UNDERSTANDING BRANDS' SUSTAINABILITY COMMUNICATIONS IN SOCIAL MEDIA: HOW THE SOURCE OF COMMUNICATION INFLUENCES CONSUMERS' RESPONSES

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PLAGIARISM

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ÖZET

Çevresel sürdürülebilirliğe ve sürdürülebilir tüketime karşı artan endişelerle birlikte markalar, sürdürülebilirlik iletişimleri için güçlü bir platform olarak sosyal medyayı kullanmaktadır. Bu çalışma, özellikle lüks olmayan hijyen ürünlerine odaklanarak, Instagram üzerinde sürdürülebilirlik iletişiminin tüketici algıları üzerindeki etkisini incelemektedir. Kapsamlı bir literatür taramasına dayanarak, bu araştırma, çevresel sürdürülebilirlik için marka iletişimlerinin tüketici algıları üzerindeki etkisinin marka tutumu, ağızdan ağıza (WOM), marka bağlılığı ve satın alma niyeti üzerindeki etkisini keşfetmektedir. Ayrıca, bu çalışma influencer tutumunun tüketici tepkileri üzerindeki düzenleyici rolünü de inceler.

Araştırmanın bulguları, sosyal medya üzerinden influencerlar aracılığıyla sürdürülebilirlik iletişiminin marka tutumu, marka bağlılığı ve satın alma niyeti üzerinde önemli bir etkisi olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Influencerlar tarafından oluşturulan içerik, marka bağlılığını ve satın alma niyetini artırmada kritik bir rol oynarken, marka tarafından oluşturulan içerikle karşılaştırıldığında marka tutumu üzerinde önemli bir etkisi bulunmamaktadır. Araştırma çıktıları influencerlara yönelik pozitif bir tutumun, influencerların sürdürülebilirlik mesajlarının marka tutumu, marka bağlılığı ve satın alma niyeti üzerindeki etkisini artırdığını gösterirken, ağızdan ağıza iletişim üzerinde önemli bir etkisi olmadığını göstermektedir.

Araştırmanın sonuçları, sosyal medya üzerindeki sürdürülebilirlik iletişimi içindeki karmaşık dinamiklere dikkat çekerek, iletişimin kaynağı ve influencerların rolünün önemini vurgulamaktadır. Bu iletişimi etkili bir şekilde yönlendirilmesini amaçlayan markalar, influencerlar ve marka tarafından oluşturulan içeriklerin farklı etkilerini tanımalı ve influencer pazarlamasını sürdürülebilirlik lehine tüketici tepkilerini olumlu etkilemek için stratejik bir şekilde kullanmalıdır. Bu bulgular, sürdürülebilirliğe olan artan taleple uyum sağlamayı ve çevre bilincine sahip tüketicilerle sosyal medya platformlarında etkileşim kurmayı hedefleyen markalar için rehberlik sunmaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: çevresel sürdürülebilirlik iletişimi, sosyal medyanın tüketici tepkilerine üzerine etkisi, influencer pazarlaması, markaların iletişim kaynakları

ABSTRACT

With increasing environmental concerns and a shift towards sustainable consumption, brands are employing social media as a powerful platform to communicate their sustainability initiatives. This study investigates the effect of sustainability communication on Instagram on consumer perceptions with a specific focus on non-luxury hygiene products. Drawing from an extensive literature review, this research explores how consumer perceptions of brand efforts for environmental sustainability affect brand attitude, word-of-mouth (WOM), brand engagement, and purchase intentions. Additionally, it examines the moderating role of attitude towards influencers in influencing consumer responses.

The findings reveal that sustainability communication via influencers on social media significantly impacts brand attitude, brand engagement, and purchase intentions. However, this influence is not uniform across all aspects. While influencer-generated content plays a crucial role in driving brand engagement and purchase intentions, it does not significantly affect brand attitude when compared to content generated by the brand itself. Furthermore, the study demonstrates that a positive attitude towards influencers amplifies the effect of influencers' sustainability messages on brand attitude, brand engagement, and purchase intentions. Nonetheless, it does not significantly influence e-WOM.

The study's results underscore the intricate dynamics within sustainability communication on social media, emphasizing the importance of considering both the source of communication and the role of influencers. Brands aiming to navigate this landscape effectively should recognize the distinct roles of influencer-generated and brand-generated content and strategically leverage influencer marketing to foster positive brand attitudes, enhance engagement, and ultimately influence consumer behavior in favor of sustainability. These insights provide valuable guidance for brands seeking to align themselves with the growing demand for sustainability and engage with environmentally conscious consumers on social media platforms.

Key words: environmental sustainability communications, effect of social media on consumers' responses, influencer marketing, source of brand communications

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1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, with the growing concerns about environmental issues; limited natural resources, climate changes, and global warming, environmental sustainability became a major concern for the consumers (Kuchinka, Balazs & Gavriletea, 2018). Increased awareness of environmental consciousness caused some consumers to change their attitudes and behaviors since they are concerned about environmental issues and only the satisfaction of basic needs is no longer enough (Mataracı & Kurtuluş, 2020). They believe that companies should also be aware of environmental issues and participate creating awareness of environmental sustainability (Kuchinka, Balazs & Gavriletea, 2018). Brands that are perceived as sustainable are more likely to attract and retain consumers, as well as enhance their attitude and brand image. Conversely, brands that are perceived as unsustainable may face negative publicity from consumers. Therefore, it is crucial for brands to understand and respond to the sustainability perceptions of their target audience in order to have a competitive advantage and maintain a positive brand image and most of the brands focus and invest on developing sustainable products to satisfy consumer demands for environmental sustainability (Kong, Witmaier & Ko, 2021).

In recent years, social media has emerged as a potent instrument for brands to convey their sustainability efforts and interact with consumers on this matter. Brands have come to acknowledge the importance of social media platforms in terms of engaging with consumers, establishing and strengthening connections with them, and enabling them to make informed choices (Kim & Ko, 2010; Pentina, Guilloux, & Micu, 2018). Social media provides a platforms for brands to directly engage with their audience and showcase their sustainability initiatives. By communicating sustainability practices, brands can promote their commitment to environmental responsibility which will affect brand attitude, brand engagement, e-WOM & purchase intention.

Brands have employed various social media communication tactics to advance their sustainability messaging to consumers. These strategies have been employed to improve the way consumers react to sustainable brands. Despite the increase in those practices, there is limited research done to understand the relationship between consumer perception of these brand efforts for environmental sustainability in social media and consumers' responses (Artemova, 2020). As a result, understanding the

impact of brands' sustainability social media communication on consumer behavior has become a critical area of research in the field of marketing.

In addition, previous studies that have aimed to comprehend brands' sustainability social media communications have relied on a limited amount of information and have focused on a specific culture such as German and South Korean (Kong, Witmaier & Ko, 2021).While the need for sustainability is highly recognized in these studies, the results suggest that sustainable communication has a stronger impact on non-luxury brands in a cultural environment.

Against this background, the objective of this research is to create and evaluate a model that seeks to comprehend brands' sustainability communications in social media and how the source of communication influences consumers' responses in terms of word-of-mouth (WOM), brand engagement and purchase. Based on the previous research on this topic, the objectives of this thesis can be outlined as follows;

• To examine how does consumer perceptions of brand efforts for environmental sustainability affect brand attitude & consumers' responses.

• To determine the impact of attitude towards influencer on consumers' responses.

• To investigate how brand attitude influences consumers' responses.

• Finally, the objective of this research is to assist brands and marketers in crafting successful marketing communication strategies that champion sustainable practices and establish them as proponents of sustainability, acknowledging the heightened awareness and expectations of contemporary consumers.

The study will analyze various forms of communication on Instagram, with a focus on non-luxury hygiene products. The choice to focus on this particular topic stems from several factors, including the influence of the pandemic, the sustainability practices advocated by the United Nations, and the overarching sustainability trend.

Firstly, the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted consumer behavior and heightened the importance of hygiene products (Das et al., 2022). With increased emphasis on cleanliness and personal hygiene, there has been a surge in demand for products such as soaps, sanitizers, and other non-luxury hygiene products (Dsouza, 2020). Analyzing the communication strategies employed by brands in this specific

context can provide valuable insights into how these brands navigate the pandemic-driven market landscape and communicate their offerings effectively.

Secondly, the sustainability practices advocated by the United Nations are increasingly influential in shaping brand strategies. The UN's sustainable development goals encompass various aspects, including responsible production and consumption (United Nations, 2015). By focusing on non-luxury hygiene products, which are often used by a wide range of consumers, the study can explore how brands in this segment align with the UN's sustainability goals. This analysis can shed light on the extent to which these brands integrate sustainable practices into their communication efforts, contributing to the broader sustainability agenda.

Furthermore, sustainability has emerged as a prominent trend across industries (Deloitte, n.d.). Consumers are growing increasingly aware of the ecological and societal repercussions of the hygiene products they purchase. Analyzing the communication strategies of non-luxury hygiene product brands on Instagram can uncover how these brands incorporate sustainability messaging and practices into their communication efforts to align with this trend. However, despite all the reasons above there is no prior research has been conducted specifically examining the communication strategies employed by non-luxury hygiene product brands on Instagram. As a result, this research seeks to bridge this knowledge gap and offer valuable insights into communication methods within this specific context.

Through this research, the goal is to offer a more comprehensive comprehension of the subject within the context of Turkey, thereby making a valuable contribution to the existing body of literature.

This study is organized as follows; firstly, a review of the literature on sustainability, brand communications on social media and consumers' responses will be presented. Secondly, the research model and hypotheses will be given followed by a presentation of the findings. Lastly, the study will conclude with a discussion and conclusion section, in which the outcomes and implications of further research will be explicated.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Definition of Sustainability

Redclift (1994) notes that the etymological origin of sustainability comes from the Latin word *sustenere* (Becker, 1997, p. 4). The definition of sustainable is made as "of, relating to, or being a method of harvesting or using a resource so that the resource is not depleted or permanently damaged" in the Merriem-Webster Online Dictionary (merriam-webster.com, 2022). The meaningfulness of this concept is amplified by the interdependence between the natural environment and the ongoing existence of humanity, as well as the necessity for the natural environment to receive support in order to sustain itself.

Sustainability is a concept that has begun to gain more importance in the recent times and emerges as a warning about the negative effect of people on the environment. In addition, sustainability can be described as the ability to sustain an ecosystem or system in an unbroken way without overloading or consuming resources (Sezgin & Karaman, 2008, p. 429).

Sustainability refers to the act of preserving or improving the quality of life for a specific community within an ecosystem (Paula & Cavalcanti, 2000, p. 110). In other words, it is important to be sustainable by ensuring the protection of natural resources for many years without harming and by considering future generations. The concepts of time and equality can also be included to discussion.

According to the Thomas Jefferson Sustainability Council, sustainability is characterized as our obligation to proceed in a manner that ensures the continuity of life, enabling our descendants, including our children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, to thrive in a welcoming, unpolluted, and healthful environment.

Sustainability concept represents an activity that does not harm or consume natural resources (Collin, 2004). The concept of sustainability is also referred to as the sum of the developments that constitute the driving force, the way of work and the point of view in these efforts (Özgenç, 2015).

Sustainability can be expressed with the ideas of preserving the natural environment and biodiversity, the rational use of resources, better living conditions for all people, increasing social equity, higher welfare level and quality of life, observing

needs of future generations and realizing economic growth based on longevity principle within the capacity of nature. In brief the concept of sustainability can be described as creating a system that does not disturb the social and natural systems in the biosphere and uses them fairly without disturbing the prosperity of future generations.

2.2. Principles of Sustainability

The sustainable development definition put forth by the World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987 is underpinned by three fundamental principles. These are; economic, social justice and environmental integrity. These principles are equally important and if any of them is neglected, sustainable development will not be achieved (Bansal, 2005, p. 198).

Environmental Integrity Principle: The increase in the problem of environmental pollution with the increasing population, damage to natural resources are only some of the factors that threaten environmental integrity. Ensuring environmental integrity is of great importance, since the damage to the environment means that the resources that are indispensable for human life are also damaged. In other words, according to this principle sustainable development can be achieved as long as human activities do not damage elements such as air, water and soil (UN, 2022).

Principle of Social Justice: Every person who is part of society has equal rights to access opportunities and natural resources. Equal rights also include the ability of future generations to benefit from the same opportunities and resources, as well as the present generation. Development can only be achieved under the condition that the needs of the society can be fully met. These needs include not only basic needs such as food, drink and shelter, but also needs such as political freedom, health or education (UN, 2022).

Principle of Economic Welfare: This principle refers to the production of goods and services in a way that will increase the quality of life of individuals. A quality life is possible when individuals and companies can use their potential efficiently (Holiday, Schmidheiney, & Watts, 2002, pp. 14-15). Economic development aimed at not depleting non-replaceable resources, ensuring social justice and protecting the environment is an indispensable element for sustainable development. The health of a country that cannot establish economic welfare will also be endangered, and the failure to have equal benefits related to income level will lead to the failure of social justice

and environmental integrity, making it impossible to achieve sustainable development (Simone & Popoff, 2000, p. 3).

These three principles are complementary to each other and each is an indispensable element for sustainable development. If a definition is made by evaluating these principles together, sustainable development; "*It is the economic development that will provide justice and opportunity not only for a certain group but for all humanity, by using scarce resources in the most efficient way and without being destroyed*" (UN, 2022).

2.3. Approaches of Sustainability

To establish a holistic sustainability strategy, it is crucial to acknowledge the interplay among the economic, social, and environmental dimensions and the impacts they have on one another (Baumgartner & Ebner, 2010). John Elkington, who uncovered the concept known as "The Triple Bottom Line", also expresses the relationship and interaction of three dimensions (Dyllick & Hockerts, 2002). As a new management paradigm, sustainability is a multi-faceted concept that reveals not only economic needs, but also environmental and social needs such as environmental sustainability, environmental protection, social equality and sustainable development (Bibri, 2008).

