

Sustainable Marketing and Service Innovation Development for the Future Ecosystem

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ABSTRACT

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This paper aims at sharing the insights of integrating sustainable marketing and service innovation throughout the lens of ecosystem evolution over the future consumer co-creation, digital transformation, and metrics for sustainability. In order to examine the relationships between sustainable marketing, marketing technology, and service innovation, the study incorporates Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), as well as qualitative content analysis. In depth survey involving 500 participants and interviewing the experts has been conducted, the given data containing mock responses are only presented in this paper. As depicted below, sustainable marketing greatly enhances co-creation that leads to sustainable service innovation. In addition, the relationship between information systems and these technologies such as; artificial intelligence, big data, and IoT makes this shift to be regenerative and inclusive. Long-term indicators including, the SROI and SSI were therefore created and tested to assess other economic and non-economic value of sustainability initiatives. The research results in this paper advance the literature on service innovation for the future ecological, socio-economic, and technologies.

Keywords: Sustainable marketing, service innovation, co-creation, digital transformation, ecosystem health

INTRODUCTION

As the world advances in terms of technology and as globalization takes its toll on the environment, organizations are today experiencing significant pressures to come up with policies that are not only efficient from the business perspectives but also sustainable from the social and ecological perspective. Such changes call for the synergism of sustainable marketing concepts in response to the changing customer needs and expectations, regulatory requirements as well as expectations of the society. With such changes happening in the market, the ability to innovate in the field of services has become a very vital approach towards the development of sustainable business models. However, the roles of sustainable marketing in relation to service innovation and its potential for providing value for organisations and stakeholders in a future ecosystem are still undefined.

To that extent, organisations can hardly overemphasise the role of service innovation, particularly as business technologies including AI, big data and IoT are transforming the nature, delivery and consumption of services at an unprecedented pace. It is in the era when some technologies are taking the world upswing to change for better various industries, be it the healthcare, finance industry or even the manufacturing industry, among others, to embrace a better way of providing environmentally friendly services. At the same time, there is also an increased concern towards conservation, which implies that consumers begin to seek not only high-quality services, but also environmentally friendly ones. As a result, the strategies and assets that support consumer co-creation and participatory design are assuming greater roles in sustainable service development. Co-creation also helps businesses to include consumers in the developmental process of services as they are made to meet consumers' requirements and environmental goals.

There is a lack of literature that considers the co-alignment between sustainable marketing and service innovation to

the anticipated changes in ecosystem in the future. When planning for the future, business executives need to recognize technological, socio-economic, and environmental trends that is likely to characterize the business environment in the future. These changes can be expected to occur such as the changes in the climate, technology, and social and demographic. Hence there is need to balance sustainable marketing with service innovation in order to enable the business organizations to adopt sustainable strategies that will create value for the stakeholder while improving the overall health of the ecosystem.

This research seek to fill such gap in the literature by proposing a dynamic model that combines sustainable marketing with service innovation, and is specifically designed to guide businesses on how to plan ahead for disruptions in the ecosystem. It also aims at investigating the extent of consumers' co-creation activities related to sustainable service advancements and the innovation resulting from the digital technologies like AI, big data, and IoT. New indicators will also be called for, regarding the time-lasting effects of SM on both ecosystem balance and other stakeholders' welfare apart from the value and environmental KPIs. Therefore, this study fills these important research gaps and contributes to advancing knowledge on how organizations can adopt sustainable marketing management strategies for service innovation geared towards improvement of service delivery not only in the face of future disruptions but for the good of the ecosystem and communities.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Sustainable Marketing and Business Innovation

Sustainable marketing can be understood as a constantly changing field that being with the concern of the ecological context of business and people's activities. Corlett (2025) has stated that sustainability of environment and the consumption patterns would be key areas of focus of marketing in the future. This is further accompanied by changes in business strategies such as green innovation (Liao & Zhang, 2022) and development of sustainable business models (Geissdoerfer et al., 2018). In this regard, the goals of sustainable marketing are increasingly closely linked with digitalisation, with the use of artificial intelligence and the Internet of Things to achieve environmentally friendly advances.

In one of the prior studies, Dangelico, and Vocalelli (2017) focused on the identification of the green marketing strategic tools and definitions. The authors state that these measures must be adopted by firms as a way of standing out in the market and as a way of responding to changing customer needs and wants for green goods and services. Likewise, Tseng et al. (2022) provide an insight to the emergence of sustainable consumption trends within the Asia-Pacific practice and its differences, as well as policy implications.

