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Ana Maria Soares
Beatriz Casais *Editors*

Uniting Marketing Efforts for the Common Good—A Challenge for the Fourth Sector

Selected Papers from XXI International Congress on Public and Nonprofit Marketing (IAPNM 2022), Braga, Portugal

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Preface

Following the XXI International Congress on Public and Nonprofit Marketing—IAPNM 2022, under the theme "Uniting Marketing Efforts for the Common Good: a challenge for four sectors," we envisioned a book that would bring together some research contributions on this topic, addressing the multiplicity of dimensions and approaches to tackle social challenge from a marketing perspective.

The call for chapters was answered with a substantial number of insightful contributions addressing multiple facets of marketing in the context of public and non-profit organizations, involving a diversity of stakeholders, including private corporations, which also contribute to the establishment of the social economy. We received a number of submissions from a wide range of themes. The selected chapters reflect the multifaceted approaches on how public, social, and corporate organizations can join efforts to contribute to the social economy and foster social change. We are delighted to share the final result.

We have collected recent research focused on the convergence of profit, public, non-profit, and social organizations and the joint efforts from governmental and non-governmental partners, corporations, and civil society at large to address social issues. The diversity and complexity of societal problems, which in several cases were compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic, call for a collective social effort and innovative solutions. By taking ownership of community well-being and fostering partnerships, different stakeholders can share responsibilities to build a better future and strengthen the common good. We are living a particularly relevant time for the emergence of innovative approaches to marketing applied to specific sectors entailing social implications, as is the case of health, higher education, or territories.

The book brings together a number of empirical and conceptual chapters, best practices and case studies, theories, and insights into public and non-profit marketing. It is composed of thirteen chapters organized in five parts. Part One focuses on the process of social change for the common good. Chapter "Meaningfulness, Social Impact, and Legitimacy: A Critical Literature Review of Definitions of the Concept "Purpose-Driven Branding" tackles purpose-driven branding and the measuring of social impact. It consists in a literature review, and the topic is structured in different categories, which allows the identification of dimensions that deserve future research.

Chapter "LGBT Brand Activism: A Research Agenda on How to Be Committed to the LGBT Conversation" not only conceptualizes this idea of purpose-driven branding under the assumptions of brand activism, but also proposes a future agenda of research. Chapter ""To Adopt or Not to Adopt, That is the Question": Are Social Marketing Strategies Effective to Stimulate Animal Adoption?" explores the topic of social marketing to conduct behavior change by examining the case of animal adoption.

Part Two emphasizes the key role of non-profit organizations in the process of the fourth sector. Chapter "Scientific Contribution in the Field of Nonprofit Governance: A Bibliometric Analysis" explores non-profit governance through a bibliometric research, and Chap. "Crisis Management and Planning in Portuguese Nonprofit Organizations During the COVID-19 Pandemic" addresses the process of planning by non-profit organizations to face challenges and crises, specifically by exploring the lessons learnt with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Parts Three, Four, and Five dwell on the application of marketing to different sectors. Part Three presents contributions on territorial marketing. Chapter "Double Visual Identity of the Place Brand: Coat of Arms and Logo. The Case of Poland" explores place branding and the management of place identity, and Chap. "Marketing as a Management Tool of Biosphere Reserves to Achieve Agenda 2030 Goals" focuses on the process of branding a natural territory, positioning place marketing on the agenda to achieve Sustainable Development Goals.

Part Four discusses topics of health and well-being. Chapter "Value Co-Creation Activities Role in Patient Well-Being in Online Healthcare Communities" presents a contribution on healthcare communities under the framework of the fourth sector. Chapter "Healthvertising on Food Packaging and Its Impact on Consumers: A Systematic Literature Review" analyzes the topic of healthvertising in food packaging and presents a literature review to discuss social outcomes and research opportunities to improve health literacy and promote healthy diets via better purchasing choices. Chapter "Influence of Socio-cultural Pressure on Internalization of the Thin Body Ideal and the Effect of Fitness Advertising Endorsers (Thin Versus Overweight/Realistic)" researches the impact of body shapes in fitness advertising and discusses the psychological effects of endorsers in advertising.

The last part focuses on marketing in higher education. Chapter "Organizational Culture and Knowledge Management: An Empirical Study in Brazilian Higher Education" shows how organizational culture affects knowledge management in higher education institutions; Chap. "Students' Satisfaction with Education Service in Public Versus Private Higher Education Institutions in Transitional Economies" discusses differences in student satisfaction with educational services in both public

and private institutions; and finally, Chap. "Understanding the Role of University Social Responsibility in Destination Marketing" explores the role of higher education institutions in terms of social responsibility, particularly regarding the promotion of tourism destinations.

Braga, Portugal

Ana Maria Soares
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Contents

Social Change for the Common Good

Meaningfulness, Social Impact, and Legitimacy: A Critical Literature Review of Definitions of the Concept "Purpose-Driven Branding"

Marc Lunkenheimer and Alexander H. Kracklauer

Abstract The term "purpose-driven branding" is on everyone's lips. Despite its popularity, however, there is a lack of conceptual clarity. The so-called "purpose-washing" is only one possible consequence of this, if it is not clear what business research actually means by the term. This study examines current definitions of the term in the context of a critical literature review and analyzes them critically with regard to their conceptual quality. The definitions examined come from 38 works published in English and German over the past seven years. They fall into three types, defining purpose-driven branding in terms of either meaningfulness, social impact, or the legitimacy of entrepreneurial action. However, all three types are deficient in their current form, because they are not clearly defined in terms of content or do not meet formal requirements. We therefore suggest that further research should strive to create conceptual clarity so that the term can be profitably operationalized for future business research.

Keywords Purpose-driven branding · Definition · Concept · Analysis

1 Introduction

Why do I exist? Why do I get up in the morning? Why should I work for this or that company? What is the purpose of my actions: earning money, buying things, and consuming? All people seem to ask themselves these very questions at some point in their lives: The question of the purpose of their actions and what gives their lives meaning.

Recently, companies have also begun to ask themselves the question of their purpose. Whereas economist and Nobel Prize winner Milton Friedman used to describe increasing profits as the only purpose of companies, this mentality seems to be changing. Against the backdrop of worsening ecological, social, and economic

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problems, broad public demand is emerging for a reorientation of companies toward creating meaning and giving themselves and their entrepreneurial activities social legitimacy (Scholz, 2020). One focus of the debate is on purpose-driven branding. This means offering people a meaningful orientation through consumption, which makes them feel part of an ethical collective, which in turn is reflected in a feeling of belonging and the significance of their own actions (in this case, the act of consumption). Purpose-driven brands address socially relevant issues and present themselves as an "ethical" alternative to conventional consumerism.

But what exactly is purpose-driven branding? As up to date as the debate is, its subject matter is not very well differentiated. Many authors criticize the lack of a scientific definition of purpose-driven branding (Alegre et al., 2017; Bruce & Jermonim, 2020; Freundt et al., 2021; Hajdas & Kleczek, 2021; Neff, 2019). Also, the terminology used is not always consistent. This paper aims to present the current status of the research literature, identifying the terms used for branding of this kind and examining their conceptual quality. In this way, research gaps can be identified and connections made to possible future research in this field.