This study will focus on environmental sustainability since it has become increasingly significant in recent times due to urgent issues and heightened concerns surrounding our planet. It is emphasized by Pope Francis that "We need a conversation that includes everyone, since the environmental challenge we are undergoing, and its human roots, concern and affect us all" (Francis, 2015). The depletion of natural resources, escalating pollution levels, and the impacts of climate change have underscored the need for immediate action. The imperative for sustainable practices and policies has become undeniable as societies recognize the long-term consequences of environmental degradation. J.K. Rowling eloquently conveys the idea that we are borrowing the Earth from future generations, emphasizing the responsibility to preserve it (Rowling, 2019). Therefore, prioritizing environmental sustainability is crucial to ensure a viable and livable planet for the well-being of future generations.

Furthermore, environmental sustainability holds significant importance for both brands and consumers, given that consumers are becoming more cognizant of the

environmental consequences of their buying choices and are actively seeking brands that prioritize sustainability. A study conducted by Nielsen revealed that 73% of consumers are prepared to alter their consumption behaviors in order to diminish their environmental footprint. Consumers are showing a growing preference for brands that emphasize sustainability, and according to research conducted by Cone Communications, 87% of consumers hold a more favorable view of companies that endorse social or environmental causes (Cone Communications, 2017). By aligning with environmental sustainability, brands can demonstrate their commitment to social responsibility, differentiate themselves in the market, and build trust with consumers, employees, investors, and communities.

2.3.1. Environmental Sustainability

It is known that sustainable development or sustainability is narrowly defined by environmental sustainability. The reason for this misconception is the aspect of international development destroying the environment (Basiago A. , 1999). Intense attention to environmental sustainability can be explained with the lack of economic development and poverty alleviation in developing countries under development theory and the delayed response to global environmental threats. Environmental sustainability remains a subject of debate within the context of development theory. The debate is on whether it is a necessary condition for fostering economic growth and preventing poverty or whether economic growth and poverty need to be resolved before environmental sustainability.

From a general perspective, the idea of sustainability emerges with the idea of leaving natural resources, the environment, and so forth similar to future generations, expressing the significance of its importance for businesses to pay attention to environmental sustainability.

Environmental sustainability is the sustainability of the natural capital (Goodland, 1995). The existence of natural capital is expressed in two main types: it is, firstly renewable (fish, wood) natural resources that can be consumed in many economic processes or non-renewable sources such as fossil fuels. On the other hand, it is natural resources ecosystem services such as water treatment, plant and animal reproduction. Ecologically responsible businesses utilize natural resources at a pace that aligns with their natural replenishment rate or in locations where their regeneration

can occur effectively. As a result, these activities give no harm to environment (Dyllick & Hockerts, 2002).

The economic prosperity of environmental conditions required the implementation of new criteria for the sharing and efficient use of resources and the inadequacy of the markets for the distribution of natural resources (Goodland, 1995).

Goodland (1995) found overlap in economic, social and environmental sustainability and he specifically recognized a significant correlation between economic viability and environmental sustainability (Goodland, 1995).

The aspect of environmental sustainability is closely related to the company's deployment and operations in the natural environment. Protection aspects in the environmental dimension are as follows:

- Resource exploitation

- Emission

- Environmental damage and risks

In fact, companies with different activities will have different environmental impacts.

The overall scope of environmental sustainability in accordance with GRI-G4 standards can be specified as follows:

Materials: The amount of materials that the organization uses in its products and services, the use of renewable and non-renewable materials and the ability to recycle can be assessed within this scope.

Energy: The energy consumption in the organization, the type and amount of energy used, the purpose of use and energy consumption standards outside the organization and energy consumption reduction processes are considered within this scope.

Water: Factors like water diversity value, size, water quality, surface water such as sea, river, groundwater, rainwater, water resource used as waste water for other organizations and recycling and reuse of water by the organization are considered within this scope.

Biodiversity: Geographical location of protected areas with high biodiversity, land leased or owned by the organization, protected area and its position, operation type, impact on the environment during production or service activities, size of the protected area, the number of species that are endangered at a critical level and in the red list of International Union for Conservation of Nature and living species on national protection list are considered within this scope.

Consumers who are aware of environmental sustainability can be considered as environmental conscious (Zheng, 2010). Having environmental concerns may affect consumers' decision-making process when acquiring a product or service.

2.3.2. Economic Sustainability

Economic sustainability involves the capacity of an economy to promote enduring growth and progress while ensuring the welfare of both current and future generations (WCED, 1987). This encompasses effective resource allocation, minimizing environmental impact, promoting social equity, and enhancing resilience to external shocks.

Efficient resource utilization to reduce waste and environmental degradation is a fundamental aspect of economic sustainability. This involves adopting sustainable practices in sectors like energy, agriculture, and manufacturing to minimize carbon emissions, preserve natural resources, and embrace circular economy principles. Moreover, economic sustainability necessitates ensuring social equity by guaranteeing fair wages, decent working conditions, and universal access to education and healthcare.

Promoting resilience in the face of external shocks is also vital for economic sustainability. This entails diversifying the economy, investing in infrastructure, and cultivating a robust financial system capable of withstanding economic downturns (United Nations, 2015). By establishing a stable and inclusive economic environment, countries can nurture sustainable growth that benefits both present and future generations.

2.3.3. Social Sustainability

Social sustainability entails a society's capacity to meet the diverse needs of its members in an equitable and just manner, promoting inclusivity, social cohesion, and fairness (United Nations, 2015). It encompasses various dimensions, such as ensuring

access to essential services, education, healthcare, housing, and social protection. Furthermore, social sustainability involves fostering equal opportunities, eliminating discrimination, and prioritizing the well-being and empowerment of individuals and communities.

Social sustainability is a vital component of sustainable development (United Nations, 2015). Goal 10 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) focuses on reducing inequalities within and among countries, striving to achieve social, economic, and political inclusion for all. Additionally, Goal 11 emphasizes the significance of creating inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable cities and communities, where people can access essential services and enjoy a high quality of life (United Nations, 2015).

2.4. Sustainable Brand Communication on Social Media

In the present era, it can be observed that consumer preferences and demands are subject to continuous transformation. As a result, it has become crucial for businesses to comprehensively examine the actions and tendencies of their intended consumer base. Meeting the requirements and desires of consumers is imperative in today's highly competitive market environment. Provided that the businesses accurately analyze consumer behavior, the products and services provided by businesses will become preferable by the consumers. Hence, companies will secure a competitive edge in the market (Koçoğlu, 2014).

Consumer behavior can be considered as part of one of the sub-categories of human behaviors in general. That is, human behavior, which can be defined as the interaction of the human being with the environment, establishes the basis for the consumer behavior. Accordingly, consumer behavior can be described as activities consisting of consumers decisions to buy the products and services (Odabaşı, 1998). In other words, consumer behavior can be defined as the entire process beginning from a consumers' needs, continuing with a consumers' purchasing a product or a service in order to fulfill the need, and ending with the evaluation stage in which the consumer assesses the advantages and disadvantages of the act of purchasing (Altunışık, Özdemir, & Torlak, 2012).

According to research by Stelzner, 96% of marketers use social media as a marketing tool (Stelzner, 2017). The impact of social media usage in marketing is remarkably significant, influencing sales growth, purchase intent, and stock prices to a

great extent. The way companies utilize social media platforms and the extent of their follower base can impact consumers' perceptions of the brand or product, either positively or negatively. The utilization of social media by a company directly impacts the purchasing behavior of lots of users. Studies have demonstrated that a significant portion of consumers rely on social media for their buying choices, and their trust in social media platforms in this regard is substantial. (Saboo, Kumar, & Ramani, 2016, p. 524).

2.5. Social Media

2.5.1. Definition and Development of Social Media

Social media is an increasingly important concept for individuals. More people are under the influence of social media every passing day. In contemporary times, people have started to engage in social media platforms for communication, sharing their thoughts and ideas with their friends. The transfer of these ideas also includes the experiences and thoughts of consumers about products or businesses. The thoughts conveyed by consumers affect other people who are also consumers and this is reflected in the purchasing behavior. Thus, identifying and understanding social media is extremely important for marketers in order to develop the right strategies. In order to define the concept of social media there are two concepts that needs to be addressed; “User Generated Content” and “Web 2.0” (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). The concept of Web 2.0 was first declared by Tim O’Reilly in 2004 during a conference proceeding (O'Reilly, Web 2.0: Compact Definition?, 2005a).

After the mentioned date, there emerged many differences about the definition of the concept. Although the concept was defined in many different ways, O’Reilly, who used the concept for the first time, defined Web 2.0 as follows: Web 2.0 is a network that covers all devices connected to a network. The applications used with Web 2.0 are the main advantages of this platform. These advantages can be summarized as; service software that is constantly updated during the use of these applications by individuals, gathering and using information provided by other individuals, using "sharing architecture" to create a constantly growing network effect and go beyond Web 1.0 to create a richer user experience (O'Reilly, 2005b). In other words, Web 2.0 has freed the internet from being one-way and it has made it an environment where users can create content and share it with other Internet users. "User Generated Content"

describes the content that users create on the Internet. In order for a content to be called user-generated content, it must meet 3 different requirements (OECD, 2007, p. 8).

The first of the requirements is the publication of the content by anyone or by a group of people on an accessible website. E-mail, two-sided messages, etc. platforms are exceptions to this requirement. Another requirement is that contents that require a creative effort. This creative effort can be defined as adding a certain value to the content. And the last requirement is that the content must be created outside a person's professional routine. It has been mentioned here that the contents are produced independent from commercial concerns. The definition of social media can be made with the help of these two concepts. Social media is an Internet-based application or site created with Web 2.0 refers to the internet environment that empowers users to generate and distribute their own content (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). By another interpretation, social media encompasses web-based applications and platforms that facilitate online interactions, idea exchange, discussions, and communication among users. These services may include texts, audios, pictures, videos, and other media individually or in multiple ways (Ryan & Jones, 2009, p. 152).

In 1979, Tom Truscott and Jim Ellis of Duke University designed a website called Usenet. People who have access to this site have the opportunity to write messages in a way that all Internet users can see and thus make discussions with site users (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). But the first social media site in today's understanding was established in 1997. The Internet site called SixDegrees.com provided users with the opportunity to create profiles and add friends. In 1998, the site offered its users to have a look at the friend lists of their friends. In the same period, media, such as AIM, ICQ, also had friend lists, but these lists could not be seen by other friends. Classmates.com, which aims to bring people together with individuals connected to their schools, did not provide the opportunity to create a profile. SixDegrees.com has become the first site to offer these two features together (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). Shortly before the 2000s, internet users were faced with the term "weblog" as Internet blogs became widespread (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

The founders of MySpace, namely Chris DeWolfe, Brad Greenspan, Tom Anderson, and Josh Berman, established the platform in 2003. They were inspired by the website called Friendster. The site reached 1 million users in the first month and in July 2006 it was the most visited site in the USA. The website was valued more than

billion dollar in 2007 (Riese, 2016). In the 2000s, social media sites started to gain popularity with the introduction of computers in every home and high speed Internet access opportunities. Thus, popular social media sites used today emerged in the beginning of 2000s. The first examples of this period are LinkedIn (2003), MySpace (2003) and Facebook (2004) (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Social media sites have started to increase after this date and the number of social media sites is increasing day by day. Various social media sites that have been established since the 2000s and have a share in the social media's current trend can be listed as follows:

- Flickr (2004)
- Reddit (2005)
- YouTube (2005)
- Tumblr (2006)
- Twitter (2006)
- Foursquare (2009)
- Instagram (2010)
- Google+ (2010)
- Snapchat (2011)
- Vine (2012)
- Periscope (2015)
- TikTok (2016)

Instagram stands out as one of the top social media platforms with 500 million active users (Lockhart in 2019). Users can share a photograph or video and post it on the application, interact with one another (Chua & Chang, 2016; Lee et. al, 2015). Unless the user deletes posts, they remain on their profile. Users can see the posts on their feed depending on the other users they follow. It is a free application which also offers users different features like stories, guides, reels, filters, stickers, text, drawings,

emojis, link, location tags (Thomas VL, Chavez M, Browne EN, Minnis AM, 2020). Since it offers attractive content, Instagram has also become an important tool for brands too (Abdullah et al., 2020). Nowadays, brands use Instagram to promote their products and communicate with their consumers.

2.5.2. Social Media and Consumer Behavior

Social media platforms have transformed how individuals consume information, connect with businesses, and communicate with producers due to the rapid advancements in technology and the internet in modern times. This has led to changes in consumer habits, the structure of the market for businesses, and the means and methods of communication (Erdemir, 2017). In the past, traditional communication channels like advertisements, newspapers, and television played a significant role in shaping consumers' purchasing choices. However, with the widespread adoption of social media, it has emerged as the most crucial determinant influencing consumers' buying decisions (Genç, 2015).

The advent of social media has altered the purchasing cycle of consumers and introduced two key differences in buying process. Typically, consumers engage in pre- and post-purchase activities on social media platforms. Firstly, consumers conduct research through various sources such as blogs, forums, review sites, search engines and social media to learn about products they intent to purchase. Secondly, consumers express their opinions and experiences about the products and services they purchase on social media, sharing information like their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the product, its general characteristics, and how well it met their expectations with other consumers (İşlek, 2012). These activities of consumers on social media platforms can influence changes in consumer behavior by creating mutual interaction between consumers.

2.6. Brand Communication

2.6.1. Definition of Brand Communication

Brand communication, which is accepted as an integrated communication strategy, contains many communication elements. Sending brand-related messages to the target audience is called brand communication (Tosun, 2010). Businesses use brand communication to make a difference in the market. Brand communication is provided through fundamental concepts such as brand identity, image, culture and loyalty.

Improving the brand image in a positive way and creating brand loyalty can be achieved with an effective and successful communication system. Institutions that aim to be known and aware of their products and brands need to increase their investments in the field of communication. Thanks to the investments to be made in the field of communication, effective communication methods will be developed and thus both the functional and emotional characteristics of the brand will be conveyed to the target audience (Doyle, 2003). In order to attract the attention of customers, the messages published and the communication methods used are both original and honest, which is one of the most important factors that ensure to stay ahead of the competitors (Bozkurt, 2005). The purposes of brand communication can be examined in three groups as access purpose, process purpose and impact purpose.