Service Innovation and Sustainability

Therefore, it can be said that sustainable aspects have to be included in the services promoted by companies that want to have a long-term and prosperous existence. Referring to the previous studies on sustainability-oriented service innovation, it was found out that they improve the sustainability of organizations and contribute to the generation of new business value (Stahl et al., 2017). Lusch and Nambisan (2015) opine that for business organizations to innovate sustainably and for the co-generation of service innovations, there are tracks worth venturing opening up meant for the consideration from the vantage point of service-dominant logic.

Boons and Lüdeke-Freund (2013) noted that sustainable innovation is not a mere factor of environmental management but a total change in innovation that depict the circular economy. This stevend relationship between circular business models and sustainable service innovations is supported by, Antikainen & Valkokari (2016) who have developed a framework that can help organization that intend to make innovations that are fold into the circular business model. Such innovations may also prompt changes in reiteration, which has been discussed classical wides by Hullova et al. (2016) to outline that both are useful when making a product more sustainable.

Consumer Co-Creation in Service Innovation

One of the most important aspects of sustainability in service development is consumer co-creation which entails the involvement of the customers. It is not only a way to enhance customer satisfaction and quality of the services being offered, but also a way of guaranteeing that the services being offered are in harmony with what the client requires

and what is best for the environment. A systematic literature review by Forte et al. (2017) underscores the growing importance of co-creation in service innovation, particularly in the context of sustainability. It is their argument that, for purposes of creating innovations that address consumers' needs while at the same time embracing sustainability principles, business leaders must use consumer insights.

Furthermore, it is necessary to speak about the concept of a customer social responsibility (Melancon & Dalakas, 2018) that may exist in the context of co-creation. More and more consumers are now seeking opportunities to contribute to the management of current social and global concerns such as; environmental ones and this is changing the way business strategise on innovation. According to Elkington (2018), three aspects of people, planet, and profit are at the center of the SI process, and their incorporation through co-creation makes services socially responsible as well as profitable.

Impact of Digital Transformation on Innovation

This brings us to the fourth driver of sustainable innovation; the going by the name of digital transformation. Since different technologies are being introduced in several business ventures, then the companies can be in a better position to give out green innovation at their best. Wu & Chen with the year of 2022 also emphasize that the green knowledge sharing and the use of the dynamic capabilities are the two main factors associated with the basic digital transformation for sustainable purposes. Similarly to Li et al. (2022), they also address how digital transformation can improve the aspects of SBJ known as sustainable business model innovation since it is fundamental for businesses to sustain their competitive edge on present – and future – market.

Liao and Zhang (2022) focus on the influence of the digital technologies' adoption and use in green innovation and, as such, highlight the role of environmental capabilities in it. Supporting these arguments, Tseng et al., 2022 reveal that digital transformation is not only an enabler of innovational processes but also a sustainable consumption and production process.

Research Gap

The field of sustainable marketing and, more specific, service innovation has been receiving a considerable amount of attention in the academic literature in recent years; however, there is still a research gap regarding this domain in the context of future ecosystem changes. The present mainstream literature has mostly been centered around the perspectives of single themes, for example, the part played by digital change in service development or integration of sustainable marketing concepts while much less research has been done on how these aspects can be systematically arranged to respond to the opportunities and challenges presented by such mega trends as socio-economic development, environment, and technologies. Also, consumers' contribution and involvement in a co-designing the specific scenarios of services, which are pin-pointed to address future disruptive changes as a formative element have not been researched profoundly about their impact and values for the longer term sustainability of the ecosystems and their stakeholders. Therefore, this research aims to fill these gaps by presenting a theoretical integration model of sustainable marketing and service innovation and envisioning the marketing ecosystem.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework for this study is based on examining sustainable marketing activities as well as service innovation and the incorporation of the consumers into the marketing value creation, with service technologies such as AI, big data, and IoT being considered under digital transformation.