Methodologically, the work takes on this task in the form of a critical literature review. The purpose of this approach is to systematically present and critically analyze the currently accessible knowledge about the concept of purpose-driven branding. First, the procedure used for the literature research is explained, and criteria for the evaluation are presented. Afterward, the results are presented and explained in detail. A discussion follows, including critical reflection on the results and checking for criteria of conceptual quality. A conclusion summarizes the research gaps that emerge and offers further thoughts.

2 Method

The research was performed from July through August 2021 using the electronic ABI/Inform Global Database via the communication network of Neu-Ulm University of Applied Sciences, Germany, as well as Google Scholar. The search for relevant publications was based on the search terms "purpose-driven branding," "purpose brand," "sinnstiftende Marke," and "sinnstiftendes Markenmanagement" appearing in the title, abstract, or keywords. The range of search terms is due to non-uniform terminology as well as the linguistic inaccuracies resulting from translations of the term into German. English- and German-language publications were considered. In order to reflect the current debate at the time of the search, results considered were limited to those published in 2014 or later. The selection process took place in three stages. The initial search yielded 1,294 records. These were checked for relevance to the research question based on the titles and abstracts. After exclusion of non-relevant publications, the title list still contained 183 records. These were checked in the full text to see whether their subject matter was explicitly defined. Works without definitions were excluded (Fig. 1). The final list included 38 titles (see Table 1).

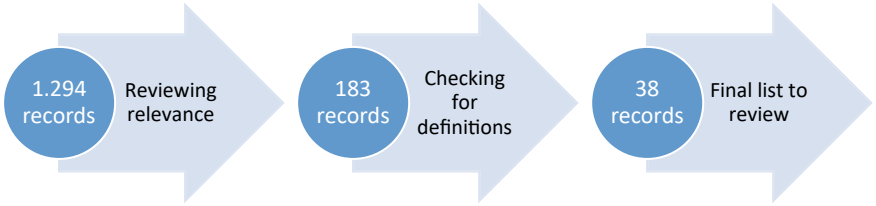

Fig. 1 Selection process for the literature search

This paper takes a critical review approach (Snyder, 2019). Critical reviews are useful when there is little coherence among the studies reviewed and thus less construct and concept clarity. These reviews aim to assess, critique, and summarize the literature to form a basis for the development of new theoretical perspectives. Since the literature on purpose-driven branding is highly heterogeneous (embracing qualitative, quantitative, and conceptual work), a critical approach was chosen.

The topic of purpose is booming. As a result, numerous publications are currently appearing on this topic. Often, the topic is treated in a general context, as in "Purpose and Entrepreneurship" or "Purpose and Organization." However, since this review deals specifically with the relationship between purpose and branding, no publications were considered that did not explicitly refer to the topic of "branding."

3 Results

The review shows that the concept of purpose-driven branding has been in use for a long time, albeit expressed in varying terminology (Kilian & Miklis, 2019). However, it remained relatively unnoticed in the research literature for many years (de Wit & Meyer, 2014). Since 2019, however, the number of publications about it has increased significantly, especially in the management literature. Management literature is characterized by having specialists and managers as its target group and conveying practice-oriented knowledge to support everyday professional life. This recent increase in visibility can therefore be seen as a possible indication of the increasing relevance of the topic in business practice. However, scientific publications on the topic have also been accumulating since around the beginning of 2020.

We evaluated how the articles we found define the term "purpose-driven branding." For an exemplary overview of definitions, see Table 2. Definitions are statements used to determine the meaning of a term so that someone who does not know the term can learn from the definition what its meaning is (Brun, 2016). Definitions name an expression that is to be defined (the definiendum) and give a defining expression (the definiens) for this purpose. If the objective of a definition is a better and more precise understanding of the expression to be defined, the definiens must consist of more comprehensible expressions than the definiendum (Brun, 2016). The

Table 1 List of papers reviewed

No	Title	Authors	Publication type	Year
1	Marken als Sinnstifter	Abbate	Book	2014
2	On Purpose: Delivering a Branded Customer Experience People Love	Smith & Milligan	Book	2015
3	The Business Case for Purpose: Friedman, Fink, and the Battle for the Soul of Business	Williams	Journal article	2015
4	Brand Purpose: The Navigational Code for Growth	Kramer	Journal article	2017
5	Competing on Social Purpose	Rodriguez-Vila et al	Book chapter	2017
6	Purpose is at the Core of Branding	Annweiler	Journal article	2018
7	How Marketers Can Connect Profit and Purpose	Boncheck	Journal article	2018
8	The Rise of Social Purpose and its Impact on Brand Success	Everitt	Journal article	2018
9	Do Good: Embracing Brand Citizenship to Fuel Both Purpose and Profit	Thompson	Book	2018
10	Fit for Purpose: Wie Unternehmen Kunden finden, zufriedenstellen und binden	Anderson & Zheglov	Book	2019
11	Brand Purpose als Treiber von Innovationen	Hofmann & Schulz	Book	2019
12	Purpose-Marketing: Unternehmen als Sinn- und Wertlieferanten	Reichertz	Book chapter	2019
13	Die emotionale Kraft von Brand Purpose	Scheffler	Journal article	2019
14	Authentic Marketing	Weber	Book	2019
15	Consumer Perception of B Corporations	Bianchi	Journal article	2020
16	Purpose: A Foundational Theory for an Up-and-Coming Topic	Brendel	Book chapter	2020

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

No	Title	Authors	Publication type	Year
17	Corporate Purpose—das Erfolgskonzept der Zukunft: Wie sich mit Haltung Gemeinwohl und Profitabilität verbinden lassen	Bruce & Jeromin	Journal article	2020
18	Marke 4.0	Esch	Book	2020
19	Brand Purpose in aller Munde. Was gilt es in der wert-haltigen Kommunikation von Marken zu beachten?	Frohne	Journal article	2020
20	Purpose im Marketing—erfolgreicher mit sinnstiftendem Unternehmenszweck	Kilian & Miklis	Journal article	2020
21	Agile Marketing	Kröger	Book	2020
22	Purpose-Driven-Branding: Agile Markenführung als "Brand-Ucation"	Lies	Book chapter	2020
23	Communicating a Company's Higher Purpose to Conscious Consumers Through Online Behavioral Advertising	Mishra	Journal article	2020
24	Nachhaltigkeit als Marken-Purpose	Platschke	Book	2020
25	The Role of Purpose in Consumer Choice: A Comparison Between Baby Boomers and Millennials in Germany with a Focus on Sustainability and Consciousness	Rennollet, Schmidkonz, & Kraft	Journal article	2020
26	How to Lead a Values-Based Professional Service Firm	Scales & Biederman Gross	Book	2020
27	Brands on a Mission: How to Achieve Social Impact and Business Growth Through Purpose	Sidibe	Book	2020
28	Purpose-Driven-Marketing: Marketing-Hype oder langfristiges Erfolgsrezept	Stang	Book chapter	2020

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

No	Title	Authors	Publication type	Year
29	Purpose "In These Uncertain Times"	Van Deth	Book chapter	2020
30	Brands Taking a Stand: Authentic Brand Activism or Woke Washing?	Vredenburg	Book chapter	2020
31	Opportunities and Challenges of Purpose-Led Companies: An Empirical Study Through Expert Interviews	Ahsen	Journal article	2021
32	Ethics & Purpose. Mehr als „Gutes und Sinnhaftes"	Betz	Journal article	2021
33	Purpose und Vision: Wie Unternehmen Zweck und Ziel erfolgreich umsetzen	Esch	Book	2021
34	Mega-Macht Marke	Freundt et al	Book	2021
35	Activate Brand Purpose: How to Harness the Power of Movements to Transform your Company	Goodson & Walker	Book	2021
36	The Real Purpose of Purpose-Driven Branding: Consumer Empowerment and Social Transformation	Hajdas & Kleczek	Journal article	2021
37	Brand Purpose and "Woke" Branding Campaigns	McColl, Ritch, & Hamilton	Journal article	2021
38	Exploring Brand Purpose Dimensions for Non-Profit Organizations	Mirzaei, Webster, & Siuki	Journal article	2021

results of the literature review can be divided into three categories with respect to the given definiens. Sometimes the question of meaning ("Why?") is placed in the foreground; other authors refer to the socio-ecological impact ("social impact") that such brands are supposed to have on issues customers care about; while still others propose something like a social legitimation of such brands ("raison d'être/license to operate") as the defining element of the term.