In order to achieve the purpose of access, it is necessary to use the right communication channels that will enable the target audience to be reached. The target audience should be determined correctly and it should be decided whether it is suitable for the brand. The purpose of the process is the preparatory stage necessary for the successful and effective use of the determined communication channel in order to reach the target audience. It includes ensuring that the target audience finds it worth listening to the brand's message and adopting it. The purpose of impact is revealed after the access and process goals, and the success of the brand communication goals is analyzed (De Pelsmacker, Geuends, & Van den Bergh, 2007).

Brand communication, which contains more content than marketing communication, either develops or ends the relations between the customer and the brand (Duncan & Moriarty, 1998). Since it is difficult to convince customers with traditional marketing methods, innovative applications are evaluated within the scope of brand communication. The notion of "experience," a relatively recent addition to marketing literature, is gaining significant importance in brand communication strategies (Batı, 2012).

2.6.2. Purposes of Brand Communication

The communication process is the process of making sense of the transmitted message rather than conveying the message. Communication is an indispensable element of human life (Firat & Dholakia, 2006). Through communication, companies can give the message they want to give to the outside and draw the image they want

(Mattelart, 1995). The acceleration of global competition with globalization also causes innovations in communication strategies (Kitchen & Schultz, 2003). Brands are the communication tools of companies in changing global conditions (Kitchen & Schultz, 2003). In this context, it has a deeper meaning than the expression “brand is a distinctive name or symbol (such as logo, trademark or package design) designed to identify the product or service of a person or a group and to differentiate it from the products and services of its competitors” (Aaker, 1991).

When considered in line with the traditional “product plus” approach, it is possible to say that the brand has an additional effect on the product and gives it an identity. In the holistic approach, the focus is on the brand itself. The sum of the marketing mix elements is seen as the brand. According to the holistic approach, the brand is the promise of the entirety of the features that the individual has purchased, and these features can make a brand tangible, real, emotional or invisible (Ambler & Styles, 1996). The brand is defined by Aaker as a "bearer of cultural meaning" (Aaker, 1991).

The communication efforts that must be implemented in order for the companies to realize all the strategies they put forward to reach their goals are called brand communication. Brand communication is a communication strategy that is carried out together with many areas such as marketing, public relations, sales development, advertising activities etc. (Tosun, 2010).

In order to achieve success in brand communication, there must be a consistency between what the brand promises and the product/service it offers (Arruda, 2009). Having certain common areas with the target audience further enhances the connection between the consumer and the brand (Feldwick, 2003). Grace & O’Cass (2005) emphasized the significance of brand communication in creating a successful brand image in influencing the behavior of consumers.

2.7. Effects of Brand Communication on Social Media

2.7.1. WOM

Influencing buyers, including their wishes and buying decisions, has always been one of the most important tasks of marketing professionals. Brand marketers instill everything about love, humor, guilt and sex through all media channels, with advertisements that use the emotion factor heavily to get their products to be talked

about or sold. Another technique frequently used, especially in the 1980s and 1990s, is word of mouth marketing, which encourages buyers to recommend their favorite products to their families and friends (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Studies have shown that these types of recommendations have more public confidence in the product in question, even though the person talking about the product has no interest. In the same research, it has been seen that the demanding buyer is more in demand for the product he trusts. As a result, marketers understand the power of word of mouth. Such advice was seen by seasoned marketers as a credible statement of support, not a straw-fire effect (Keskin & Çepni, 2012).

Thus, this concept, which we can define as social impact marketing, has gained a stronger meaning with the idea of directing marketing methods to people who have an impact on buyers. Social impact marketing used to be simpler and more straightforward, as was the effect on buyers. As a result of the development of technology over years, WOM was evolved into e-WOM. Today, anybody online can contribute to e-WOM, which is a comment about a product or service made by consumers (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). However, the internet and social media have interrupted the communication channel connecting the brand, influencers and followers. The trust of buyers, which is of great importance for the success of word-of-mouth marketing, has been shaken by the information pollution. Over time, with the development and strengthening of social media, people began to open their minds to the world. With the environment formed after this point, everyone became an influencer without realizing it (Yaylagül, 2017).

This situation has led to the problem of searching for real influencers to carry out word of mouth marketing practice in the marketing world. Then, in 2010, rating platforms emerged that categorize and rank the impact people have on social networks based on the content, how often they produce content, and the number of followers. Marketers seeking to reinstate word-of-mouth marketing and in a desperate quest to identify influencers have embraced these platforms with mixed results in mind. The divergence of opinion over the accuracy of the platform that ranks social influencers and whether this platform benefits the word-of-mouth marketing initiative is proof that the desire of brand marketers to identify and classify influencers is still intense (Yaman, 2017).

Today, lots of consumers are sending and receiving messages all over the social media. When individuals make purchasing decisions, they commonly perform online inquiries or look for product reviews to acquire supplementary details and gain a deeper understanding of products and services (Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012). Prior research has indicated that positive word-of-mouth (WOM) exerts a favorable influence on purchase intention. However, if the statement is negative, it has a negative impact on purchasing interest (Baker et al, 2016).

In a research study aimed at examining how brand communication activities on social media influence brand equity, electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM), and purchase intention, it was found that social media provides consumers a platform to gather information about a brand more interactively. Thus, social media communications encourage consumers for e-WOM by sharing their ideas and information about brands / products / services freely (Aji & Nadhila & Sanny, 2020).

2.7.2. Brand Engagement

Brand engagement encompasses various dimensions, including cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects. It goes beyond mere awareness or purchase intention and involves active participation, emotional connection, and advocacy by consumers. Engaged customers form strong attachments to the brand, actively seek and share information, provide feedback, and exhibit brand loyalty (Bowden, 2009; Hollebeek, 2011).

Social media platforms have revolutionized brand-consumer interactions, offering unique opportunities for brand engagement. These platforms enable brands to establish two-way communication, foster meaningful dialogues, and create a sense of community. Users can like, comment, share, and engage with brand content, effectively becoming brand advocates and amplifying brand messages (Hanna, Rohm, & Crittenden, 2011).

Several factors contribute to brand engagement on social media. Content plays a pivotal role, as compelling and relevant content generates interest, triggers emotions, and encourages interaction (Brodie et al., 2013). Personalization and customization also enhance brand engagement, as tailored experiences make users feel valued and connected to the brand (Wirtz et al., 2013). Additionally, social media platforms offer real-time engagement, allowing brands to respond promptly to customer inquiries,

concerns, and feedback, thereby fostering a sense of responsiveness and trust (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2010).

Brand engagement on social media holds significant importance for brands due to several reasons. Firstly, engaged customers are more likely to exhibit brand loyalty, make repeat purchases, and recommend the brand to others. They become brand ambassadors, promoting the brand organically, and contributing to positive word-of-mouth (Van Doorn et al., 2010).

Secondly, brand engagement on social media enhances brand visibility and reach. Through sharing, liking, and commenting on brand content, users extend the brand's reach to their own social networks, creating a ripple effect. This organic reach increases brand exposure, attracts new customers, and contributes to brand growth (Li et al., 2012).

Moreover, brand engagement fosters brand authenticity and trust. Genuine interactions, transparency, and responsiveness build credibility, leading to stronger relationships with consumers. Brands that engage proactively with their audience on social media platforms demonstrate their commitment to customer satisfaction and nurture a positive brand image (Mollen and Wilson, 2010).

Brand engagement on social media is a multifaceted concept that involves active participation, emotional connection, and advocacy by consumers. Social media platforms provide an ideal environment for brands to foster brand engagement, allowing for two-way communication, community building, and real-time interactions. Brand engagement holds immense importance for brands as it drives customer loyalty, facilitates co-creation, extends brand visibility, and builds brand authenticity. Understanding and effectively leveraging brand engagement on social media can lead to long-term brand success in today's digitally connected world.

2.7.3. Purchase Intention

Purchasing intention is defined by Turgut et al. (2016) as “the consumer's plans to purchase a certain amount of a certain brand or product in a certain time period and the consumer's intention to purchase a certain product or service”. In another words, purchase intention is the combination of potential purchases and consumer interest (Kim & Ko, 2012). It should not be thought that the purchase intention will necessarily end with the purchasing behavior. For this reason, it is difficult to measure purchase

intention. However, the measurement can be made within the framework of the consumer's desire to purchase the product (Akyıldız & Marangoz, 2008).

If the consumer is positively affected by the advertisement he / she watches, a positive advertisement attitude is formed. This is the same as admiring the ad. Acknowledging the advertisement results in the brand being favorably received, ultimately leading to the intention to make a purchase. The decision stage in the purchasing process and the purchase intention are intertwined. It is often used to calculate what the estimated sales of products will be. Strategic planning is made according to forecasts (Mutlu, Çeviker, & Çirkin, 2011). There are many factors that affect the purchasing decision and may discourage purchasing. Risk factor is the most important of these factors. As the price of a product increases, its risk also increases. In the event that the characteristics of a product are not certain, the consumer questions his / her decision on his own. This also affects the risk factor (Odabaşı & Gülfidan, Tüketici Davranışı, 2007).

In addition, it is possible to say that e-WOM is positively correlated with purchase intention (Doh & Hwang, 2009). It is posited that favorable e-WOM (electronic word-of-mouth) reviews of a product will impact the future purchasing intentions of other consumers. Drawing from research conducted to investigate the influence of Instagram's social media marketing on purchase intent, the results suggest that the increasing adoption of social media strategies in Indonesia encourages consumers to utilize social media platforms as a source of information about specific products and services. This, in turn, can significantly influence consumers' intentions to make purchases (Aji & Nadhila & Sanny, 2021).

2.7.4. Brand Attitude

Brand attitude refers to an individual’s personal assessment of an object, which may include a branded product. Brand attitudes, which are considered relatively stable and behavioral trends, are interpreted as reliable indicators of consumers' behavior towards a product or service (Mitchell & Olson, 1981). Brand attitude is the consumer's feelings and thoughts towards the brand, the values perceived by the brand, showing whether the consumer likes the brand or not.

Brand attitude is related to brand equity (Tosun, 2010). With brand awareness, the process of recognizing and remembering the brand begins by learning some

information about the brand. With the strengthening of this awareness, brand familiarity occurs, then the information in the memory triggers the formation of associations through brand familiarity. At the end of this whole process, brand attitude is formed. A strong brand attitude is followed by brand loyalty. Understanding consumers' attitudes towards the brand is important for marketers because how the consumer perceives the brand, the brand's advertisement, and the positive or negative attitude it develops towards the brand affect their purchasing decisions. Consumers are influenced by the environment while forming an attitude towards the brand. Family, friends and past experiences have an effect on a person's attitude towards a brand. An individual's purchase intention is influenced by their attitude towards the behavior, subjective norms regarding the behavior, and, consequently, the consumer's attitude towards the brand contributes to their purchase intention (Pradhan, Duraipandian, & Sethi, 2014).

2.7.5. Attitude toward Influencer

The word “influencer” has gained universal validity as a marketing term today and is used as an advertising activity carried out by well-known and influential people, usually towards the group in the domain of social media phenomena. Influencers are individuals or groups that have the potential to influence the actions and attitudes of other people. In today's world, thousands of influencers, micro and macro, have emerged with social media. The areas in which they are concentrated also vary. This situation causes influencers to be a very effective way in terms of targeting in marketing. Because each influencer has an audience interested in certain topics. Influencers have an influence on potential customers (Brown & Fiorella, 2013).

Influencers are content creators and this content forms the basis for subsequent influencer activities. These individuals are the proprietors of active and widely-followed accounts on various channels, including blogs, vlogs, Instagram, and other social media platforms. Particularly, Instagram influencers are regarded as reliable trendsetters within one or more specific fields, and consequently, they hold a level of trustworthiness with consumers (Veirman, Cauberghe & Hudders, 2017). The results of a study conducted to explore the correlation between influencers and brand engagement showed that, there is a positive impact of Instagram influencers on consumers’ decision making process (Duh, 2021).

Influencers regularly share their daily lives or opinions and experiences through these channels. Brands that want to appeal to the target audience of these people can send influencers products to test, enable them to participate in or organize special events, or simply sponsor them financially. The goal is for these people to endorse and make visible the brand's products as popular figures (Veirman, Cauberghe, & Hudders, 2017).

Events on social media create transformations of ideas on many people. The source of these transformations is the influencer figures. All kinds of messages are transmitted at the speed of light on social media. Therefore, these events also happen very quickly. The messages that an influencer delivers to his followers are spread by the followers and reach other people. Therefore, influencer marketing is not limited to the audience of the influencer. Today, the reliability of traditional advertising activities in the eyes of consumers has decreased considerably. These advertisements can be ignored or even seen as overly intrusive and create negative effects from time to time (Veirman, Cauberghe, & Hudders, 2017).

3. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

The purpose of this study is to investigate how the source of communication of sustainability messages by brands on social media affects consumer responses and to propose a model for understanding these responses. Specifically, the study aims to examine how consumers react to sustainability practices on social media based on the source of the message (brand or an influencer). It also considers factors such as brand attitude and attitude toward influencers. By analyzing consumer responses to sustainability communications, the study seeks to provide insights that can help brands effectively communicate their sustainability efforts and improve their practices on social media.

3.1. Sustainability Communications and Consumers' Perception

Sustainability communications play a critical role in shaping consumers' responses and can have a significant impact on a brand's image, attitude and performance (Kurnia et al., 2022).

The significance of environmental consciousness on brand attitude has gained considerable prominence in the contemporary consumer environment. Individuals are becoming more conscious of the environmental consequences associated with their buying choices and are utilizing social media platforms to express their concerns and exchange information with fellow consumers. Having a strong concern for the environment can considerably influence brand attitude in a positive way (Lee, Park & Han, 2019). Brands that prioritize sustainability in their products and messaging are more likely to attract positive attitudes and engagement from consumers on social media. Studies have found that consumers perceive sustainable brands as more trustworthy, socially responsible, and authentic, leading to increased brand loyalty and positive word-of-mouth recommendations (Furlow et al., 2020).