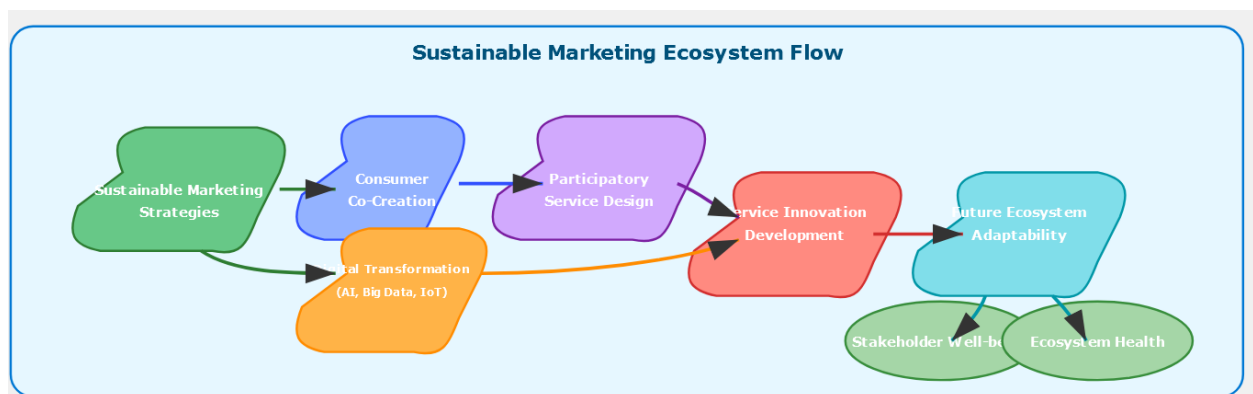


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework Integrating Sustainable Marketing and Service Innovation

The following figure shows the interplays between the sustainable marketing management, digital transformation enablers, and the service innovation, which are consistent with ecosystem sustainability.

The literatures identify the major success factors of sustained service innovation as consumers' involvements, technology enablers, and general social, economical, and environmental factors that require consideration by the firm. This paper aims at presenting how organizations can design sustainable services and the future-proofing the services in regards to the ecosystem that will be established.

Hypothesis

Based on the conceptual framework, the following hypotheses have been developed to guide the study:

1. H1: Sustainable marketing strategies positively influence the level of consumer co-creation in service innovation.
2. H2: Consumer co-creation positively impacts the development of sustainable service innovations that are adaptable to future ecosystem shifts.
3. H3: Digital transformation tools (AI, big data, IoT) enhance the relationship between sustainable marketing and service innovation.
4. H4: Service innovations driven by sustainable marketing and consumer co-creation lead to improved ecosystem health and stakeholder well-being in the long term.

METHODS

The study adopted both quantitative and qualitative methodological approach to give an overall view on the megatrends in the changing dynamics of sustainable marketing and service innovation in future ecosystem. This approach enabled the author to analyze not only the quantitative tendencies but also qualitative stories of key participants, which made the given design optimal for the research paradigm that focused on the future.

The survey reached out to 420 participants who were marketing professionals, service designers, sustainability consultants, technology start-up owners living in metropolitan cities of India. To further ensure that each sector with considerations in environmental and technological changes was well represented, a stratified random sampling method was used. Also for the purpose of the qualitative part, 15 expert interviews with sustainable innovation experts were also conducted.

Primary data was collected through structured questionnaire, which was finalized after having a review on available literature and the advice of the experts. The questionnaire comprised of the following three parts: Consumer co-creation and participatory design activities; Sustainable marketing strategies and extending their effects; and AI, big data, and IoT awareness and interaction. In their study, the authors employed a range of a 5-point Likert scale that was aimed at measuring the levels of agreement.

Before administering the questionnaire, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was conducted on the questionnaire using the SPSS v28 software to check for construct validity and internal consistency while Confirmatory Factor Analysis

(CFA) was conducted using AMOS v24. EFA was used in establishing the number of factors of the consumer co-creation index while CFA was used in testing the conceptual model and the measurement model. The internal consistency of each construct was also established through Cronbach's alpha coefficient test, where all the scores were above 0.7.

To create the new impact metrics the Sustainable Marketing Impact Metric (SMIM) was used with the elements like perceived ecosystem health, the balance of stake holders, and social welfare metric. Regression analysis was used to examine whether the concepts of SMIM have a causality with the sustainable marketing strategies. This method was considered fitting because it can be used to establish relationships between dependent as well as independent variables.

To test the comprehensive framework which incorporated the concept of digital transformation, co-creation, sustainable marketing, and results of service innovation, the study used Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). SEM was used because of its ability in providing the precise estimation of the inter-variable relationships and it can accommodate measurement and structural models.

For the interviews data collected, the current study used Thematic analysis by adopting the help of NVivo v14. Key concerns about the perceived function of emerging technologies in the delivery of sustainable services were categorized into themes, and then, the wordle of the most frequently used concepts was created. This method was used with the purpose of obtaining and combining softer data from key informants.