3.1 Asking "Why?"

The most common definition of purpose-driven branding appeals to the question, "Why?" The answer to this question is intended to provide a purpose and/or meaning

Table 2 Exemplary definitions of the term "purpose-driven Branding"

"Why?"	Social impact	Raison d´être/licence to operate
"Brand purpose, the 'why' of the brand, is tightly linked to the brand's culture and values." (Mirzaei et al., 2021, p. 187)	The idea of social purpose adds a fresh nuance on the idea of brands making an impact on the world—it supposes that the impact will be a positive one, either in human, environmental or societal terms (Everitt, 2017, S. 221)	"Purpose is, according to current terminology, the raison d'être of a brand or a company."[1] (Freundt et al., 2021, p. 201)
"Purpose has three elements: Your Why, a bold vision, [and] a compelling mission." (Scales & Biderman-Gross, 2020, p. 19)	"Consumers increasingly expect brands to have not just functional benefits but a social purpose. As a result, companies are taking social stands in very visible ways." (Rodriguez-Vila & Bharadwaj, 2017)	"Purpose is […] about the 'raison d'être' of a company, which is at the heart of its activities and provides a background for all its activities." (Ahsen & Gauch, 2021)
"[Purpose is] the 'why' of brand vision" (Thompson, 2018, S. 63)	"Theoretically, brand purpose can be purely profit maximization; however, […] Brands are encouraged to go beyond functional benefits and wealth creation to focus on broader, more aspirational commitments that have an impact and make a difference in people's lives." (Mirzaei et al., 2021, p. 187)	"Being purpose-led is vital for businesses who want to succeed, who want to win and retain customers and talent, and who want to progress with a 'licence to operate' by all stakeholders in society." (Smith & Milligan, 2015, S. 32)

for what the company does (Anderson & Zheglov, 2019; Betz, 2021; Esch, 2021; Mirzaei et al., 2021). Why does a company produce what it produces? Why does a company sell what it sells? Why does a company communicate what it communicates? The answer to this "Why?" question should have a positive influence on customers' reasons to buy a company's products, investors' reasons to invest in it, or potential employees' reasons to accept a job there (Freundt et al., 2021; Scales & Biderman-Gross, 2020). A brand that aligns its communication with a purpose provides all addressees with an answer to this "Why?" question (Scales & Biderman-Gross, 2020). The manifestation of this answer thus becomes the core of a meaningful brand (Abbate, 2014).

In addition to the "Why?" question, the relevant literature often also asks "How?" and "What?" (Esch, 2021; Freundt et al., 2021; Kröger & Marx, 2020; Platschke, 2020). This understanding of purpose goes back to Simon Sinek and his book *First*

[1] Original in German: "Purpose ist dem momentanen Sprachgebrauch nach der Daseinszweck einer Marke oder eines Unternehmens. "

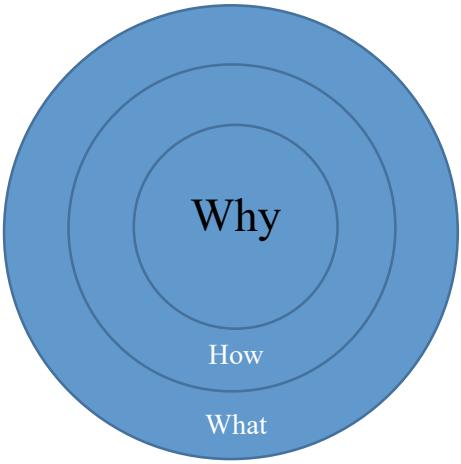

Fig. 2 "Golden Circle" (Sinek, 2009)

Ask Why (2009). In this book, he reduces the question of purpose to the question "Why?" with his golden circle ("Golden Circle", Fig. 2) and prominently places the question not only at the center of his circle but also at the center of every organization. His text has been instrumental in initiating the debate about the concept of purpose in its current form. In numerous current publications, therefore, the triad of "Why? How? What?" can be found.

For Sinek, the question "Why?" is at the heart of every business strategy. The answer to this question leads to the company's purpose, the reason the company does what it does. The answer to the "How?" question indicates how the "Why?" can be achieved in a way that makes a company better than other providers. The "What?" question is obviously directed at what products and services a company offers (Sinek, 2009).

To summarize: A purpose-driven brand is characterized by addressing the meaning needs of its stakeholders. It provides an answer to the meaning question "Why?".

3.2 Social Impact

Another way of defining the term "purpose-driven branding" is to note that, in addition to its economic function, a brand has social influence (Bonchek & France, 2018; Kilian & Miklis, 2019; Kröger & Marx, 2020; Rodriguez-Vila & Bharadwaj, 2017; Vredenburg et al., 2020). In some cases, there is also discussion of a "(higher) social purpose" (Everitt, 2017; Mirzaei et al., 2021; Rodriguez-Vila & Bharadwaj, 2017; Siuki, 2021). This refers to a concrete goal that is not purely financial. Instead, a contribution is to be made to the common good, or ecological and/or social goals are to be pursued in addition to economic ones (Rodriguez-Vila & Bharadwaj, 2017;

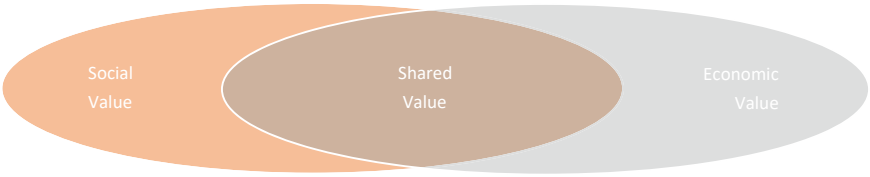

Fig. 3 Shared value as the intersection of social and economic value

Vredenburg et al., 2020). Social or ecological commitment is understood as something that goes beyond the profit motive of an organization (Mirzaei et al., 2021; Mishra, 2020; Siuki, 2021). In the best case, economic, social, and ecological benefits go hand in hand, and profit and purpose are united (Bonchek & France, 2018; Bruce & Jeromin, 2020; Everitt, 2017).

The shared-value approach is frequently referred to (Bonchek & France, 2018; Brendel, 2020; Esch, 2021; Sidibe, 2020; Smith & Milligan, 2015). The underlying concept goes back to a 2011 publication by Michael Porter and Mark Kramer in the Harvard Business Review, in which the authors call for replacing the classic profit orientation of companies with the generation of shared value as the primary corporate purpose (Porter & Kramer, 2011). In this context, Porter and Kramer understand shared value as "creating economic value by creating societal value" (Porter & Kramer, 2011, p. 77). The goal is to create economic value in a way that also creates value for society by addressing its needs and challenges (Porter & Kramer, 2011, p. 64). In this way, shared value can be regarded as arising from two components, economic value and social value, manifesting in the area where they intersect (Shormair & Gilbert, 2017), as illustrated in Fig. 3 and explained below.