Furthermore, social media offers consumers a platform to hold brands responsible for their sustainability initiatives and actions. Consumers can share information about brands' environmental and social impact, demand transparency and accountability, and call for change when necessary. Brands that are perceived as not taking sustainability seriously or engaging in "greenwashing" can face negative backlash and damage to their reputation on social media. Therefore, brands that are transparent about their sustainability efforts and engage with consumers on social media

to addrerss their concerns can build stronger relationships with their audience and create a positive brand image (Chen & Chang, 2021).

The relationship between sustainability and consumers' brand attitudes on social media is significant, and brands that prioritize sustainability in their products and messaging can benefit from increased positive word-of-mouth recommendations (Kong, Witmaier & Ko, 2021). Nonetheless, it is essential for brands to maintain transparency regarding their sustainability initiatives and engage with consumers on social media to address their issues and establish trust. Social media possesses the capability to ensure brands' accountability for their sustainability efforts, and brands that take their environmental and social impact seriously can build a positive brand image and strengthen their relationship with their audience.

Furthermore, consumers who perceive brands as environmentally and socially responsible are more likely to engage in positive e-WOM, which can greatly impact a brand’s reputation and sales. Positive e-WOM can also lead to increased consumer loyalty and positive brand associations, which can translate into a competitive advantage. On the other hand, consumers who perceive brands as not taking sustainability seriously or engaging in "greenwashing" are more likely to engage in negative e-WOM, leading to a loss of reputation and potential revenue for the brand (Chen & Chang, 2021).

Moreover, the influence of sustainability perception on electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) behavior is magnified due to the extensive utilization of social media platforms. Social media platforms offer consumers a means to disseminate their viewpoints and personal encounters regarding a brand's sustainability practices to a broad audience. Positive e-WOM can quickly go viral and reach a large number of consumers, while negative e-WOM can quickly damage a brand's reputation. Therefore, brands that prioritize sustainability in their products and messaging and engage with consumers on social media to address their concerns can build stronger relationships with their audience, create positive brand associations, and minimize the impact of negative e-WOM (Furlow et al., 2020).

Furthermore, individuals who perceive brands as socially and environmentally responsible are more inclined to interact with the brand on social media platforms, such as by liking, commenting on, and sharing their content. Such engagement has the

potential to result in increased brand visibility and recognition, which can ultimately give rise to a competitive edge in the marketplace (Furlow et al., 2020).

However, negative perceptions of a brand's sustainability practices can lead to decreased brand engagement on social media, this can result in a substantial influence on both a brand's reputation and its sales performance (Furlow et al., 2020).

Moreover**,** sustainability perception of consumers is significantly linked to their purchase intention. From the previous studies conducted about the relationship between consumer behavior and environmental consciousness, it is obtained that being an environmental conscious consumer influences them to purchase products and services that are less harmful to environment (Chang & Fong, 2010; Dancius, 205; Roberts & Bacon, 1997). In another study, it was discovered that consumers who prioritize environmental consciousness are more inclined to make purchases from that particular brand (Chen & Chang, 2021).

Another research has shown that consumers' environmental consciousness can influence their purchase behavior and brand engagement (Lee, Park & Han, 2019).

All of those considerations about sustainability and consumer responses suggest the first hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: Consumer perceptions of brand communication efforts for environmental sustainability will positively influence a) brand attitude, b) e-WOM, c) brand engagement, and d) purchase intentions.

3.2. Sustainability Communications and Brand Attitude on Social Media

Given consumers' growing concerns regarding sustainability and the environmental impact of products and services, brand attitude holds substantial sway over sustainability communications. Consumers often base their decisions on the perceived sustainability of brands. Research has shown that positive brand attitude lead to greater willingness to engage in sustainable behaviors (Wang, Liang, & Zhang, 2016).

Brand attitude is also an essential aspect of e-WOM. Studies have found that positive brand attitude is positively associated with positive e-WOM, whereas negative brand attitude is related with negative e-WOM (Cho & Park, 2011). Positive brand attitude can result in favorable electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) as contented

consumers are inclined to share their positive experiences with others on social media platforms (Akar & Topçu, 2021). Conversely, an unfavorable brand attitude can give rise to negative electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM), which can inflict harm on the brand's reputation and result in customer attrition (Nath & Adhikari, 2021).

Brands can influence e-WOM by actively engaging with consumers on social media platforms. Responding to consumer feedback, addressing their concerns and thanking them for their positive comments can build a positive relationship with the audience, leading to increased positive e-WOM (Akar & Topçu, 2021).

The relationship between brand attitude and brand engagement on social media has been thoroughly explored in existing literature. Multiple studies have indicated a positive connection between brand attitude and brand engagement on social media. For instance, one study discovered that consumers with a favorable brand attitude were more inclined to actively engage with the brand on social media platforms (Lee & Kim, 2019). Likewise, Kim and Ko (2012) observed that a positive brand attitude among consumers toward a brand's social media content had a beneficial impact on their engagement with the brand on social media. These findings imply that a positive brand attitude can lead to an increase in brand engagement on social media.

Furthermore, brand engagement on social media can also have a positive impact on brand attitude. A research study discovered that consumers' active involvement with a brand on social media had a positive impact on their brand attitude (Alnawas & Alzahrani, 2019). Similarly, a study by Kim and Ko (2012) found that brand engagement on social media positively influenced consumers' perception of a brand's credibility, which in turn positively influenced their brand attitude. These findings suggest that brand engagement on social media can contribute to the development of a positive brand attitude among consumers.

On the other hand, earlier research has demonstrated that brand sentiment has a beneficial impact on purchasing intentions on social media. For example, in a study conducted it was found that a positive brand sentiment significantly influences purchasing intentions on social media platforms (Park & Lee, 2009). Similarly, another study emphasized that brand attitude plays a positive role in influencing purchase intention within the context of mobile devices (Huang & Chen, 2017). Furthermore, brand engagement on social media has been identified as a mediator in the relationship

between brand attitude and purchase intention. Brand attitude has a direct positive influence on purchase intention, and this association is partially mediated by brand engagement (Huang & Chen, 2017).

Therefore:

Hypothesis 2: Brand attitude mediates the effect of sustainability perception has a positive effect on consumer responses; a) e-WOM, b) brand engagement, c) purchase intentions.

3.3. Brand Communication Sources on Social Media

Brand communication on social media can take various forms; contents made by company or influencers. Contents made by the company may be called as branded contents; these are contents that are created by a brand to promote their products or services. It can include images, videos, blog posts and other types of content that showcase a brand's offerings (Waqas et al, 2021). On the other hand, influencer content is created by social media influencers who are considered experts in their niche. Influencer contents can include product reviews, posts and endorsements that showcase a brand's products or services (Lou & Yuan, 2019). This type of content is highly effective because it is created by individuals who have built trust with their followers and are seen as authoritative figures. Influencers can be a powerful source of brand communication because they can help increase brand awareness, reach new audiences and drive sales (Jarrar et al. 2020).

Numerous research investigations have explored the impact of content generated by influencers in contrast to content produced by brands on consumer reactions. Consequently, influencer-generated content is viewed as more genuine and reliable in comparison to content created by brands, as indicated by Bartsch et al. in 2019. The study found that consumers perceive influencer created content as more personal and relatable which lead to increased engagement and positive brant attitude. In another study, it is found that influencer created content is more effective at increasing the purchase intention compared to brand created content. Also, it is found that consumers perceive view influencer created content as more persuasive and credible, leading to greater purchase intention (Bartsch et al, 2019).

Content generated by influencers is often viewed as more authentic, genuine, and relatable. Influencers possess the capability to create a sense of social validation,

where consumers believe that choosing the promoted product is the right decision because it's favored by others. Moreover, consumers often identify with their favorite influencers, and purchasing products or services promoted by these influencers can be seen as a way of expressing their identity or belonging to a particular social group. It is found in a study that, consumers' perceived social identity mediated the relationship between influencer marketing and purchase intention (Kim & Ko, 2019). Consequently:

Hypothesis 3: Brand communications focusing on environmental sustainability made by influencers rather than the company itself will more strongly influence a) brand attitudes, b) eWOM, c) brand engagement and d) purchase intention.

3.4. Sustainability Communications and Attitude toward Influencer on Social Media

The perception of an influencer can wield a substantial influence on the efficacy of sustainability communications on social media.

In today's world, gaining insight into the correlation between consumers' attitudes towards influencers and their subsequent responses is imperative. Research has shown that positive attitudes towards influencers can have a substantial influence on WOM. If an individual has a positive attitude towards an influencer, it is possible for a consumer to create a positive e-WOM (Chen, Lin & Chang, 2020).

It is found that social media users who have a more favorable attitude toward influencers are more likely to share their content and engage in e-WOM (Lee & Watkins, 2016). Attitude toward influencers significantly influences the credibility of e-WOM, with consumers perceiving e-WOM to be more reliable when it comes from a trusted influencer (Chu & Kim, 2019). In addition to the impact on consumer behavior, the relationship between attitude toward influencer and e-WOM can also have implications for brand image and reputation. In a study, it was found that perceived authenticity, credibility and attractiveness of influencers significantly influence the attitude toward influencers among consumers (Abidin & Ots, 2020). This highlights the importance of partnering with credible and trustworthy influencers.

In recent years, there has been extensive research conducted on the correlation between attitudes towards influencers and brand engagement. A positive attitude toward influencer can increase brand engagement among consumers, as they are more likely to interact with their brand and share their experiences with others. Previous

studies showed that consumers who hold a favorable attitude towards influencers are more inclined to actively engage with the brand's social media content, resulting in elevated levels of brand engagement (Han, Nunes & Dreze, 2019).

Based on a study conducted to explore the connection between influencers and Instagram users' purchase intention within the fashion industry, findings indicate that influencers exert a positive influence on users' purchase intention (Abdullah et al., 2020).

Moreover, studies have indicated that the efficacy of influencer marketing campaigns significantly hinges on the attitude towards the influencer. In a particular study, it was discovered that consumers who hold a more favorable attitude towards the influencer demonstrate a greater likelihood of engaging with the brand (Li, Liang & Liu, 2019).

In contrast, a negative attitude toward influencers can harm brand engagement among consumers. Negative attitude toward influencers can lead to lower levels of brand engagement and may even result in consumers avoiding the brand altogether (Khamitov & Boerman, 2017). This highlights the importance of meticulously choosing influencers who share the brand's values and messaging, as it aids in reducing unfavorable perceptions among consumers.

Overall, the relationship between attitude toward influencers and brand engagement is a crucial aspect of influencer marketing. By building positive relationships with influencers and fostering a favorable attitude toward them among consumers, businesses can increase brand engagement and ultimately influence consumer behavior.

There has been a growing emphasis on examining the connection between consumers' opinions about influencers and their intentions to buy products. A positive attitude toward influencers can increase purchase intention among consumers, as they are more likely to trust and be influenced by the recommendations of their favorite influencers. A positive attitude towards an influencer can result in more favorable attitudes towards the products they endorse, ultimately leading to an increase in purchase intention (Brown & Hayes, 2008).

Additionally, another study revealed that consumers who hold a more favorable attitude towards the influencer are more prone to develop a positive attitude towards

the brand and its products. Consequently, this elevated attitude contributes to higher levels of purchase intention (Jean et al., 2019). This suggests that building positive relationships with influencers and fostering a favorable attitude toward them among consumers is crucial in increasing purchase intention.

Conversely, a negative attitude toward influencers can harm purchase intention among consumers. In a study, it was found that a negative attitude toward influencers can lead to lower levels of trust in the brand and ultimately decrease purchase intention (Yang & Liu, 2019).

The relationship between brand attitude and attitude toward influencers has received increasing attention nowadays, with the surge of influencer marketing on social media. In a study, it is found that consumers with a positive brand attitude have a tendency to perceive influencers associated with the brand as credible and trustworthy (Sung & Lee, 2018). The literature suggests that there is a positive correlation between brand attitude and attitude toward influencers. However, brands should collaborate with credible and trustworthy influencers to increase consumers' trust and purchase intention (Kim & Sung, 2019).

In previous research it has been stated that having a positive influencer attitude can considerably influence consumers' brand attitude in a positive way (Jean et al., 2019).

On the other hand, previous research showed that influencer endorsements can positively impact brand attitude. Social media endorsements can enhance consumers' brand attitudes, particularly for products that are less well-known or less frequently purchased (Godey et al, 2016). Another study supported that consumers who follow influencers on social media have a more positive brand attitude towards endorsed brand (Chua & Chang, 2019).

Hence:

Hypothesis 4: Attitude to influencer positively moderates the relationship between environmental sustainability perception and consumer responses such that the more positive the attitude towards the influencer, the higher is the influence of the influencers' environmental sustainability message on a) brand attitude, b) e-WOM, c) brand engagement, and d) purchase intention.

Below is the description of the research model and proposed relationships.