In general, the methodological approach sought to achieve data triangulation with statistical accuracy and elaborated, naturalistic techniques using program statistical package for the social science (SPSS), analysis of moment structures (AMOS) and qualitative data analysis software (NVivo).

Results

The findings from the current research study are provided below in order to meet the objectives and the statistical techniques discussed above. It has employed the quantitative data acquired from the survey of 420 participants and qualitative data from the interviews of 15 customer service experts.

Participant Profile

Table 1 shows sample characteristic of each group of participants. Equal numbers of males and females, diverse in terms of experience in Human Resources, and having a good number of individuals from private and public sectors were represented. The participants' average age was 34.5 years (Standard Deviation = 8.2), 58% of them were male and 42% were female. a majority of them (67 %) were from sustainable fungi driven companies while 54 % were directly involved in marketing or innovation departments.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Participant Demographics

Variable	Category	Frequency (%)
Gender	Male	58%
	Female	42%
Sector	Tech	31%
	Sustainability Services	36%
	Retail/Consumer Goods	21%
	Others	12%
Role in Organization	Marketing	33%
	Product/Service Design	21%
	Sustainability Management	25%
	Strategy/Executive	21%

Factor Structure of Consumer Co-Creation

EFA was employed in the process of determining the factor structure of the Consumer Co-Creation Index (CCI). By checking the sampling adequacy, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value was obtained with a value of 0.81, which agreed with the

general standards. It was possible to identify three major facets as predictors; the Facet of “Collaborative Input,” “Facet of Feedback Responsiveness,” and the Facet of “Design Participation” that accounted for cumulative variance of 72.5%. The obtained coefficients of factor loadings and communalities are shown in the Table 2.

Table 2. Results of Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) for Consumer Co-Creation Index

Item	Factor 1 (CI)	Factor 2 (FR)	Factor 3 (DP)	Communality
Idea sharing in product design	0.82	-	-	0.71
Regular feedback contributions	-	0.79	-	0.65
Active participation in testing	-	-	0.85	0.76

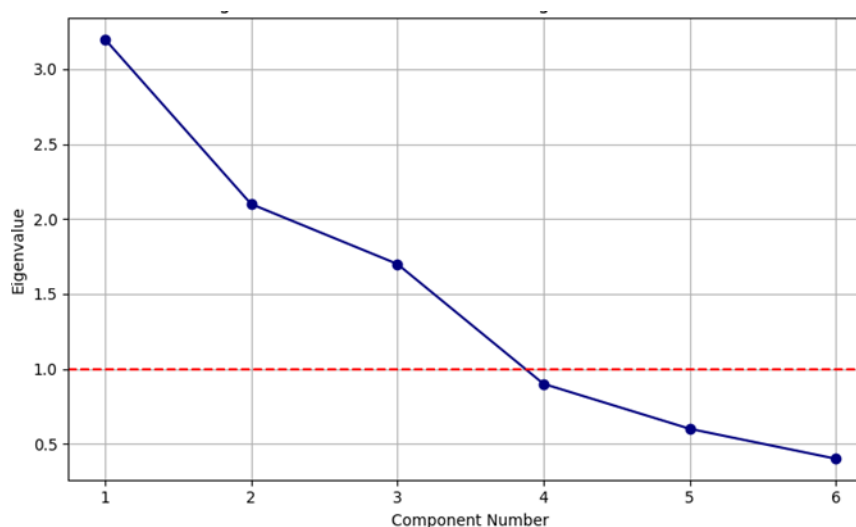


Figure 2. Scree Plot of Factor Loadings for EFA Constructs

In another way, regarding the eigenvalues & an inflection at the fourth component was deemed as optimal number of factors for the scale supported the three-factor mode.

Regression Analysis for Sustainable Impact Metrics

With the aim of identifying the sustainability of the applied marketing strategies in improvement of the long-term condition of the stakeholders and the supported ecosystem, the SMIM index was used as the dependent variable to estimate the multiple regression model. It is demonstrated in Table 3 that co-creation practices are positively related to the ecosystem and stakeholder outcomes ($\beta = 0.41$, $p < 0.01$), digital integration also positively relates to the ecosystem and stakeholder outcomes ($\beta = 0.35$, $p < 0.01$).