The intersection of economic and social value refers to a simultaneous increase in economic and social value. Shared value is therefore created whenever an increase in financial profit is accompanied by a social or ecological improvement in the status quo.

Summary: A purpose-driven brand creates a value that goes beyond its usual profit-oriented function, i.e., the differentiation of its own offering on the market. It also creates a social or ecological value.

3.3 Legitimacy

The last interpretation of the term "purpose-driven branding" refers to the legitimation of business activities, which finds expression in the raison d'être of the brand or the raison d'être of the entire brand-managing organization (Abbate, 2014; Kilian & Miklis, 2019). Particularly in English-language literature, one encounters the French loanword "raison d'être" (Ahsen & Gauch, 2021; Weber, 2019). In this context, there is also talk of a "moral purpose" or of purpose as a "moral call for action" (Kramer, 2017; Weber, 2019, p. 46). Purpose-oriented brand management is the pursuit of

legitimate ends by legitimate means. Economic goals must be in legitimate harmony with social and ecological concerns, such as fair wages and sustainable production (Freundt et al., 2021).

In this context, some authors also speak of a "license to operate" that provides companies with social legitimacy. A "license to operate" refers to the social acceptance of companies (Reichertz, 2019; Sidibe, 2020; Smith & Milligan, 2015; Weber, 2019). The term originates from the theoretical field of corporate social responsibility. This "license" is based on the intersubjective perception of the members of society and cannot therefore be formally acquired. It ensures that corporate value creation is secured in the long term through social legitimization. The debate about the concept of purpose is thus increasingly becoming the anchor point of current discussions about responsible corporate and brand management (Freundt et al., 2021). Companies seeking to implement this concept use brand communication to influence the world into which their products go as well as, naturally, to create a good "environment" for their products. But these companies not only explicitly articulate central cultural and moral values and norms—they also claim to be guided by them (Baetzgen, 2019; Reichertz, 2019).

To summarize: A purpose-driven brand is one that is characterized by communicating what is legitimate action in relation to society and the environment, while at the same time revealing the legitimacy of the economic actions of the brand-managing organization, which itself operates strictly according to these values and norms, thus legitimizing itself as a member of its stakeholders' values-based community.

4 Discussion

It has become apparent that definitions of the concept of a brand's purpose revolve around three aspects of branding: answers to the question "Why?", social impacts, and/or raisons d'être. The question remains whether these definitions are of sufficient conceptual quality. Quality criteria for scientific terms are used as a benchmark for evaluating the definitions. Traditionally, there are five rules for a definition, which are to be considered as naming characteristics of sound definitions (Table 3). Accordingly, a definition will be considered successful if it complies with these five rules (Copi, 1998).

For the analysis of the literature studied, three essential aspects of branding were identified in authors' attempts to define the term "purpose-driven branding." The separation of these aspects served the purpose of systematic analysis; the aspects themselves are not necessarily sharply distinguishable from each other. In addition, a few authors used more than one aspect in their definitions. This is indicated by the following formulations: "These companies, or the communications agencies they pay, thus perform a very specific service by (a) legitimizing themselves as a moral authority, (b) describing a certain world, and (c) also formulating how to act in this

Table 3 Characteristics of a sound definition of a term

	Rule	Description
1	A definition should specify the essential attributes of the given concept	If the definition is theoretical in nature, then the definiens must regularly specify those attributes which—according to the theory—are of the greatest importance for understanding and predicting the behavior of the things denoted by the definiendum
2	A definition cannot be circular	It is clear that when the definiendum itself occurs in the definiens, the definition explains the meaning of the defined term only to those who already understand it
3	A definition cannot be too broad or too narrow	According to this rule, the definiens shall denote no more and no fewer things that are denoted by the definiendum
4	A definition cannot be expressed in ambiguous, opaque, or figurative language	Ambiguous terms should certainly be avoided when establishing definitions, for the task of the definiens is to explain the meaning of the definiendum clearly
5	A definition should not be negative in nature where it can be affirmative	The reason for this rule is that a definition is expected to explain what the term means, not what it does not mean

world: they 'provide' meaning" (Reichertz, 2019)[2]; "Companies that are beholden to their stakeholders must provide social legitimacy, which automatically raises the question of purpose" (Abbate, 2014).[3] This indicates that each of these three aspects (meaningfulness, societal impact, and legitimacy) is in itself considered a necessary condition of purpose-driven branding by some author(s) in the literature. In order for rule (1) for definitions to be fulfilled, all essential attributes must be considered in the definition of a term. However, none of the authors examined explicitly takes all three aspects into account. Further conceptual work is therefore necessary here to integrate all three aspects into an umbrella concept.

However, the results of the literature review still show conceptual vagueness in each of the three individual strands, which should be critically analyzed.

Definitions of the first type refer to the question "Why?", proposing that a purpose-driven brand is a brand that addresses purpose and offers meaning to its stakeholders. This type of definition can be seen to be circular: A purpose-driven brand is a brand that creates meaning and purpose for its stakeholders. The term to be defined ("purpose-driven brand") is defined by the very thing in need of defining,

[2] Original in German: "Diese Unternehmen beziehungsweise die von ihnen bezahlten Kommunikationsagenturen erbringen also, indem sie a) sich als moralische Instanz legitimieren, b) eine bestimmte Welt beschreiben und c) auch formulieren, wie in dieser Welt gehandelt werden soll, eine ganz spezifische Leistung: sie 'liefern' Sinn".

[3] Original in German: "Unternehmen, die ihren Stakeholdern verpflichtet sind, müssen sich gesellschaftlich legitimieren, womit sich die Frage nach dem Sinn automatisch stellt."

namely meaning or purpose-giving. Such a definition makes no semantic contribution because the question of what exactly makes the brand meaningful and purpose-driven—in what the meaningfulness actually consists—remains unexplained. Thus, rule (2) is not fulfilled.

Furthermore, a conceptual inconsistency in Simon Sinek's work can be traced at this point. Sinek does not explicitly give a name to what he means by the "Why?", but he describes it with a variety of different and apparently related but not synonymous terms, such as purpose, goal, drive, conviction, and vision. Though perhaps he does so with the aim of avoiding formal circularity, the result is a conceptual blur. For taken collectively, these terms denote more things than are actually denoted by the definiendum. As a definition, then, Sinek's multifaceted description is too broad and indeterminate, failing to satisfy rule (3).

This first approach to defining purpose-driven branding therefore needs to be more precisely specified for further research. In particular, meaning and purpose should be clearly distinguished so that each can be defined in more detail. This important distinction has already been pointed out by Bordt (2019). The conceptual vagueness in the "Why?"-centered approach therefore seems to indicate a research gap. A promising starting point for addressing it could be provided by Viktor Frankl's tradition of logotherapy and existential analysis.