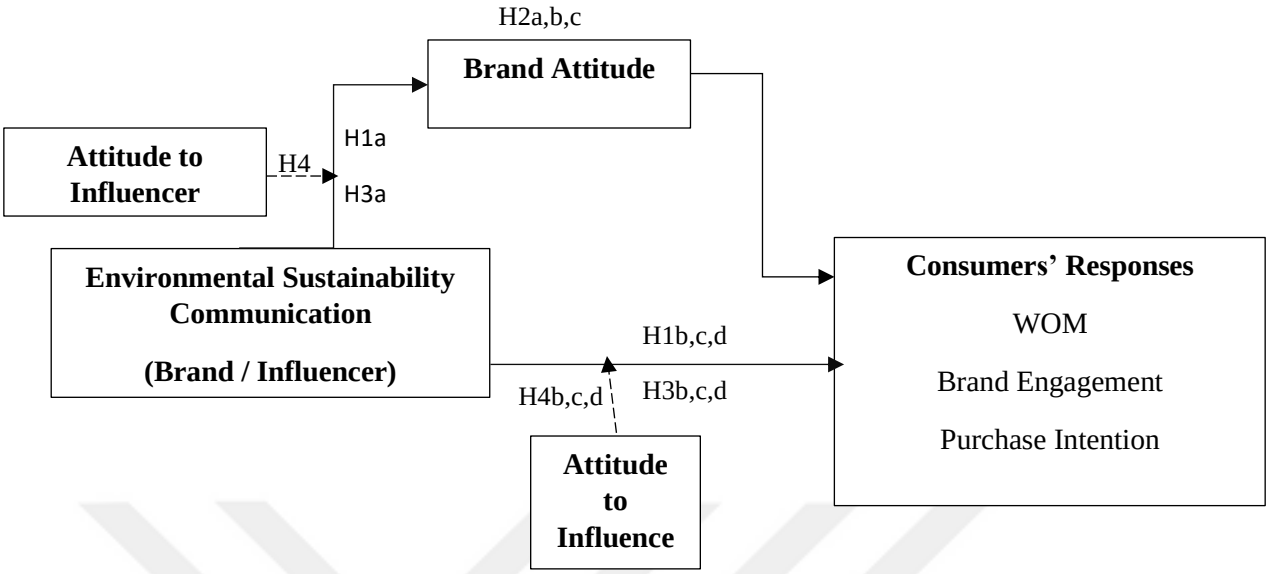

Figure 1. Theoretical Model

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The primary aim of this chapter is to delineate and elucidate the procedures and methodologies employed in this research. This involves outlining the approach taken and the methods employed to collect data through a survey. The study employs a structured survey that specifically examines how brands communicate their sustainability efforts through social media, and how these communication effects influence consumer responses, moderated by attitude toward influencers being taken into account in order to test the hypotheses.

4.1. Research Design

The study utilized a questionnaire as the research instrument to assess the variables under investigation.

4.1.1. Measurement Instruments and Questionnaire Design

In order to study the effect of the source of the communication of brands' sustainability efforts, A questionnaire was created by drawing upon previous studies and integrated into the theoretical model, ensuring acceptable levels of validity and reliability.

The questionnaire incorporated multi-item measures derived from prior research conducted in the literature; Environmental sustainability was derived from Ferreira & Fernandes, (2021), WOM and purchase intention from Aii, Nadhila & Sanny, (2020), brand engagement from Duh & Thabethe, (2021), brand attitude and attitude to influencer from Bruner (2011). The survey was disseminated among diverse demographic groups encompassing individuals from various backgrounds.

The questionnaire consisted of 5-point Likert-type scales, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), and encompassed items adapted from multiple researchers. These items are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1. *Constructs in the Study and Their Sources*

Construct	Source	Questions
Environmental Sustainability	Ferreira & Fernandes, 2021	- "I feel frustrated and angry when I think of companies that conduct business by polluting the environment." - "When two products are similar, I tend to select the one that harms the environment less, even though it is more expensive." - "If the products sold by the firms seriously damage the environment, I will refuse to purchase them" - "When purchasing products, I always select the ones with environmental certification, even though they are more expensive." - "I follow the key points of recycling and classify recycled waste at home." - "I am concerned about my actions to improve the environment." - "I am often concerned about and absorb. environmental knowledge and information" - "Sustainable brands are intensively advertised." - "Sustainable brands seem to spend a lot on advertising compared to other brands."
WOM	Aji, Nadhila & Sanny, 2020	- "I talk to many people about this brand." - "It is prideful for me to say that I am a customer of this brand"

Brand Engagement	Duh & Thabethe, 2021	- "I would read posts related to the brand in the Instagram post." - "I would look at pictures/ graphics related to the brand in the post." - "I would follow the depicted brand on the Instagram page." - "I would comment on posts/pictures/graphics/videos related to the brand in the post." - "I would share content related to the brand on the post." - "I would press/click "like" on posts related to the brand." - "I would write reviews related to the brand on the post"
Purchase Intention	Aji, Nadhila & Sanny, 2020	- "Interacting with this brand's Instagram help me make decisions better before purchasing their products and services" - "Interacting with this brand's Instagram increase my interest in buying their products and services" - "I will definitely buy products as marketed on this brand's Instagram" - "I have a high intention to become this brand customer"
Brand Attitude	Bruner, 2011	- "To me CIF is good/bad" - "To me CIF is value for money / not value for money" - "To me CIF is low quality / high quality"
Attitude to Influencer	Bruner, 2011	- "Please express your attitute towards Cansu Dengey."

4.1.2. Data Collection, Sampling and Analysis

To evaluate the impact of different sources of content on social media a between subject experiment was used with 3 groups.

4.1.2.1. Pretest 1

Firstly, the sustainability communications of brands on social media were examined. Instagram, where brands have the most communication, was chosen as the social platform for this study. After a detailed analysis of social media content and influencer collaborations of brands from various sectors such as cosmetics, food & beverage, and hygiene on their Instagram pages, CIF was selected as the brand that best represents sustainability communication. Pretest 1 was done to develop the stimuli used in the study. An online survey was conducted via Google Survey, with 106 participants. In this test, participants were shown 5 different social media contents of CIF and contents of influencers the brand collaborated with. These 106 participants were individuals between the ages of 18-25, consisting of 25% males and 75% females, who are university students or graduates residing in Turkey and actively using social media. After the pretest, the content and influencer content of CIF, which were found to be the most effective in terms of contribution to environmental sustainability consciousness by %45 of the participants, were used in this study.

4.1.2.2. Pretest 2

In the subsequent stage, a second pretest, known as pretest 2, was conducted using selected contents from the CIF. Its purpose was to evaluate the questionnaire's clarity, consistency, and reliability in capturing the intended information.

For this pretest, three distinct groups were formed. The first group was the Control Group (CG), where no content was presented. Participants in this group solely responded to questions related to environmental sustainability, consumer responses, and demographic information. The second group was the Influencer Group (IG), which exclusively viewed influencer content. In addition to answering questions regarding brand attitude, attitude towards influencers, consumer responses (brand engagement, WOM, purchase intention), environmental sustainability, and demographic information, participants in this group also answered the attitude towards influencer question. Lastly, the Brand Group (BG) was formed, where participants were exposed only to brand content. This group answered all the questionnaire sections except for

influencer attitude. After the influencer content was shown to the Influencer Group (IG) and the brand content was presented to the Brand Group (BG), a caution check question was included in the questionnaire. The participants in both groups were asked the following question: "To which brand does the previous content belong?" This caution question was designed to assess whether the participants were paying attention to and comprehending the content that was shown to them accurately.

The pretest involved a total of 50 participant. 80% of the respondents are between 25-34 and unmarried with 50% have graduate degree. 55% of the respondents have income below 9001 TL. All majors were found to be with high validity and reliability therefore, the main study has been performed.

4.1.2.3. Main Study

Following this, the main data collection stage was conducted by disseminating questionnaires online via Qualtrics to 149 individuals residing in various cities in Turkey. The participants who completed the questionnaire also distributed it to individuals they were close to. This method of distributing the survey among close contacts helped to enhance the overall sample size and potentially capture a more comprehensive view of the target population.

The data collected was analyzed using IBM SPSS 25 statistics software. Initially, frequency distributions were computed to assess the demographic information of the participants. Subsequently, hypothesis testing was conducted, utilizing independent t-test and Hayes Process Macro Model 4 was utilized on SPSS to examine the hypotheses.

5. RESULTS

5.1. Descriptive Statistics

Demographic information was collected by asking questions about gender, age, educational status, marital status, and monthly income. The intention was to particularly target social media users. In order to gather data from this specific group, a convenience sampling method was employed. Convenience sampling entails the selection of individuals who are readily accessible and easily available, making it a practical method for reaching out to social media users. By utilizing this method, the survey aimed to capture the perspectives and characteristics of individuals who engage with social media platforms. Demographic information gathered from the survey is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. *Distribution of the Participants' Demographic Information (n = 149)*

	Influencer		**Brand**		**Control**		**Total**	
Variables	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**
Gender								
Female	39	63.9	28	57.1	26	66.7	93	62.4
Male	22	36.1	21	42.9	13	33.3	56	37.6
Marital status								
Married	18	29.5	11	22.4	8	20.5	37	24.8
Single	43	70.5	38	77.6	31	79.5	112	75.2
Age								
18-24	11	18.0	9	18.4	7	17.9	27	18.1
25-34	31	50.8	30	61.2	25	64.1	86	57.7
35-44	12	19.7	8	16.3	5	12.8	25	16.8
45-54	5	8.2	2	4.1	0	.0	7	4.7
55+	2	3.3	0	.0	2	5.1	4	2.7
Education level								
High School	2	3.3	3	6.1	1	2.6	6	4.0
Associate degree	6	9.8	2	4.1	1	2.6	9	6.0
Bachelor's degree	40	65.6	27	55.1	25	64.1	92	61.7
Master's/doctoral degree	13	21.3	17	34.7	12	30.8	42	28.2
Monthly income								
4250 TL and below	4	6.6	7	14.3	6	15.4	17	11.4
4251 – 5000 TL	3	4.9	2	4.1	4	10.3	9	6.0
5001- 7000 TL	11	18.0	7	14.3	2	5.1	20	13.4
7001 - 9000 TL	6	9.8	5	10.2	6	15.4	17	11.4
9001 TL and above	37	60.7	28	57.1	21	53.8	86	57.7
TOTAL	61	100.0	49	100.0	39	100.0	149	100.0

In this study, 37.6% of the 149 participants were male and 62.4% were female. In addition, it is seen that the gender distribution of the 3 groups is not much different from the total. It is seen that 75.2% of the participants are single and 24.8% are married. When the groups are examined, it is seen that approximately 70% of each group consists of single people. It was found that more than half of the participants were between the ages of 25-34 (57.7%). It was also found that most of them (61.7%) had a bachelor's degree and more than half of them had a monthly income of more than 9001 TL (57.7%) (Table 1).

5.2. Reliability and Factor Analysis

Questions about environmental sustainability, brand attitude, attitude towards influencer and consumer responses and descriptive statistics of participants are given at Table 3.

Reliability and factor analysis was done to to examine the various aspects of consumer responses, environmental sustainability and brand attitude. The outcomes of this analysis are presented in Table 3. The outcomes of the reliability assessment reveal that the Cronbach's Alpha values for brand attitude, brand engagement, WOM and purchase intention span from 0.78 to 0.95. This indicates that the utilized measurement scales were deemed satisfactory and dependable, as indicated in Table 3.

After conducting reliability analysis, the factor analysis technique was employed to assess the validity of the constructs. The dimensions were investigated by a factor analysis by using the principal component analysis, correlation matrix, anti-image matrix. In environmental sustainability construct, Question 5 is eliminated because of low factor loading (0,045<0,5). Environmental communication construct can be examined as two different parts; communication and consumer perception. Question 8 and 9 are about communication.

The outcomes of the factor analysis revealed Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) sample validation coefficient values of 0.72 for brand attitude, 0.88 for brand engagement, 0.5 for word-of-mouth (WOM), 0.74 for purchase intention, and 0.84 for environmental sustainability. These values exceeded the threshold of 0.5 for both the overall test and each individual variable. Therefore, based on the KMO values, it can be concluded that the variables are statistically significant. These results demonstrate that the dataset of 149 participants was sufficient for uncovering the questionnaire's

underlying factor structure. Furthermore, the outcomes of Bartlett's test, which assesses the meaningfulness of the factor structure, indicated that the obtained factor structures were meaningful, as presented in Table 4.

Table 3. *Reliability Statistics and Factor Analysis Results*

Factor	Questions	Mean	Std.	Factor	Variance %	Cronbach's Alpha
Brand Attitude	"To me CIF is… (Bad-….-Good)"	4,05	0,94	,874	74%	0,83
	"To me CIF is... (Not value for money-….- Value for money)"	4,03	0,89	,859		
	"To me CIF is... (Low quality-….- High quality)"	4,11	0,84	,857		
Brand Engagament	"I would press/click "like" on posts related to the brand."	1,99	1,17	,896	77%	0,95
	"I would follow the depicted brand on the Instagram page."	1,58	1,01	,895		
	"I would comment on posts/pictures/graphics/ videos related to the brand in the post"	1,54	1,01	,894		
	"I would share content related to the brand on the post."	1,64	1,04	,878		
	"I would write reviews related to the brand on the post"	1,82	1,08	,875		
	"I would read posts related to the brand in the Instagram post."	1,96	1,09	,865		
	"I would look at pictures/ graphics related to the brand in the post"	2,13	1,18	,847		
WOM	"It is prideful for me to say that I am a customer of this brand"	2,6	1,29	,907	82%	0,78
	"I talk to many people about this brand."	2,25	1,25	,907		
Purchase Intention	"Interacting with this brand's Instagram help me make decisions better before purchasing their products and services"	2,37	1,24	,916	70%	0,86

	“Interacting with this brand’s Instagram increase my interest in buying their products and services”	2,55	1,32	,867		
	“I will definitely buy products as marketed on this brand’s Instagram”	2,43	1,24	,866		
	“I have a high intention to become this brand customers”	3,23	1,32	,706		
Environmental Sustainability	“When purchasing products, I always select the ones with environmental certification, even though they are more expensive”	3,41	1,18	,852	46%	0,87
	“When two products are similar, I tend to select the one that harms the environment less, even though it is more expensive”	3,87	1,11	,843		
	“If the products sold by the firms seriously damage the environment, I will refuse to purchase them “	3,8	1,05	,806		
	"I am often concerned about and absorb environmental knowledge and information"	3,74	1,02	,784		
	“I feel frustrated and angry when I think of companies that conduct business by polluting the environment”	4,25	1,03	,720		
	“I follow the key points of recycling and classify recycled waste at home”	3,48	1,21	,677		
	“Sustainable brands spend more money on advertising campaigns compared to other brands.”	3,3	1,15	,467		
	“Sustainable brands are intensively advertised.”	3,07	1,34	,611		

Table 4. KMO and Bartlett's Test results

Construct	KMO and Bartlett's Test
Brand Attitude	0,72
Brand Engagement	0,88
WOM	0,5
Purchase Intention	0,74
Environmental Sustainability	0,84

5.3. Hyptoheses Testing

To assess the hypotheses H1, H3, and H4, a t-test was conducted, while for testing H2, the Hayes Process Macro Model 4 was utilized on IBM SPSS 25.