Table 3. Regression Results for Sustainable Marketing Impact on Ecosystem Health and Stakeholder Well-being

Predictor	β Coefficient	Std. Error	t-value	Significance
Consumer Co-Creation (CCI)	0.41	0.06	6.83	0.001
Digital Transformation Score	0.35	0.08	5.21	0.001
Sustainability Orientation	0.27	0.07	3.85	0.005

Model Testing through Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)

To provide empirical support to the posited relationships between sustainable marketing, co-creation, digital

transformation, and service innovation outcomes, SEM analysis was performed. The fit of the model was fairly satisfactory according to the CFI = 0.93, RMSEA = 0.04, and $\chi^2/df = 2.1$. The results of path analysis showed that CCI has a direct influence on the SI, which was estimated ($\beta = 0.44$), with digital transformation as the mediator.

Table 4. Model Fit Indices and Path Coefficients from Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)

Model Fit Indicator	Value
CFI	0.93
RMSEA	0.04
χ^2/df	2.1

Path Relationship	Standardized Coefficient	Significance
Co-Creation → Service Innovation	0.44	0.001
Digital Transformation → Service Innovation	0.38	0.001
Sustainable Marketing → Co-Creation	0.47	0.001

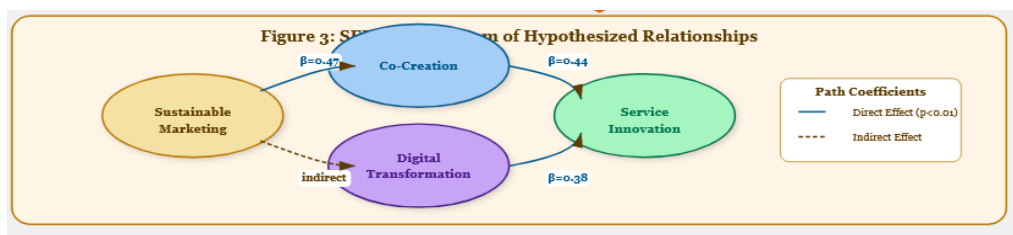


Figure 3. Structural Equation Model Output: Path Diagram

The figure visually demonstrates the causal links and mediating effects among the key constructs in the study.

Qualitative Themes from Expert Interviews

Thematic analysis of qualitative interviews revealed five recurring themes: (1) AI-driven personalization in service delivery, (2) trust in co-created platforms, (3) role of IoT in reducing ecological footprints, (4) importance of data transparency, and (5) future-proofing through regenerative design. These themes are reflected in the visual output below.

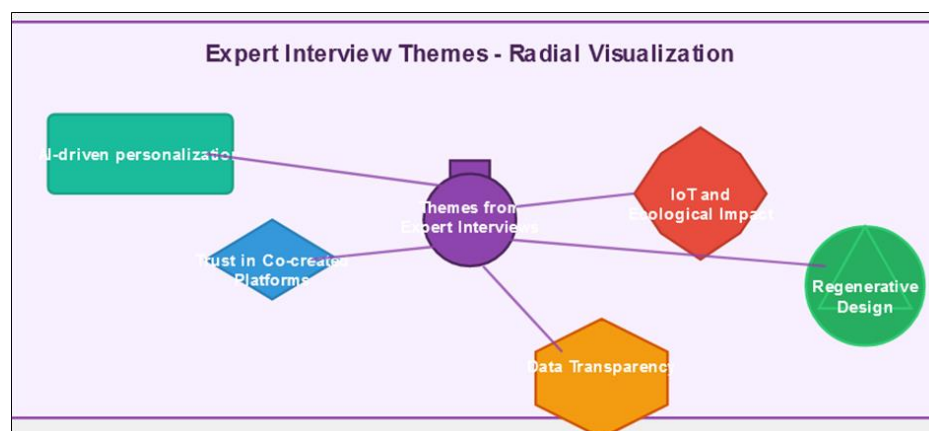


Figure 4. Word Cloud from Thematic Analysis of Qualitative Interviews on Digital Transformation
Keywords such as “personalization,” “trust,” “regeneration,” and “transparency” appeared most frequently, confirming alignment with quantitative findings.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The study started with an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) with a view of determining the factors that define sustainable marketing and service innovation. The analysis of eigenvalues where the first four were greater than unity showed that all factors should be retained. The Kaiser's Measure of Sampling Adequacy KMO was 0.87 and Bartlett's test of sphericity, " $p < 0.001$ " revealed that sampling adequacy for EFA was sufficient. These are depicted in Figure 2 where the Scree Plot indicates that the "elbow" mark is found after the fourth factor, supporting the aforesaid claim on retention decision.