The second type of definition refers to the social and/or ecological effectiveness of purpose-driven branding: A purpose-driven brand creates value that goes beyond its actual profit-oriented function, i.e., the differentiation of its own offering on the market. It also creates a social value. This is an ex negativo formulation and thus fails to satisfy Rule (5) because of the way it refers to what goes beyond profit maximization, i.e., to values identified only as non-economic values. Such formulations are only useful as definitions if the set of non-economic values is not > 1; otherwise, it is not clear what exactly this formulation refers to, and this definition ex negativo does not provide semantic added value, because it is supposed to explain what a term means and not what it does not mean. This makes it clear how important the shared value concept is in this context, because that concept contrasts economic value with social value as the only alternative. If the shared value concept is used as a basis, the exclusion procedure can be used to determine what the term denotes in the context of this theory.

But the reference to the shared value concept raises a whole new set of questions: How can it be ensured that a given purpose-driven brand not only is instrumentalized to differentiate the offer on the market (i.e., ultimately creates economic value) but also has an actual social value? Can brands have a social impact at all? If so, how can this influence be described? This leads to the core question of whether brands are capable of contributing to social change at all. The contributions examined here do not provide these answers.

Hajdas and Kleczek (2021) have already identified this as a research gap. A promising approach to further developing the notion of purpose-driven branding in terms of social and environmental effectiveness could be social practice theory (TSP) if the goal of a purpose-driven brand is to change consumer behavior. In describing the effectiveness of transformations, TSP focuses not on the individual

but on social and collective actions. TSP understands the social practices of an entity as its configuration of principles ("principles: what is 'right' or 'wrong'"?), actions ("actions: embodying the principles of practices, but also requiring the acquisition of skills"), and resources ("resources used in a specific way for a given practice"). As Hajdas & Kleczek put it.

> By integrating TSP and Branding, we understand that the resources are the products or services, packaging (materials), distribution (infrastructure), or other solutions offered by a brand within its strategy; actions are how users use them; and the principles are the norms, meanings, and rules that users follow when acting in the practice. Consequently, if companies want to transform consumer practices, they should provide resources (tools, materials, infrastructure, and knowledge) so that users can implement new practices (Hajdas & Kleczek, 2021, p. 361).

The last feature used in attempts to define purpose-driven branding has been described in the literature as raison d'être or license to operate. This is a figurative expression being used in the definition. It thus violates rule (4). While such a formulation conveys a sense of the use of the term, it does not provide a clear explanation of what the definiendum means. Obviously, companies do not need an actual license to operate, nor is an authorization to exist necessary. These formulations figuratively paraphrase what is actually at stake: the question of social legitimacy. However, exactly what this legitimation consists of and how a brand or the brand-managing organization legitimizes itself remains completely unspecified in these publications.

Reflecting on business ethics may contribute to the further development of the concept of purpose-driven branding. The question of the legitimacy of a business is about the significance of the brand or the brand-managing organization for the just coexistence of individuals. However, what exactly it means for a business to have a right to operate has so far remained open, as has the clarification of what moral rights (such as this one) specifically refer to (Ulrich, 2016). Likewise, what role a brand must assume to be guaranteed legitimacy in the sense presented here needs further clarification.

5 Limitations and Conclusion

This study has reviewed the current research literature on the term "purpose-driven branding" with attention to the definitions contained therein. What this term denotes seems to be narrowable down to three main aspects. It has been shown, however, that the three typical definitions have difficulties in terms of form and content. The definition type 1 ("Why?") has a circular structure. Definition type 2 ("create non-economical value") is a definition ex negativo, which also does not make a semantic contribution. Definition type 3 ("raison d'être") uses figurative language for definition, which also does not meet the requirements of a scientific concept. As a result, a definition of the term "purpose-driven branding" in the sense of a lexical definition is not possible for all three types of definitions.

The study is limited in that it selected only publications in German and English. Future research could follow up to see if there are other definitions in publications that have a different language focus. Further, these three typical definitions do not match the quality criteria of scientific concepts. This conclusion is limited by the very strict definition of definition that was applied. Nonetheless, it became apparent that in order to obtain a sufficiently clarified concept of purpose-driven branding, further conceptual work needs to be done in the future. This is typically the task of philosophy as a conceptual science. Methodologically, an explication in Carnap's sense is suitable for this purpose (Carnap, 1959; Siegwart, 1997). An explication aims at transforming a concept that is useful but deficient from a scientific point of view into a concept that is more scientifically respectable. Examples of the kinds of deficiencies an explication can remedy are a concept's indeterminacy, its inconsistency, or the lack of an adequate individuation principle for what it denotes (Greimann, 2012).

Furthermore, a proximity of the concept "purpose-driven branding" to business ethics theories is remarkable. Two of the three typical definitions can be found, for example, in the basic dimensions of life-serving business in the context of integrative business ethics by Peter Ulrich. The concepts could benefit from further theoretical work in the context of business ethics, to what extent the concept is an application case of this.

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LGBT Brand Activism: A Research Agenda on How to Be Committed to the LGBT Conversation

Ricardo Grilo, Vera Teixeira Vale, and Susana Marques

Abstract The increasing popularity of brand activism has brought social issues to the fore of brand actions and communications. Showing up during a social problem, standing up for it and becoming an ally can create new opportunities for brands to strengthen their relevance or lead to consumer backlash. The LGBT movements are one of the possible choices for marketers and managers among other activities such as Black Lives Matter, Me Too and Fridays for Future. However, the brand activism construct within the context of LGBT conversation is still in its infancy. To address this topic, we explore how brands are committed to the LGBT conversation by building inclusive marketing efforts, raising awareness and standing up for LGBT rights. Based on the review of literature related to brand activism, corporate social responsibility and woke activism, we explore the many unanswered questions regarding brand-related interactions with LGBT causes. Relevant insights into the factors to consider when designing successful LGBT brand activism campaigns are also discussed. Therefore, concluding thoughts, implications and potential areas for future research are identified.

Keywords Brand activism · Brand communication · Corporate social responsibility · LGBT brand activism

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1 Introduction

Despite significant changes in laws surrounding the rights of LGBT people around the globe, public opinion and laws on the acceptance of these communities remain sharply divided by region and country (United Nations Human Rights Office, 2017): more than a third of the world's countries criminalise loving same-sex relationships and the hostile public attitudes combined with the lack of legal protections create the perfect storm of violence and discrimination. The ILGA Europe (2022) report concluded that over half of LGBTI students in Denmark had suicidal thoughts or self-harmed in 2021 and that 80% of LGBT students feel unsafe at school in Ukraine. The LGBT issues are one of the most popular causes among the public. Chinery (2019) shows that 29% of the 122 companies that participated in June for the Pride month with marketing campaigns registered a spike in-time brand participation. This activism results in the move of the brands from placing advertisements in LGBT media to assuming a side in the talk, becoming advocates, allies, and activists, perhaps. As the LGBT community still faces challenges, the pressure is growing from stakeholders' expectations (Palazzo & Scherer, 2006; Wagner & Seele, 2017). Pursuing the brand's legitimacy and authenticity in the commitment to the LGBT conversation is one of the biggest challenges, as its political roots are hostile to capitalist interests (Kates, 2004), generating what can be called rainbow washing, referring to brands using LGBT symbols not to originate positive social outcomes but to boost sales (Batey, 2019). This attention increases during Pride month. On one hand, this Pride appropriation can be a sign of mainstream acceptance. On the other hand, it can be a deception of the movement's heritage. The Porter Novelli/Cone (2019) reveals that 75% of Gen Z's will hold brands accountable through researching to see whether they are being honest about taking a stand. The number of brands supporting the acceptance of the LGBT community is increasing, advocating for respect and equality around the world. Why?