Table 5. Group Comparisons for Brand Communication

	Groups	n	Mean	SD	F	p
WOM	IF	61	2.68	1.19	2.346	.099
	BF	49	2.26	1.15		
	CG	39	2.28	1.07		
Brand engagement	IF	61	2.05	1.07	3.405	.036*
	BF	49	1.63	.83		
	CG	39	1.67	.86		
Purchase intention	IF	61	2.99	.99	5.078	.007*
	BF	49	2.43	1.06		
	CG	39	2.46	1.09		
Brand attitude	IF	61	4.25	.72	3.459	.034*
	BF	49	4.06	.79		
	CG	39	3.85	.76		

* $p < .05$

As can be seen in Table 5, the comparison of the participants in 3 different groups for WOM, brand engagement, purchase intention, and brand attitude scores were made with one-way ANOVA. The results show that the IF, BF and CG groups did not differ in terms of WOM, $p > .05$. On the other hand, participants significantly differ with their brand engagement, purchase intention and brand attitude scores, $F(2, 146) = 3.405, 5.078, 3.459$, $p < .05$, respectively. The Bonferroni post-hoc tests were performed to identify which group were different from the others. The results of the

post-hoc test revealed that the IF group has significantly more engaged to the brand and have higher purchase intention compared to BF group and CG group. Also, the IF group has significantly more positive attitudes towards the brand compared to CG. Because of these results shown in Table 5.

In order to test the influence of consumer perceptions of brand communication efforts for environmental sustainability on a) brand attitude, b) e-WOM, c) brand engagement, and d) purchase intentions, t-test was applied. Two groups were identified in SPSS. The first group (Group 1) is the group that content was shown whether it is brand or influencer content, second group (Group 2) is the group that did not saw any content (Control Group). Among the examined constructs, it is seen that only the p-value of brand attitude is 0.008 < 0.05, indicating statistical significance (Table 7). So, H1a is accepted. Conversely, the remaining constructs were not supported by the data, as their p-values exceeded the predetermined threshold; there is no meaningful connection between consumer perceptions of brand communication efforts for environmental sustainability on consumer responses.

Table 6. Groups statistics for Group 1 & 2

GROUPS		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Brand Attitude	1.00	106	4,18	,75	,07
	2.00	43	3,82	,73	,11
Brand Engagement	1.00	106	1,88	,99	,09
	2.00	43	1,64	,83	,12
WOM	1.00	106	2,51	1,18	,11
	2.00	43	2,23	1,07	,16
Purchase Intention	1.00	106	2,75	1,06	,10
	2.00	43	2,44	1,05	,16

Table 7. t-test results for H1

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means			
	F	Sig.	t	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Brand Attitude	,56	,45	2,70	,008	,36	,13
			2,74	,008	,36	,13
Brand Engagement	,87	,35	1,40	,163	,24	,17
			1,51	,134	,24	,15
WOM	,41	,52	1,37	,172	,28	,20
			1,42	,157	,28	,20
Purchase Intention	,05	,82	1,59	,112	,30	,19
			1,60	,112	,30	,19

Independent t-test analysis was done to investigate the differences between the effect of influencer related brand communication content and brand content on consumer responses. It was assumed in Hypothesis 3 that brand communications focusing on environmental sustainability made by influencers rather than brand itself will more strongly influence consumer responses. Therefore, 2 groups were determined for this test; Influencer group which includes the participants shown influencer content and brand group which only branded content was shown. The statistics of the group was given in Table 8 and the result of t-test was demonstrated in Table 9.

The p-value of brand attitude, obtained from the t-test is 0.11 which greater than 0.05, indicating that the results are not statistically significant As a result, H3a is rejected. On the other hand, p-value of brand engagement, WOM and purchase intention are 0.01, 0.03 and 0, respectively. Since all of them are less than 0.05, it is possible to say that brand communication focusing on environmental sustainability made by influencers have more stronger effect than branded contents. Therefore, H3b, H3c and H3d are accepted.

Table 8. Group statistics for Influencer & Brand Groups

Groups		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Brand Attitude	Influencer	57	4,29	,72	,09
	Brand	49	4,06	,78	,11
Brand Engagement	Influencer	57	2,10	1,08	,14
	Brand	49	1,62	,82	,11
WOM	Influencer	57	2,74	1,17	,15
	Brand	49	2,25	1,14	,16
Purchase Intention	Influencer	57	3,03	1,00	,13
	Brand	49	2,42	1,05	,15

Table 9. t-test results for H3

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means			
	F	Sig.	t	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Brand Attitude	,86	,35	1,62	0,11	0,24	0,15
			1,60	0,11	0,24	0,15
Brand Engagement	2,31	,13	2,51	0,01	0,48	0,19
			2,56	0,01	0,48	0,19
WOM	,01	,93	2,17	0,03	0,49	0,23
			2,17	0,03	0,49	0,23
Purchase Intention	1,03	,31	3,03	0,00	0,61	0,20
			3,02	0,00	0,61	0,20

Another t-test was conducted to examine the relationship between attitude to influencer and brand attitude and consumer responses. It is assumed in Hyptohesis 4

that the more positive the attitude toward influencer, the higher is the influence of the influencers' environmental sustainability message on brand attitude & consumer responses. In order to proceed the test, respondents have been split into 2 groups based on the taking the mean value of attitude towards influencer into consideration with 21 respondents being higher than the mean value, shown in Table 8. As demonstrated in Table 9, p-value of brand attitude, WOM and purchase intention are 0.04, 0.01 and 0.01, respectively. However, p-value of brand engagement is 0.18 > 0.05. Therefore, H4a, H4c and H4d are accepted while H4b is rejected.

The attitude towards a brand's sustainability communication is positively influenced, regardless of whether it's done by the brand itself or an influencer. On the consumer responses side, there's a distinction between (WOM) and purchase intention, whether it's the brand or an influencer delivering the message.

Table 10. Group statistics for Group 1 & Group 2

GROUP Influencer		**N**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**	**Std. Error Mean**
Brand Attitude	1.00	36	4,16	0,75	0,13
	2.00	21	4,54	0,60	0,13
Brand Engagement	1.00	36	1,94	0,90	0,15
	2.00	21	2,38	1,31	0,29
WOM	1.00	36	2,44	1,05	0,18
	2.00	21	3,26	1,22	0,27
Purchase Intention	1.00	36	2,79	1,00	0,17
	2.00	21	3,45	0,88	0,19

Table 11. t-test results for H4

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means			
	F	Sig.	t	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Brand Attitude	,50	,47	-1,98	,05	-,38	,19
			-2,10	,04	-,38	,18
Brand Engagement	3,19	,07	-1,50	,13	-,44	,29
			-1,36	,18	-,44	,32
WOM	,30	,58	-2,66	,01	-,81	,30
			-2,56	,01	-,81	,31
Purchase Intention	,31	,57	-2,51	,01	-,66	,26
			-2,59	,01	-,66	,25

To explore the fundamental processes that contribute to the influence of perceptions regarding sustainability on electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) and the intention to make a purchase, we conducted a moderated mediation analysis using the PROCESS Model 4 by Hayes (Hayes, 2013). In this analysis, environmental sustainability was considered as the independent variable, consumer responses as the dependent variable, and brand attitude as the mediator in the study.

For the first analysis H2a was tested where independent variable is environmental sustainability, dependent variable is WOM and mediator is brand attitude. The result of moderated mediation analysis for H2a was shown in Table10. The results revealed a significant indirect effect of impact of environmental sustainability on WOM (b = 0.33) since there is no 0 in between lower and upper bound level, as shown in Table 10. Furthermore, the direct effect of environmental sustainability on WOM in presence of brand attitude mediator was not found to be

significant (b = 0.36, p = 0.4 > 0.001). Hence, the relationship between environmental sustainability and WOM is not strong enough to be detected directly but it operates through the brand attitude. So, H2a was accepted.

Table 12. Moderated mediation analysis for H2a

Total effect of X on Y						
Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	c_cs
0,69	0,18	3,82	0	0,33	1,05	0,45
Direct effect of X on Y						
Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	c'_cs
0,36	0,17	2,01	0,4	0	0,71	0,23
Indirect effect of X on Y						
		Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI	
	BA	0,33	0,1	0,16	0,56	
Completely standardized indirect effect(s) of X on Y						
		Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI	
	BA	0,22	0,06	0,1	0,35	

An additional moderating mediation analysis was performed to investigate the connection between environmental sustainability and brand engagement. Interestingly, the indirect effect of environmental sustainability on brand engagement was found to be non-significant. (b = 0.13) since there is a 0 between lower and upper bound levels (Table 11), indicating there is no mediation. So, H2b is rejected.

Table 13. Moderated mediation analysis for H2b

Total effect of X on Y						
Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	c_cs
0,41	0,17	2,34	0,02	0,06	0,77	0,3
Direct effect of X on Y						
Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	c'_cs
0,28	0,19	1,42	0,15	-0,11	0,68	0,2
Indirect effect of X on Y						
		Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI	
	BA	0,13	0,07	-0,01	0,29	
Completely standardized indirect effect(s) of X on Y						
		Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI	
	BA	0,97	0,05	-0,01	0,19	

Lastly, mediation analysis was done for environmental sustainability and purchase intention. As can be seen in Table 12, there is an indirect effect (b = 0.15) and

direct effect (p = 0 < 0.001) which means there is a partial mediation. So, H2c is partially accepted.

Table 14. Moderated mediation analysis for H2c

Total effect of X on Y						
Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	c_cs
0,64	0,15	4,26	0	0,33	0,94	0,49
Direct effect of X on Y						
Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	c'_cs
0,48	0,16	2,96	0	0,15	0,81	0,37
Indirect effect of X on Y						
		Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI	
	BA	0,15	0,84	0	0,33	
Completely standardized indirect effect(s) of X on Y						
		Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI	
	BA	0,12	0,05	0	0,23	

In conclusion, results of the hypotheses can be seen in Table 13.

Table 15. Results of hypotheses testing

Hypotheses	Results
H1: Consumer perceptions of brand communication efforts for environmental sustainability will positively influence a) brand attitude, b) e-WOM, c) brand engagement, and d) purchase intentions.	H1a is accepted H1b, H2c, H2d are rejected
H2: Brand attitude mediates the effect of sustainability perception has a positive effect on consumer responses; a) e-WOM, b) brand engagement, c) purchase intentions.	H2a is accepted H2b is rejected H2c is partially accepted
H3: Brand communications focusing on environmental sustainability made by influencers rather than the company itself will more strongly influence a) brand attitudes, b) eWOM, c) brand engagement and d) purchase intention.	H3a is rejected H3b, H3c, H3d are accepted
H4: Attitude to influencer positively moderates the relationship between environmental sustainability perception and consumer responses such that the more positive the attitude towards the influencer, the higher is the influence of the influencers' environmental sustainability message on a) brand attitude, b) e-WOM, c) brand engagement, and d) purchase intention.	H4a, H4c, H4d are accepted H4b is rejected

6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The present study was conducted to understand brands' sustainability communications in social media to investigate how to source of communication influences consumers responses. Following an extensive examination of social media posts and partnerships between influencers and brands across diverse sectors, CIF was chosen to be examined for this study. Given that this research was carried out during the pandemic, CIF was highly relevant and relatable brand for this study. The research employed a structured online survey using Likert-type scales to collect data from 149 participants in Turkey. Three different groups were created: the Control Group (CG), the Brand Group (BF), and the Influencer Group (IF), IF and BF were exposed to different types of CIF's content related to environmental sustainability. The collected data was analyzed using IBM SPSS 25 by using factor & reliability analysis, t-test and moderated mediation analysis.

The findings of this study shed light on the complex relationship between consumer perceptions of brand communication efforts for environmental sustainability and their subsequent effects on various aspects of consumer responses. The acceptance of Hypothesis 1a underscores the significant impact of these perceptions on brand attitude. Consumers who view a brand's communication efforts positively regarding environmental sustainability are more likely to develop favorable attitudes toward the brand. This aligns with the existing literature highlighting the influential role of sustainability in shaping consumer perceptions and preferences (Lee, Park & Han, 2019). Brands that effectively convey their commitment to environmental sustainability are poised to garner more positive responses and engagement from their audience, thus solidifying the link between sustainability-focused messaging and favorable brand attitudes.

Conversely, the rejection of Hypothesis 1b, along with Hypotheses 2c and 2d, reveals some nuanced findings. Despite positive perceptions of environmental sustainability communication efforts not directly translating into elevated e-WOM, brand engagement, or purchase intentions, this outcome might be attributed to several factors. For instance, while consumers appreciate sustainability efforts, they might not necessarily translate this appreciation into active discussions or intentions to purchase. The lack of a direct effect does not negate the importance of sustainability

communication; instead, it emphasizes the multifaceted nature of consumer responses and the role of additional moderating variables. The rejection of Hypothesis 1b, which posited that positive perceptions of environmental sustainability communication efforts would directly lead to elevated e-WOM, brand engagement, or purchase intentions, aligns with findings from previous research (Lee, Park & Han, 2019). While consumers do appreciate sustainability efforts, this appreciation doesn't always translate into active discussions or immediate intentions to purchase. This result underscores the multifaceted nature of consumer responses, reflecting the complex interplay of various factors in shaping attitudes and behaviors towards sustainability (Chen & Chang, 2021).

Moreover, the rejection of Hypotheses 2c and 2d, which suggested that positive sustainability perceptions would directly lead to increased e-WOM and brand engagement, underscores the necessity of considering additional moderating variables in the relationship between sustainability perception and consumer actions. It's consistent with the idea that consumers may not automatically engage with a brand on social media or spread positive e-WOM solely based on their perception of sustainability. These findings highlight the importance of a holistic view of consumer responses, recognizing that multiple factors may influence e-WOM and engagement, beyond sustainability perception alone (Furlow et al., 2020).

