chain of dairy products in Georgia and concluded that its distribution can generate economic activity for different groups of the population and can help increase production and competitiveness. Additionally, depending on how men and women participate and exhibit leadership in that chain. Production control on quantity and quality and awareness generation in stock breeders can reduce the level of food loss. Finally, this study showed the necessary cooperation between the different stakeholders of the value chain and between the private and public sectors. Similarly, Riley et al. (2018), as a conclusion of their study conducted in Ethiopia, Nigeria, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, indicated that participation and cooperation in the private sector can be improved to achieve universal access to modern birth control methods that are safe and effective, just as it is stipulated in the commitments of the SDGs.

Finally, Kotler et al. (2018) defends that Promotion means activities that communicate the merits of the product and persuade target customers to buy it. In the studies reviewed, the communication and promotion policy of companies seems to be an important element in advancing toward the SDGs. In general, the studies reviewed emphasise, on the one hand, the importance of the type of messages transmitted to consumers (Testa et al., 2018; Wang and Chou, 2020; Finkler and Higham, 2020; Singh and Pathak, 2020), and on the other hand, the relevance of implementing education and awareness strategies for these messages (Hepner et al., 2020; Finkler and Higham, 2020; Shapiro et al., 2020; Kautish et al., 2020).

Finally, we separately present the study of Peletz et al. (2019), since they investigate at the same time different marketing variables. The conclusions of the studies reviewed reveal that very different courses of action exist through marketing to advance toward the SDGs. Given the complexity of the case, it has been shown not only that action must be taken through different tools in a coordinated and complementary manner (product, communication, distribution, etc.) but also that it is necessary to work at different levels (strategic and operative) and with participation from all stakeholders (public and private sectors).

5 Conclusions, limitations, and future research

After the approval of the SDGs and along with the findings of the searches made in the WoS and Scopus databases, we observed that the companies' responses have taken several years, probably because of the need to direct their strategies toward the achievement of the SDGs.

Regarding the distribution of the 21 studies based on the economic sectors to which they refer, we observed that the secondary sector is the one with the greatest number of studies, followed by the tertiary sector, and finally, the primary sector. We consider that in the secondary and tertiary sectors, the final consumers are closer to companies, and

thus, the marketing initiatives can contribute directly to the development of the SDGs. In contrast, the primary sector is linked to raw materials, and therefore, differentiation and brand existence are practically non-existent. Hence, it is expected that the development and implementation of marketing strategies and actions will not have such an impact on this primary sector. Nevertheless, to achieve the SDGs related to the 'planet' dimension, the correct management of commodities is crucial, but goes beyond the marketing area. In addition, it must be taken into account that the need for the 2030 Agenda resulted from everything that happened in the industrial sector between 1980 and 2000, when it had greater relative weight in the economy. Perhaps, in the future, the development of the agenda and its objectives will be more closely related to the service sector (people management, information and technologies, privacy...), which today shows greater growth in developed countries, due to government policies, social changes, business trends, advances in information technology and the effects of globalisation (Wirtz and Lovelock, 2022).

Related to marketing actions and strategies, the marketing mix component that appears the least in the analysed documents is price, despite this being a key aspect for the coherence of the value proposition and for the generation of business profits. Additionally, several marketing actions that result in a better achievement of certain SDGs (quality ingredients, energy, water, responsible consumption, etc.) can increase the price of some products/services. This aspect can be a problem while working on other goals (for example, equality or poverty). The marketing concept that is mentioned the most is the need to work on appropriate marketing strategies since they provide a clear framework for an organisation. If there is, for example, a social marketing approach, it is easier to align the product development policy, distribution, and other aspects, thus generating a greater positive impact on the SDGs.

When analysing SDGs, the goal that appears the most in the reviewed studies has been, as it seems logical, Goal 12, which refers to responsible consumption and production. Marketing strategies and actions aim to identify needs and promote the consumption of product and services, which is coherent with that conclusion.

Based on the SDGs' classification in five scopes of great relevance for humanity and the world (Gusmão Caiado et al., 2018), in the studies analysed, the care of the planet is mentioned 13 times, and the concern for people is mentioned 12 times. Therefore, these two dimensions should receive the greater efforts to achieve SDGs. It is likely that they are the scopes most valued by final consumers, who are the main recipients of marketing actions.

Finally, based on the analysis of the 21 studies included in our systematic review, we can conclude the degree of advancement and achievement compared with the demands of the 2030 Agenda is still emerging, although, in the marketing sphere, many concrete initiatives that impact advancement toward the SDGs can be raised. Isolated initiatives by certain companies do exist, but it would probably be interesting to define a performance framework within the organisations to advance toward the achievement of the SDGs in a more uniform manner. The collaboration of all stakeholders such as consumers and companies and private and public initiatives seems evident and necessary in order to convincingly move forward in achieving the goals.

The systematic review carried out allows us to draw some implications for company management teams and policy makers. With regard to the first group, we would like to point out the importance of understanding the concept and adopting a real commitment to the issues set out in the 2030 Agenda goals, such as allocating enough resources or

considering compliance with the 2030 Agenda when choosing between different options (local production, fair wages, quality contracts, etc.). Actions that are not based on a real commitment and conviction about the importance of advancing the SDGs do not have the desired impact. Practices such as greenwashing, when detected, are punished by consumers (de Jong et al., 2020; Lim et al., 2013). A second implication for business managers is the importance of applying resources to educate users. It is not sufficient to work in coherence with the 2030 Agenda; it is also necessary to make users aware that alternative energy resources, paying fair wages or being respectful with the environment can lead to a higher price for final customers. Customers need to be made co-responsible for the commitments that the company advocates. These ideas are also relevant when talking about the implications for policy makers. Firstly, policy makers need to really understand the complexity and implications of sustainability and SDGs and should be educated on these topics. Secondly, they need to articulate the legal aspects such as the compulsory Sustainability Report in order to encourage as well as the monitoring and punishment of misleading practices. And thirdly, taking into account the role of education and information, they have to promote communication campaigns to raise citizens' awareness on sustainability issues.

This study is not without limitations, such as the databases used, which, for the purposes of this study, were limited to analysing only scientific articles that were published in English. In the future, other databases could be added, as well as publications from official institutions and business associations. There are also several research opportunities arising from the literature review. Focusing on organisations, an exploratory study in a specific sector would be interesting in terms of providing information on management teams' perception about the impact on their own businesses of consumers' awareness and adherence to the 2030 Agenda's goals. In addition, it would be interesting to carry out exploratory research among brand managers in a specific sector to find out the degree of progress achieved in both strategic and operational marketing decisions are led by consumers or by their own cultural values, Lehner and Halliday (2014) conclude in their paper that a balance is observed between these two perspectives. Secondly, if we focus on consumers and end-users, it would be interesting to conduct a descriptive study in a given sector, to analyse the level of acceptance with the following assumption: that "companies that promote sustainability through their marketing initiatives can achieve a higher recognition than those that do not" (Hepner et al., 2020; Kartikawangi, 2017). Thirdly, and being aware that progress on the SDGs may require a commitment from both customers and companies, we believe that it would be interesting to investigate, for instance, if consumers are willing to pay a higher price to ensure that the products they are buying make a valuable contribution to achieving the 2030 Agenda's goals. Any of the above lines of research can also be addressed by making a comparison between countries, between company sizes, or between sectors of activity.

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