Academic researchers know little about how brands are getting involved (Bhagwat et al., 2020; Zhou, 2021), facing critical challenges, such as (1) the criteria that define a brand as gay-friendly and the relationship between the perceptions of gay-friendliness brands and supporting LGBT causes are yet to be established (Vredenburg et al., 2020); (2) the majority of studies on corporate social responsibility (CSR) advertising have examined less controversial social issues (Sheehan & Berg, 2018); (3) new terms as brand activism (Kotler & Sarkar, 2017), corporate social advocacy (Dodd, 2018) and corporate social justice (Zhang, 2020) need to be more explored; and (4) the scepticism concerning LGBT brand activism has been left unanswered (Vredenburg et al., 2020). It is necessary to understand brands' connections with LGBT activism and the potential risks of the commercialisation.

2 Overall Situation

Drawing from the literature on brand activism, this concept is considered a natural evolution of CSR research and a possible avenue for communication for development and social change (Kotler & Sarkar, 2017). This connection creates LGBT-friendly brands (Ciszek, 2017; Oakenfull, 2013). The rainbow, a global symbol of the LGBT community and social movement, has been adopted by brands for marketing and commercial purposes (Champlin & Li, 2020).

With an active role in promoting social changes, LGBT activism is more commercialised in nature (Olson, 2017). Still, it's a new area of research that depends on strategic communication to provoke social change (Ciszek, 2017), and little academic interest has engaged brand activism with communication for social change. We respond to Waisbord's (2014) call for theoretically sophisticated studies that clarify the nexus between brand participation and social change as we explore how brands are becoming activists in the LGBT movement.

Playing around queer imagery without talking much about LGBT people's current struggles and lives can be dangerous. According to Porter, social activism must be understood within business programmes (Porter, 2012, as interviewed in Driver, 2012). Thus, if activism 'is a form of strategic communication that operates to produce meaning and create discourses for social change' (Ciszek, 2017, p. 10), are brands strategic social agents (Schoenberger-Orgad, 2011)? For Edelman (2018), chief executive officer of Edelman, there is a new relationship between a corporation and a consumer, where the functional benefits aren't enough (Schmidt et al., 2022), and the act of purchasing is influenced by the brand's willingness to act with purpose. Aligned with this perspective, a 2018 empirical study found that 64% of global consumers boycott or buy based on their stand on societal issues. This is an increase of 13% yearly (Edelman, 2018). One year later, empirical studies concluded that consumers argue that too many corporations use social issues as a marketing move to sell more (Edelman, 2019). Drawing from these different perspectives, consumers' responses can go from support to boycotting (Schmidt et al., 2022; Xu & Zhoub, 2020).

According to Wettstein and Baur (2016), brand activism is different from CSR in two aspects: CSR activities gather more consensus and are viewed as positive; CSR more strongly emphasises actions, and their consequences, than it does inherent corporation values. Thus, brand activism addresses controversial issues with the potential to divide the public, being defined by the lack of consensus that can generate as it faces the absence of a correct response to the social issue involved (Nalick et al., 2016; Vredenburg et al., 2020). The study of Vredenburg et al. (2020) argues that brand activism draws from CRS literature and that perception of authenticity depend on the alignment of activist marketing messages with brand purpose, values and prosocial corporate actions. The authors also claim that activism is built on inherent higher purpose values compared with CSR programmes, as the CSR programmes

emphasise actions and outcomes. As brand activism's mission is to increase awareness, be vocal, and encourage behavioural and socio-political change, it generates passionate responses.

For Micheletti et al. (2006), the notion of political consumption is important to understanding the difference between both tactics. The market purchases by consumers' commitment to political, economic and societal development are essential to engage with social issues. This idea is aligned with corporate social advocacy activities, defined as a type of corporate activism focused on taking a stand on issues with strong political roots (Hydock et al., 2020). Bennett (2006) also presents the global citizenship idea, based on the generations born since 1970. These generations enjoy the advantages of globalisation, allowing them to consume through beliefs, supporting the idea that brands have the power to influence the status of citizen-consumers (Manfredi-Sánchez, 2019). This perspective is related to activism, which can be defined as corporation's public, and political, demonstration of 'support for or opposition to one side of a partisan socio-political issue' (Bhagwat et al., 2020, p. 1).

To understand the differences between cause-related marketing (CRM) and brand activism it is important to explore the anchor behind CRM definition, proposed by Varadarajan and Menon (1988, p. 60): '[…] the process of formulating and implementing marketing activities that are characterized by an offer from the firm to contribute a specified amount to a designated cause when customers engage in revenue-providing exchanges that satisfy organizational and individual objectives'. In fact, CSR is key to the gradual formalisation of CRM, aimed to 'do well by doing good' through a strategic focus (Varadarajan & Menon, 1988, p. 60). Sixteen years later, Skory and Repka (2004) described CRM as being marketing with a worthy cause. Currently, it is defined as 'marketing activities in which company donations to a cause are based upon sales of specified goods or services' (Larson et al., 2008, p. 272), contributing to different corporate goals, like facilitating market-entry, enhancing brand image and awareness (Docherty & Hibbert, 2003), and creating trade engagement (Varadarajan & Menon, 1988). Brønn and Vrioni (2001) claim that CRM is more a rational decision than an altruistic one, considering that brands face a competitive market where the value of social concerns is escalating and gaining great importance. However, for Shetty et al. (2019), cause-related statements are a form of brand activism but not the same. Thus, LGBT brand activism results when brands take a side in the talk and contribute to the LGBT issue through messaging and practice. As a form of commitment to the LGBT movement, brands not only stand up against homophobia and transphobia but also advocate, as strategic social agents, for LGBT human rights, contribute to eliminating discrimination and act in the public sphere to build a better world using strategic communication and marketing, producing meaning, and creating discourses for social change within the LGBT context, which can generate polarised stakeholder responses. The pursuit of change is the heart of LGBT brand activism.

Following Mirzaei et al. (2022) study, woke activism occurs when brands take a public expression of support for or opposition to one side of a controversial issue. This public stance can be in the form of corporate social and political advocacy,

which can be related to the construct of corporate socio-political activism, according to the study of Bhagwat et al. (2020), without forgetting the differences between them. These socio-political issues are non-consensual matters on which institutional and societal opinion remains divided. When comparing CSR and corporate socio-political activism, a major difference is the extent to which the focal issue is widely favoured rather than partisan. In summary, LGBT brand activism is related to CSR, CRM, woke brand activism and corporate socio-political activism, but is a distinct and independent concept that has yet to be elucidated.

3 Brands Connecting with Controversial Issues

To explore the distinctiveness of brand activism, we need to understand the origin of the construct. The term 'brand activism' gained theoretical relevance in 2017 when Kotler and Sark raised the question that still waits for answers: 'When did brand activism become a thing?'. One year before, the Marketing Science Institute (2016) classified the issue of whether brands should take such stands as one of the critical issues emerging in the not-too-distant marketing future. With almost two-thirds of consumers expecting brands to work to improve the state of society, brand activism can also be profitable (Accenture, 2018). Brands are being called to get involved. Hence, it is vital to understand if placing brands as moral actors that promote legal, economic, social, political or environmental reform (Sarkar & Kotler, 2018) is likely to help or damage the brand. Nevertheless, brands connected to controversial issues are not new. Pepsi-Cola's adoption of the counterculture in the 1960s is an example of brands co-opting causes for their benefit (Schmidt et al., 2022). However, this was notable within cause-related marketing. Now, brands are becoming activists in the socio-political sphere (Maks-Solomon & Drewry, 2020; Vredenburg et al., 2020). Although the increased number of brands adopting activist marketing messaging, Maks-Soloman and Drewry (2020) argue that if CSR has been studied extensively, brand activism remains unexplored.