In contrast, the literature supports the idea that consumers who view brands as environmentally and socially responsible are more inclined to engage in positive e-WOM, brand engagement, and purchase intentions. Positive e-WOM can significantly impact a brand's reputation and sales, ultimately providing a competitive advantage (Chen & Chang, 2021). This aligns with the broader understanding of the influence of sustainability perception on consumer responses, where responsible brands tend to attract environmentally conscious consumers who are more likely to make purchases from and engage with such brands (Chang & Fong, 2010; Lee, Park & Han, 2019). Additionally, the rejection of Hypotheses 2c and 2d may highlight the role of contextual factors or brand-specific attributes that could influence e-WOM and brand engagement. The literature suggests that brands actively engaging with consumers on social media regarding sustainability concerns can build stronger relationships, foster positive brand associations, and mitigate the impact of negative e-WOM (Furlow et al., 2020). Conversely, negative perceptions of a brand's sustainability practices can lead to

decreased brand engagement on social media, underlining the pivotal role of brand image and reputation in shaping consumer behavior (Furlow et al., 2020).

Furthermore, the literature consistently underscores the significance of sustainability perception in influencing purchase intentions, with environmentally conscious consumers more likely to choose eco-friendly products and services, as well as make purchases from brands perceived as responsible (Chen & Chang, 2021; Lee, Park & Han, 2019). The rejection of these hypotheses in this study highlights the multifaceted nature of sustainability perception and its impact on consumer responses, emphasizing the need for a comprehensive understanding that takes into account various moderating factors and the complex interplay of perceptions, attitudes, and actions in the realm of sustainability communication and brand engagement. Possible factors contributing to the lack of direct effects could include individual differences in motivation, external influences, and contextual factors. It's crucial to consider that consumer responses are influenced by a myriad of internal and external forces beyond sustainability communication alone. In this context, exploring potential mediators or moderators that could enhance the link between environmental sustainability communication and e-WOM, brand engagement, and purchase intentions might offer valuable insights for future research. Practically, these findings suggest that marketers seeking to harness the power of sustainability communication to encourage e-WOM should prioritize fostering positive brand attitudes. For brand engagement and purchase intentions, a more holistic strategy considering additional factors beyond brand attitude is crucial.

The exploration of the mediation effect of brand attitude on the relationship between sustainability perception and consumer responses (e-WOM, brand engagement, and purchase intentions) has provided valuable insights into the intricate interplay of these variables. The acceptance of Hypothesis 2a, which posits that brand attitude mediates the positive effect of sustainability perception on e-WOM, aligns with previous research emphasizing the significance of brand attitude in shaping electronic word-of-mouth behaviors. Studies have consistently shown that consumers with positive brand attitudes are more likely to engage in positive e-WOM (Akar & Topçu, 2021; Cho & Park, 2011). This finding underscores the mediating role of brand attitude, where consumers who perceive a brand as environmentally and socially responsible are inclined to share their positive experiences with others on social media platforms. Thus,

the accepted hypothesis reinforces the importance of fostering positive brand attitudes in the context of sustainability communication.

On the other hand, the rejection of Hypothesis 2b, which proposed that brand attitude mediates the positive effect of sustainability perception on brand engagement, offers intriguing insights. While a positive brand attitude is typically associated with increased brand engagement on social media (Lee & Kim, 2019; Kim & Ko, 2012), this outcome suggests that sustainability perception alone may not directly translate into heightened brand engagement. This finding underscores the complexity of brand engagement, which may be influenced by various other factors beyond sustainability perception. It's essential for brands to recognize that while sustainability is vital, it may not be the sole driver of active brand engagement on social media.

The partial acceptance of Hypothesis 2c, indicating that brand attitude partially mediates the positive effect of sustainability perception on purchase intentions, highlights an interesting interplay between these variables. Prior research has consistently demonstrated the positive role of brand attitude in influencing purchase intentions on social media platforms (Park & Lee, 2009; Huang & Chen, 2017). However, the partial mediation suggests that sustainability perception may also have a direct impact on purchase intentions, beyond its influence through brand attitude. This result underscores the multifaceted nature of consumer decision-making, where both sustainability perception and brand attitude play significant roles in shaping purchase intentions. These findings align with the existing literature on the importance of brand attitude as a mediator between sustainability perception and various consumer responses. These results underline the intricate web of influences governing consumer responses. The divergent outcomes across e-WOM, brand engagement, and purchase intentions highlight the distinct nature of these responses and the diverse array of factors that impact them.

The investigation into the impact of brand communications on environmental sustainability, delivered by influencers versus the company itself, has yielded significant insights into the dynamics of consumer responses across various dimensions. The rejection of Hypothesis 3a, which posited that brand communications focusing on environmental sustainability, when crafted by influencers rather than the company itself, would strongly influence brand attitudes, runs counter to some of the existing literature. Previous studies have indicated that influencer-created content can

indeed have a substantial impact on brand attitudes due to its perceived authenticity, relatability, and personal touch (Bartsch et al., 2019). However, it's important to acknowledge that the effectiveness of influencer-created content may vary depending on the specific context and audience. Some consumers may still prioritize the official company's stance on sustainability over influencer endorsements. This finding underscores the complexity of consumer perceptions and attitudes toward sustainability, suggesting that both influencer and company-created content can play roles in shaping brand attitudes.

On the other hand, the acceptance of Hypotheses 3b, 3c, and 3d, indicating that influencer-created content on environmental sustainability has a stronger influence on eWOM, brand engagement, and purchase intention compared to company-created content, aligns with prior research. Influencers have consistently been found to be effective in generating authentic and relatable content that resonates with their followers (Bartsch et al., 2019). This authenticity and relatability translate into increased engagement, positive eWOM, and higher purchase intentions. The acceptance of these hypotheses reinforces the idea that influencers can serve as powerful advocates for sustainability initiatives. Their ability to connect with audiences on a personal level and convey the importance of environmental sustainability can result in tangible benefits for brands, such as greater brand engagement, word-of-mouth promotion, and increased likelihood of consumers making sustainable choices.

These outcomes resonate with the growing influence of influencers in shaping consumer behavior and preferences. The endorsement of sustainability initiatives by influencers aligns with their established credibility and authenticity, allowing them to effectively bridge the gap between brand communications and consumer perceptions. Consumers might find influencer-led messages more relatable and compelling, leading to higher engagement and increased intentions to support such initiatives. So, we can say that utilizing influencers has an impact on engagement, WOM, and purchase intention. If we're focusing on sustainability communication, for WOM, purchase intention, and engagement, we should communicate through influencers. Having a positive attitude from influencers in terms of WOM and purchase intention also positively affects the brand.

Lastly, the analysis of how the attitude toward influencers influences the link between environmental sustainability perception and consumer responses has provided valuable insights, revealing the intricate dynamics at play in this association. The acceptance of Hypotheses 4a, 4c, and 4d, indicating that the attitude toward influencers positively moderates the influence of influencers' environmental sustainability messages on brand attitudes, brand engagement, and purchase intentions, is consistent with prior research. Studies have consistently highlighted the pivotal role of influencers in shaping consumer attitudes and behaviors, especially when the attitude toward influencers is positive (Chen, Lin & Chang, 2020; Han, Nunes & Dreze, 2019; Abdullah et al., 2020). The acceptance of H4a suggests that a positive attitude toward influencers amplifies the impact of influencers' environmental sustainability messages on brand attitudes. This finding aligns with the broader literature indicating that a favorable attitude toward influencers can significantly influence consumers' brand attitudes in a positive way (Jean et al., 2019). When consumers perceive influencers as credible and trustworthy, their endorsements of environmental sustainability can enhance brand attitudes, contributing to a more positive perception of the brand (Sung & Lee, 2018).

The validation of H4c emphasizes the importance of a favorable view of influencers in enhancing the impact of influencers' sustainability messages on brand engagement. Consumers who hold a favorable attitude toward influencers are more likely to actively engage with the brand's content on social media (Han, Nunes & Dreze, 2019). This aligns with the idea that influencers' authenticity and relatability, coupled with a positive influencer attitude, can motivate consumers to interact with the brand and share their experiences (Lee & Watkins, 2016).

The acceptance of H4d indicates that a positive attitude toward influencers enhances the impact of influencers' environmental sustainability messages on purchase intentions. This finding is in line with previous research suggesting that consumers who have a favorable attitude toward influencers are more prone to trust and be influenced by their recommendations, leading to increased purchase intentions (Brown & Hayes, 2008). It highlights the significance of influencer credibility and the positive influencer attitude in shaping consumers' intentions to make sustainable choices.

On the other hand, the rejection of Hypothesis 4b, which proposed that attitude toward influencers positively moderates the effect of influencers' environmental sustainability messages on e-WOM, suggests that the influence of influencers on e-WOM may not be significantly amplified by a positive influencer attitude in the context of environmental sustainability. This result deviates from the general understanding that a favorable influencer attitude can lead to positive e-WOM (Chen, Lin & Chang, 2020; Lee & Watkins, 2016). However, it's important to consider that e-WOM may be influenced by various factors beyond the attitude toward influencers, and sustainability-related discussions may require a distinct set of considerations. Overall, these findings emphasize the importance of cultivating positive influencer relationships to effectively leverage influencers in sustainability communication strategies and drive positive consumer responses.

In conclusion, the outcomes of this study can be recommended to brands targeting this specific audience and considering how to conduct sustainability communication on social media. These findings provide actionable insights for brand seeking to navigate the complex landscape of sustainability communication in the digital age.

7. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Recognizing the limitations of this study is crucial. The research was conducted in a specific context and focused on a particular demographic. Future studies could explore the generalizability of these findings across different cultures and regions. The analysis focused primarily on a limited age group in Turkey as a representative demographic factor and one single product category; hygiene. While CIF is a well-known brand and represents a widely consumed product category, the findings may not extend to luxury or non-hygiene product sectors. Consequently, the implications derived from this study might be more applicable to similar hygiene product segments. Also again, CIF is a global brand however there are many private label products in hygiene category, our findings may not imply to those products.

Furthermore, the evolution of social media platforms is another aspect that should be considered. While the study initially centered on Instagram and subsequently shifted focus to TikTok, the broader landscape of social media platforms presents a plethora of dynamics that might not be captured in this analysis. The study's insights, therefore, may not be universally applicable across all social media platforms and their unique characteristics.

A methodological limitation pertains to the inherent social science bias associated with survey-based research. Respondents might tailor their responses to align with socially desirable behaviors, potentially affecting the accuracy of the reported data. This bias is particularly relevant in the context of sustainability, as respondents may feel societal pressure to align their responses with more environmentally conscious choices.

The study's cross-sectional design poses a significant constraint on causal inference. While the study establishes relationships between sustainability perceptions and consumer responses, it cannot definitively establish the direction of causality. A more longitudinal approach would have allowed for a better understanding of how these factors evolve and interact over time.

The temporal context of the data collection also introduces limitations. The data collection occurred during the pandemic period, a time marked by unique consumer behaviors and circumstances. Since then, the pandemic's impact has considerably diminished, potentially altering the relevance and applicability of the study's findings

to the present context. Also, utilization of a real field experiment could have potentially enhanced the understanding of causal relationships and the external validity of the findings.

Moreover, this study's focus on brand attitude, WOM, brand engagement and purchase intention offers valuable insights but restricts the exploration of other dimensions relevant to consumer responses. Constructs like brand authenticity and brand loyalty, which are intricately linked to sustainability perceptions and consumer choices, could have enriched the analysis and provided a more comprehensive understanding of the complex interactions at play.

In conclusion, while this study sheds light on critical dynamics between sustainability perceptions, social media, and consumer behavior, its limitations underscore the need for cautious interpretation. Future research should consider addressing these constraints to build a more robust and nuanced understanding of the intricate relationships explored in this study.

Certainly, here's a discussion section based on the acceptance and rejection of your hypotheses:

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Tosun, N. B. (2010). İletişim Temelli Marka Yönetimi. İstanbul: Beta Basım Yayın Dağıtım.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Online Survey Control Group

Bu anket Yeditepe Üniversitesi İİBF İşletme Bölümü Yüksek Lisans Öğrencisi Helin Ezgi Oran tarafından yürütülen bilimsel bir araştırma için hazırlanmıştır. Çalışma, markaların sosyal medyada sürdürülebilirlik iletişimlerini anlamak üzerine gerçekleştirilmektedir. Anketteki soruları dikkatle okuyup eksiksiz olarak cevaplamanızı rica ederiz.

Çalışmaya katılmanız tamamen isteğe bağlıdır. Katılım sonucu sizden ücret talep edilmeyecek, ücret verilmeyecektir. Vereceğiniz cevaplar sadece ilgili bilimsel araştırma dahilinde kullanılacak ve kimliğiniz gizli tutulacaktır. Lütfen anket formuna adınızı, soyadınızı veya kimliğinizi belirten hiçbir şey yazmayınız.

Katkılarınızdan dolayı teşekkür ederiz.