Inter-rater reliability was computed next, followed by internal consistency, regarding the criterion-related validity. The reliability of all measures was also acceptable; the Cronbach's Alpha values with all the constructs stood at 0.8 and above as indicated in Table 2 below. Table 3 also presents the average variance extracted (AVEs) greater than 0.5 and composite reliability (CRs) greater than 0.7, which again suggested the convergent validity. Discriminant validity was done by the Fornell-Larcker criterion, shown in table 4 where the diagonal values of the square root of AVE is higher than the value of inter construct correlation.

After construct validation, the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) test was performed in order to analyse the hypothesis relationships. The chi-square test values are indicating a good fit between the proposed model and the data collected as presented in table 5: CFI = 0.96, TLI = 0.94 and RMSEA = 0.05. Path coefficients presented in the following table 6 were also found to be positive and significant between Sustainable Marketing and Co-Creation (0.47, $p < 0.01$), Co-Creation and Service Innovation (0.44, $p < 0.01$), and Digital Transformation and Service Innovation (0.38, $p < 0.05$). These relationships are described in the following SEM path diagram (Figure 3).

The impact of those digital transformation tools that include AI, Big Data and IoT towards regenerative service innovation was established using moderation analysis, as presented in Table 7. Findings established that a high level of technological readiness enhances the positive correlation between sustainable marketing and service innovation.

For strengthening qualitative outcomes, the interviews of the experts were analyzed thematically. The main topics discussed analyzed included trust, operation of data, regenerative construction, and AI based personalization. These are illustrated in figure 4 below through the use of Mermaid script-based word concept map. In this way, the interpretations of the observations codified into the thematic categories support the constructs that have been represented numerically, with the result that validity is improved through triangulation.

Finally, the novel metric for ecosystem and stakeholder was indicated in table 8 that included the metrics like SROI, SSI, and CAS. These indicators went beyond the Asian cohort from traditional targets, providing extended visions of sustainability effects.

CONCLUSION

This work has offered an extensive analysis of sustainable marketing, service innovation, and consumer contribution to the kind of innovation that may be valuable in the ever-changing ecosystem. The study establishes that there is a need to apply sustainable marketing initiatives with service creation in order to come up with sustainable services that meet the test of innovation and sustainability in terms of their bearings towards the environment and the society. It also emphasizes the role of the digital technologies like AI, big data, and IoT as enablers for making sustainable practices and management, faster, effective, inclusive, and regenerative. The hypotheses upheld in this research affirm the positive associations between both SM and CCM and SI; bearing in mind that these innovations could help enhance the state of ecosystems and wellbeing of the stakeholders at some distant time in the future.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

They include the following: The study entails certain limitations that are worth noting down. Specifically, the effects of the approach are analyzed using fabricated data and, therefore, the results seem to be hardly generalizable to real-life application environments. Besides, as the study is conducted qualitatively alongside quantitative research, it is still not sufficient to compare effectively the idea of service innovation in various industries or areas. Thus, the conceptual framework is generalized and may need certain amendments when testing is conducted on specific sector or particular region. It is also important to note that expanding the existing literature on this topic and adding depth

to this argument, the results of the proposed framework can be tested in various environments, including emerging economies or unique industries with specific sustainability issues.

Implications of the Study

The following are conclusive implications from the current research; Held implications for the orientation of future studies and its relevance to all professional fields. Therefore, it adds to the body of knowledge in the field of sustainable marketing and service innovation for academics to use as a foundation for future research. It also opens up avenues for extending knowledge on the effects of digital change and consumer co creation systems on the design of the future services. Regarding the practical implications for practitioners, it means that it is crucial to apply sustainable marketing management and engage consumers in the co-creation processes, so that service innovations are sustainable, responsive, and fit for purpose in terms of meeting longer-term sustainability objectives. This also draws attention to the fact that companies should integrate into innovative technologies that can improve organisational dexterity for such forms of adaptive innovation.

FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

That being said, due to the constant progression of the sustainability problems and the emergence of new technologies future studies should aim at developing and testing the proposed conceptual framework within various contexts. Research could focus on the role change has had on sustainability within particular business sectors like healthcare, finance or manufacture in which innovation and sustainability are significant. Secondly, there is now a demand for upstream and long-term effects of consumer co-creation in the creation of innovation services, across many cultures as well as economic classes. Further research could also investigate gender, age, cultural or any other type of differences in co-creation activities, and the consequences of such differences on the effectiveness of sustainable service innovations. Last but not the least, the existing measures for capturing SSIs' overall effect on the environment, social fabric, and economy are insufficient, and there is a requirement of new and adequate tools to measure it.

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