The LGBT issues are at the heart of this new marketing era. Brands are no longer primary targets of LGBT activism, but sources of that activism (Ball, 2019; Zhou, 2021). Yet academic researchers know little about these new brands' commitment (Zhou, 2021). One of the reasons for this lack of knowledge is the fact of much research has been concerned with health and political-related domains, ignoring the marketing context (Anteby & Anderson, 2014; Chan, 2017; Gross, 2005; Zhou, 2021). Tindall and Waters (2013) claim that 'LGBTQ issues have largely been neglected by scholars in the strategic communication field' (p. 2658). Zhou (2021) calls for more research. The adherence of brands to the brand activism bandwagon has created lots of interest for inquiry into the area of marketing (Mirzaei et al., 2022; Shetty et al., 2019). Firstly, we should explore the definition and dimensions of brand activism, as it has fragmented perspectives.

Brand activism, including within the context of LGBT issues, may generate polarised responses and alienate customers. This makes brands avoid brand activism.

According to the results of the CMO survey (2018), 178 chief marketing officers (83%) believed it was inappropriate for their firm to take a side on politically charged issues. Brands should get involved with social-political issues only when there is alignment between messaging and practice to be able to authentically connect with targets (Moorman, 2020; Vredenburg et al., 2020). This is the brand authenticity claim, supported by research that shows consumers resonate with brands that stay true to a position (Becker et al., 2019). Engaging with causes in hypocritical ways generates what Wagner et al. (2009) define as corporate hypocrisy, which they define as 'the belief that a firm claim to be something that it is not' (p. 79). Generally, the risk of brand activism is associated with the type of issue that the brand supports and with these risks comes the possibility of backlash and corporate hypocrisy charges. The LGBT brand communication and the LGBT brand action belong to the wider construct of woke brands. Following Mirzaei et al. (2022) study, these woke brands create the expectation that they will fight against discrimination and prejudice as they are defined through the degree of awareness they try to signal and communicate to their target audience.

There's a huge gap in knowledge and guidelines for active authentic and successful brand activism strategies, making it hard for brands to operationalise these suggestions to take full advantage of brand activism and to positively contribute to a better world.

4 Types of Brand Activism

Brand activism definition is widely fragmented, with several proposals from different scholars (see Table 1).

As more brands stand out for social issues, more definitions for brand activism are proposed, as Table 1 displays. However, drawing from Maks-Soloman and Drewry's (2020) position, academic researchers have different perspectives, most with common grounds, but that have not yet been integrated into a general understanding. For example, if Sibai et al. (2021) claim that brand activists are defined for their moral competency to create social benefits, Eilert and Nappier Cherup (2020) argue that brand activism is the commitment to social issues aiming at societal change by influencing the attitudes and behaviours. Thus, can we consider that influencing attitudes and behaviours creates social benefits or are the researchers discussing different things inside the same topic? This doubt remains through the nine definitions presented above. Nevertheless, we can argue that being purpose and values-driven is an apparent common belief, from Kotler and Sarkar (2017) to Vredenburg et al. (2020).

The political nature of brand activism is highlighted by Moorman (2020) but doesn't find an echo in the other authors presented in Table 1. Authors like Mukherjee and Althuizen (2020) or Kotler and Sarkar (2017) argue that politics is one of the possible dimensions for brands, as they can be activists in more areas, such as social, business, legal, economic and environmental.

Table 1 Brand activism: 9 key definitions

Author(s)	Brand activism definition	Defining characteristics
Sibai et al. (2021)	To authenticate brand activism, controversial strategies must display moral competency that is, an ability to pass accurate moral judgments	(1) an activist brand is a moral subject (2) that reforms dominant moral judgments (3) to promote social benefits
Eilert and Nappier Cherup (2020)	Brands' willingness to take a stand on social, political, economic and environmental issues to create societal change by influencing the attitudes and behaviours	3 types of influences: normative, mimetic and coercive
Moorman (2020)	Public speech or actions focused on partisan issues made by or on behalf of a company using its corporate or individual brand name. The partisan nature of socio-political issues is a vital element for brand activism	7 perspectives to guide the degree brands will be political actors: brand authenticity; corporate citizen; cultural authority; calculative; brands as educators; political mission; employee engagement
Mukherjee and Althuizen (2020)	The act of taking a stand on controversial social or political issues for which society has yet to reach consensus	–
Vredenburg et al. (2020)	Purpose and values-driven strategy in which a brand adopts a nonneutral stance on issues, to create social change and marketing success. Implies intangible (messaging) and tangible (practice) commitments. Goes beyond advocacy/messaging	Identifies four typologies of brand activism: absence, silent, authentic and inauthentic
Manfredi-Sánchez (2019)	Communication strategy. Aims to influence the citizen-consumer with messages sustained by political values. Borrows from the campaigns of social movements, copying the aesthetics of authenticity	Symbolic value and character. Defence of divisive issues. Implies alliances. Committed to authenticity and mastering the language of the community
Wieser et al. (2019)	Transform markets and society by shaping what is right/wrong, worthy/unworthy in the industries in which brands operate	–

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

Author(s)	Brand activism definition	Defining characteristics
Kotler and Sarkar (2017)	Emerges as a values-driven agenda for companies that care about the future of society. The underlying force for progress is a sense of justice and fairness for all. 6 areas of brand activism: social, business, political, legal, economic and environmental	How many consumers are likely to care? will they believe that we authentically engage with the cause? does the governance sees how and why activism makes a difference?
Vilá and Bharadwaj (2017)	Brands are corporate citizens and committed to progress on social goals. Does the strategy reinforce existing brand attributes? What new and valuable attributes might it create? Would it be hard for competitors to imitate?	Three domains must be explored: brand heritage; customer satisfaction; product externalities

Taking stands is probably one of the elements that we quickly identify in most of the authors. Yet, it remains unclear what type of stand researchers are thinking about. For Manfredi-Sánchez (2019), taking a stand is developing and implementing a communication strategy to influence the audience through messages sustained by political values. To Mukherjee and Althuizen (2020), more than taking a stand, it is essential that the frame is about a controversial issue, which is also supported by Sibai et al. (2021).

Finally, authenticity is also one of the common beliefs between authors, which we explore below. This is one of the elements considered crucial to achieving positive outcomes. However, the definition has been changing, and the lack of consensus raises new challenges, which we explore next.

5 Hypocrisy, Truth and Beliefs

Authenticity can make a difference in the outcomes of brand activism campaigns. The truthfulness of this claim has not been empirically verified as more research is needed to study and operationalise the dimensions of woke activism authenticity (Mirzaei et al., 2022). Consumers might condemn activist brands' tactics they see as inauthentic (Sibai et al., 2021; Vredenburg et al., 2020), accusing them of 'woke washing' (Moorman, 2020), or 'rainbow washing' (Clements, 2017). As authenticity became dominant in the context of why corporations choose to adopt certain socio-political causes, the construct won different perspectives. Schallehn et al. (2014) argue that it relates to continuity and consistency with the truth of purposes and

values. Taylor (1991) claims that ethical and valid engagement with others is a key pillar to be perceived as authentic.