Lütfen aşağıdaki soruları dikkatlice okuyunuz ve kendinizi düşünerek yanıtlayınız.	**Kesinlikle katılmıyorum**				**Kesinlikle katılıyorum**
Çevreyi kirleterek iş yapan şirketleri düşündüğümde hayal kırıklığına uğramış ve kızgın hissediyorum.	☹	○	○	○	☺
İki benzer ürün arasından, daha pahalı olmasına rağmen çevreye daha az zarar vereni seçme eğilimindeyim.	☹	○	○	○	☺
Bir firmanın sattığı ürünler çevreye zarar veriyorsa, satın almayı reddederim.	☹	○	○	○	☺
Bir ürün satın alırken, daha pahalı olsa bile her zaman çevreye zarar vermediğine dair bir sertifikaya sahip olan ürünü seçerim.	☹	○	○	○	☺
Geri dönüşümün temel noktalarını takip ediyorum ve evde geri dönüştürülmüş atıkları sınıflandırıyorum.	☹	○	○	○	☺
Çevreyi iyileştirmeye yönelik eylemlerimden endişe duyuyorum.	☹	○	○	○	☺
Çevresel konularla ilgili sık sık endişe duyuyorum ve çevresel bilgiyi özümsüyorum.	☹	○	○	○	☺

Lütfen bundan sonraki soruları değerlendirirken CIF markasını düşünerek cevaplayınız.					
Bence CIF markası...	Kötü	○	○	○	İyi
Bence CIF markası...	Verilen paraya değmez	○	○	○	Verilen paraya değer
Bence CIF markası...	Düşük kalitelidir	○	○	○	Yüksek kalitelidir

Lütfen biraz önce görmüş olduğunuz CIF'in Instagram paylaşımını düşünerek aşağıdaki davranışları yapma olasılığınızı belirtiniz.	**Çok düşük olasılıkla**				**Çok yüksek olasılıkla**
Bu markanın Instagram'ı ile etkileşime geçmek, ürünlerini ve hizmetlerini satın almadan önce daha iyi kararlar almama yardımcı olur.	☹	○	○	○	☺
Bu markanın Instagram'ı ile etkileşime geçmek, ürünlerini ve hizmetlerini satın almaya olan ilgimi arttırır.	☹	○	○	○	☺
Kesinlikle bu markanın Instagram'ında pazarlanan ürünleri satın alırım.	☹	○	○	○	☺
Bu markanın müşterisi olmaya yüksek bir eğilimim var.	☹	○	○	○	☺
Instagram gönderisinde, marka ile ilgili gönderileri okurum.	☹	○	○	○	☺
Bir gönderide marka ile ilgili fotoğraflara/grafiklere bakarım.	☹	○	○	○	☺
Instagram sayfası yönlendirilen markayı takip ederim.	☹	○	○	○	☺
Marka ile ilgili gönderi/fotoğraf/grafik ya da videolara yorum yaparım.	☹	○	○	○	☺
Marka ile ilgili bir gönderiyi paylaşırım.	☹	○	○	○	☺
Marka ile ilgili gönderileri beğenirim.	☹	○	○	○	☺
Gönderiye markayla ilgili görüşlerimi yazarım.	☹	○	○	○	☺

Bu marka ile ilgili birçok kişiyle konuşurum.	☹	○	○	○	☺
Bu markayı öneririm.	☹	○	○	○	☺
Bu markanın bir müşterisi olduğumu söylemek benim için gurur verici.	☹	○	○	○	☺
Marka hakkında çoğunlukla pozitif konuşuyorum.	☹	○	○	○	☺

Cinsiyetiniz ◯ Kadın ◯ Erkek ◯ Diğer

Yaşınız ◯ 18 - 24 ◯ 25 - 34 ◯ 35 - 44 ◯ 45 - 5455 ◯

Medeni Durumunuz Evli ◯ Bekar ◯

Eğitim Durumunuz

Okur - Yazar

İlkokul

Ortaokul

Lise

Ön Lisans

Lisans

Yüksek Lisans

Doktora

Aylık Geliriniz

4250 TL ve altı

4250 TL - 5000 TL

5000 TL - 7000 TL

7000 TL - 9000 TL

9000 TL ve üzeri

Appendix B: Online Survey Influencer Group

Bu anket Yeditepe Üniversitesi İİBF İşletme Bölümü Yüksek Lisans Öğrencisi Helin Ezgi Oran tarafından yürütülen bilimsel bir araştırma için hazırlanmıştır. Çalışma, markaların sosyal medyada sürdürülebilirlik iletişimlerini anlamak üzerine gerçekleştirilmektedir. Anketteki soruları dikkatle okuyup eksiksiz olarak cevaplamanızı rica ederiz.

Çalışmaya katılmanız tamamen isteğe bağlıdır. Katılım sonucu sizden ücret talep edilmeyecek, ücret verilmeyecektir. Vereceğiniz cevaplar sadece ilgili bilimsel araştırma dahilinde kullanılacak ve kimliğiniz gizli tutulacaktır. Lütfen anket formuna adınızı, soyadınızı veya kimliğinizi belirten hiçbir şey yazmayınız.

Katkılarınızdan dolayı teşekkür ederiz.

Lütfen aşağıdaki içeriği dikkatlice inceleyiniz ve soruyu yanıtlayınız.

	Kesinlikle katılmıyorum				Kesinlikle katılıyorum
Bana göre bu içerik sürdürülebilirliğe katkı sağlamaktadır.					

Lütfen bundan sonraki soruları değerlendirirken CIF markasını düşünerek cevaplayınız.					
Bence CIF markası...	Kötü	○	○	○	İyi
Bence CIF markası...	Verilen paraya değmez	○	○	○	Verilen paraya değer
Bence CIF markası...	Düşük kalitelidir	○	○	○	Yüksek kalitelidir

Lütfen biraz önce görmüş olduğunuz CIF'in Instagram paylaşımını düşünerek aşağıdaki davranışları yapma olasılığınızı belirtiniz.	**Çok düşük olasılıkla**				**Çok yüksek olasılıkla**
Bu markanın Instagram'ı ile etkileşime geçmek, ürünlerini ve hizmetlerini satın almadan önce daha iyi kararlar almama yardımcı olur.	☹	○	○	○	☺
Bu markanın Instagram'ı ile etkileşime geçmek, ürünlerini ve hizmetlerini satın almaya olan ilgimi arttırır.	☹	○	○	○	☺
Kesinlikle bu markanın Instagram'ında pazarlanan ürünleri satın alırım.	☹	○	○	○	☺
Bu markanın müşterisi olmaya yüksek bir eğilimim var.	☹	○	○	○	☺
Instagram gönderisinde, marka ile ilgili gönderileri okurum.	☹	○	○	○	☺
Bir gönderide marka ile ilgili fotoğraflara/grafiklere bakarım.	☹	○	○	○	☺
Instagram sayfası yönlendirilen markayı takip ederim.	☹	○	○	○	☺
Marka ile ilgili gönderi/fotoğraf/grafik ya da videolara yorum yaparım.	☹	○	○	○	☺
Marka ile ilgili bir gönderiyi paylaşırım.	☹	○	○	○	☺
Marka ile ilgili gönderileri beğenirim.	☹	○	○	○	☺
Gönderiye markayla ilgili görüşlerimi yazarım.	☹	○	○	○	☺
Bu marka ile ilgili birçok kişiyle konuşurum.	☹	○	○	○	☺

Bu markayı öneririm.	☹	○	○	○	☺
Bu markanın bir müşterisi olduğumu söylemek benim için gurur verici.	☹	○	○	○	☺
Marka hakkında çoğunlukla pozitif konuşuyorum.	☹	○	○	○	☺

Lütfen içeriği paylaşan influencera (Cansu Dengey) olan tutumunuzu işaretleyiniz.	1				5
	Negatif	○	○	○	Pozitif

Lütfen aşağıdaki soruları dikkatlice okuyunuz ve kendinizi düşünerek yanıtlayınız.	**Kesinlikle katılmıyorum**				**Kesinlikle katılıyorum**
Çevreyi kirleterek iş yapan şirketleri düşündüğümde hayal kırıklığına uğramış ve kızgın hissediyorum.	☹	○	○	○	☺
İki benzer ürün arasından, daha pahalı olmasına rağmen çevreye daha az zarar vereni seçme eğilimindeyim.	☹	○	○	○	☺
Bir firmanın sattığı ürünler çevreye zarar veriyorsa, satın almayı reddederim.	☹	○	○	○	☺

Bir ürün satın alırken, daha pahalı olsa bile her zaman çevreye zarar vermediğine dair bir sertifikaya sahip olan ürünü seçerim.	☹	○	○	○	☺
Geri dönüşümün temel noktalarını takip ediyorum ve evde geri dönüştürülmüş atıkları sınıflandırıyorum.	☹	○	○	○	☺
Çevreyi iyileştirmeye yönelik eylemlerimden endişe duyuyorum.	☹	○	○	○	☺
Çevresel konularla ilgili sık sık endişe duyuyorum ve çevresel bilgiyi özümsüyorum.	☹	○	○	○	☺

Cinsiyetiniz ◯Kadın ◯ Erkek ◯ Diğer

Yaşınız ◯ 18 - 24 ◯ 25 - 34 ◯ 35 - 44 ◯ 45 - 5455 ◯

Medeni Durumunuz Evli ◯ Bekar ◯

Eğitim Durumunuz

Okur - Yazar

İlkokul

Ortaokul

Lise

Ön Lisans

Lisans

Yüksek Lisans

Doktora

Aylık Geliriniz

4250 TL ve altı

4250 TL - 5000 TL

5000 TL - 7000 TL

7000 TL - 9000 TL

9000 TL ve üzeri

Appendix C: Online Survey Brand Group

Bu anket Yeditepe Üniversitesi İİBF İşletme Bölümü Yüksek Lisans Öğrencisi Helin Ezgi Oran tarafından yürütülen bilimsel bir araştırma için hazırlanmıştır. Çalışma, markaların sosyal medyada sürdürülebilirlik iletişimlerini anlamak üzerine gerçekleştirilmektedir. Anketteki soruları dikkatle okuyup eksiksiz olarak cevaplamanızı rica ederiz.

Çalışmaya katılmanız tamamen isteğe bağlıdır. Katılım sonucu sizden ücret talep edilmeyecek, ücret verilmeyecektir. Vereceğiniz cevaplar sadece ilgili bilimsel araştırma dahilinde kullanılacak ve kimliğiniz gizli tutulacaktır. Lütfen anket formuna adınızı, soyadınızı veya kimliğinizi belirten hiçbir şey yazmayınız.

Katkılarınızdan dolayı teşekkür ederiz.

Lütfen aşağıdaki içeriği dikkatlice inceleyiniz ve soruyu yanıtlayınız.

	Kesinlikle katılmıyorum				Kesinlikle katılıyorum
Bana göre bu içerik sürdürülebilirliğe katkı sağlamaktadır.					

Lütfen bundan sonraki soruları değerlendirirken CIF markasını düşünerek cevaplayınız.					
Bence CIF markası...	Kötü	○	○	○	İyi
Bence CIF markası...	Verilen paraya değmez	○	○	○	Verilen paraya değer
Bence CIF markası...	Düşük kalitelidir	○	○	○	Yüksek kalitelidir

Lütfen biraz önce görmüş olduğunuz CIF'in Instagram paylaşımını düşünerek aşağıdaki davranışları yapma olasılığınızı belirtiniz.	**Çok düşük olasılıkla**				**Çok yüksek olasılıkla**
Bu markanın Instagram'ı ile etkileşime geçmek, ürünlerini ve hizmetlerini satın almadan önce daha iyi kararlar almama yardımcı olur.	☹	○	○	○	☺
Bu markanın Instagram'ı ile etkileşime geçmek, ürünlerini ve hizmetlerini satın almaya olan ilgimi arttırır.	☹	○	○	○	☺
Kesinlikle bu markanın Instagram'ında pazarlanan ürünleri satın alırım.	☹	○	○	○	☺
Bu markanın müşterisi olmaya yüksek bir eğilimim var.	☹	○	○	○	☺
Instagram gönderisinde, marka ile ilgili gönderileri okurum.	☹	○	○	○	☺
Bir gönderide marka ile ilgili fotoğraflara/grafiklere bakarım.	☹	○	○	○	☺
Instagram sayfası yönlendirilen markayı takip ederim.	☹	○	○	○	☺
Marka ile ilgili gönderi/fotoğraf/grafik ya da videolara yorum yaparım.	☹	○	○	○	☺
Marka ile ilgili bir gönderiyi paylaşırım.	☹	○	○	○	☺
Marka ile ilgili gönderileri beğenirim.	☹	○	○	○	☺
Gönderiye markayla ilgili görüşlerimi yazarım.	☹	○	○	○	☺
Bu marka ile ilgili birçok kişiyle konuşurum.	☹	○	○	○	☺

Bu markayı öneririm.	☹	○	○	○	☺
Bu markanın bir müşterisi olduğumu söylemek benim için gurur verici.	☹	○	○	○	☺
Marka hakkında çoğunlukla pozitif konuşuyorum.	☹	○	○	○	☺

Lütfen aşağıdaki soruları dikkatlice okuyunuz ve kendinizi düşünerek yanıtlayınız.	**Kesinlikle katılmıyorum**				**Kesinlikle katılıyorum**
Çevreyi kirleterek iş yapan şirketleri düşündüğümde hayal kırıklığına uğramış ve kızgın hissediyorum.	☹	○	○	○	☺
İki benzer ürün arasından, daha pahalı olmasına rağmen çevreye daha az zarar vereni seçme eğilimindeyim.	☹	○	○	○	☺
Bir firmanın sattığı ürünler çevreye zarar veriyorsa, satın almayı reddederim.	☹	○	○	○	☺
Bir ürün satın alırken, daha pahalı olsa bile her zaman çevreye zarar vermediğine dair bir sertifikaya sahip olan ürünü seçerim.	☹	○	○	○	☺
Geri dönüşümün temel noktalarını takip ediyorum ve evde geri dönüştürülmüş atıkları sınıflandırıyorum.	☹	○	○	○	☺
Çevreyi iyileştirmeye yönelik eylemlerimden endişe duyuyorum.	☹	○	○	○	☺
Çevresel konularla ilgili sık sık endişe duyuyorum ve çevresel bilgiyi özümsüyorum.	☹	○	○	○	☺

Cinsiyetiniz ◯Kadın ◯ Erkek ◯ Diğer

Yaşınız ◯ 18 - 24 ◯ 25 - 34 ◯35 - 44 ◯ 45 - 5455 ◯

Medeni Durumunuz **E**◯ **Bek**◯

Eğitim Durumunuz

Okur - Yazar

İlkokul

Ortaokul

Lise

Ön Lisans

Lisans

Yüksek Lisans

Doktora

Aylık Geliriniz

4250 TL ve altı

4250 TL - 5000 TL

5000 TL - 7000 TL

7000 TL - 9000 TL

9000 TL ve üzeri