Citizens are using new forms of engagement and participation, with highlights for political consumption (Baek, 2010; Kam & Deichert, 2020). According to Baek (2010), political consumption is the 'consumer's decision either to punish or reward [corporations] by making selective choices of products or brands, based on social, political or ethical considerations' (p. 1066). This is aligned with Schmidt et al. (2022) argument, which claims that consumers tend to support brands on social issues. However, this support is not unconditional. As consumption gains a socio-political nature, consumers expect brands to act what they communicate (or preach). When brands do not deliver on their promises, consumers have the channels to call them out (Bakhtiari, 2020). More than half of surveyed customers were sceptical of brands' involvement in social issues, claiming that brands have profit-seeking motivations. To fight against the trust problem, the promise must be backed by authentic action (Bakhtiari, 2020). That said, consumers increasingly use their purchase decisions to support their beliefs and make several demands to brands to use their influence and power to drive positive societal change. Hence, activism focuses on issues that face challenges and obstacles in their progress toward a consensual public and institutional opinion (Eilert & Nappier Cherup, 2020). Prior literature lacks an integrative framework to understand to which extent brands are willing to advocate LGBT acceptance in tangible and intangible ways. A central question remains: Whether and how brands are moving from communicating LGBT acceptance to becoming activists on LGBT rights?

As Eilert and Nappier Cherup (2020) claim, brand activism relies on exploring how brands involve themselves in socio-political issues. Hypocrisy, truth and beliefs will always be side-by-side. The challenge is to understand how.

6 Brand Activism and the LGBT Conversation/Commitment

The private sector has several opportunities to promote inclusion and respect. According to the United Nations (UN), organisations have the duty to respect all internationally recognised human rights, but how can brands truly advocate for LGBT rights? The United Nations Human Rights Office (2017) developed standards of conduct for business. The call is to corporations all over the world, which must follow five conduct standards in four dimensions:

(a) Respect human rights (at all times): stand up for the human rights of LGBT people in the communities where they do business.
(b) Eliminate discrimination (workplace): zero discrimination in recruitment, employment, working conditions, benefits, respect for privacy or treatment of harassment.

(c) Provide support (workplace): provide a positive environment so that LGBT staff can work without stigma. Requires businesses to go beyond equal benefits and take steps to ensure inclusion.
(d) Prevent other human rights violations (marketplace): do not discriminate against LGBT suppliers, distributors or customers. Ensure that business partners do not determine and pay attention to abuses a corporation may be implicated in through their products, services or business relationships.
(e) Act in the public sphere (marketplace): consult closely with local communities to identify what constructive approaches businesses can take in contexts where legal frameworks and existing practices violate the human rights of LGBT people.

Hence, drawing from these United Nations Human Rights Office insights, brand activism goes beyond messaging but must pay attention to the degree of message practice. In other words, from advocacy to practice, brands must have broad marketing strategies, including dimensions such as workplace, marketplace, degree of commitment and time (duration).

7 Key Aspects and Questions

Brand activism is at a crossroads. How brands advocate and get committed to LGBT issues (Campbell, 2007; Mazutis & Slawinski, 2015; Shan et al., 2017) still raises many questions.

Brands taking sides strive to authentically engage with their audiences to accomplish their goals and needs and to avoid backlash. Consumers rely on brands to express this self-concept idea as brands influence consumers' identity paths (Kirmani, 2009). That said, brands need to reflect the values that consumers consider important and have the potential to help them construct who they are (Morhart et al., 2013). Thus, we need to examine if identification is enough to generate a commitment to the LGBT cause.

According to Torelli et al. (2012), prior information about a brand is key so consumers can evaluate CSR information. So, it is important to communicate CSR initiatives to consumers to create or reinforce awareness (Muniz et al., 2019). But excessive communication can have the opposite effect, as repetition can lead to irritation and boredom (Muniz et al., 2019). Fournier and Lee (2009) claims that people relate to brands in many ways, similar to how they engage people. To better explore this idea of people that relate with brands socially, within the marketing literature, it's important to understand the engagement concept. As a concept with a wide variety of definitions (Maslowska et al., 2016), we adapt the definition of brand-community engagement proposed by Wirtz et al. (2013), explained as 'the consumer's intrinsic motivation to interact and co-operate with community members' (p. 229), to understand why and how brands are communicating and becoming activists for the

LGBT issues. Consequently, to create a successful purpose and value-driven brand, the strategy begins inside-house and then with the communication plan.

As brands can use LGBT issues for several reasons, including to authentically connect with target audiences, to distinguish themselves from competitors, to improve brands' image and win new market segments, or to create change in the world, we claim that to become a LGBT activist, brands must stand up for human rights of LGBT people in the communities where they do business, contribute to eliminate discrimination in the workplace and provide support through a positive workplace environment, prevent human rights violations and act in the public sphere.

Research into LGBT brand activism could adapt the work of brand political activism, developed by Moorman (2020), to study LGBT brand activism through the lens of brands. We would have to consider three characteristics: (a) the brand is purpose and values-driven; (b) addresses a controversial or polarising socio-political issue and (c) the brand contributes toward the LGBT issue through messaging and brand practice. As more brands seek to create well-defined social-purpose strategies (Vilá & Bharadwaj, 2017), practitioners need to identify the best social need to engage with to make positive insights into the brand's value proposition. Also, we cannot ignore three domains: brand heritage (Vilá & Bharadwaj, 2017), product elements (Vilá & Bharadwaj, 2017), and brand purpose, values, and prosocial corporate practice (Vredenburg et al., 2020). Moreover, it is relevant to uncover Moorman's (2020) perspectives to understand how brands apply them to guide their decisions about the degree to which they will be activists. These perspectives can be seen as implicit theories (Zeithaml et al., 2020) that marketers use to position the brands' role in more significant social issues. Taking into consideration that each perspective has a set of assumptions about the brand, its responsibilities, role and risks, it can be important to understand to what extent brands engage in LGBT activism. Moorman (2020) gives seven perspectives that need to be explored: (a) brand authenticity view; (b) cultural authority view; (c) calculative view; (d) educators view; and (e) political mission view; (f) employee engagement view and (g) corporate citizen view. Combined with the high societal expectations from the brands (Waddock, 2008), we can say that consumers, especially millennials, expect brands to act beyond their commercial goals, pushing brands to assume their activist mode and communicate their opinion about an issue.

8 To Keep in Mind

It is important to keep in mind: (1) authentic brand activism is key to generate positive social outcomes and performance for the brand; (2) values-driven messaging and practice are vital to the success of any brand activism strategy; (3) theory and practise demonstrates that the wrong cause and pursuing moderate misalignment of the brand can originate bad or limited outcomes of brand activism and (4) it is essential to gain legitimacy and to celebrate solid alliances (Manfredi-Sánchez, 2019). Legitimacy is considered nuclear for the survival of organisations (Ellerup Nielsen & Thomsen,

2018), and therefore of brands. Deeply rooted in the process to seeking 'approval for their acts from groups in society' (Kaplan & Ruland, 1991, p. 320), the understanding of legitimacy can be pragmatic (connected to the instrumental CSR and framed as the exchange between a brand and its stakeholders), moral (value-based and framed as the judgements about the brand's activities and if them provide social benefits congruent with the value system of the stakeholders) and cognitive (the outcomes brands may acquire by being part of the crowd and by conforming to what is taken for granted by the public) (Suchman, 1995).

The increasing popularity of moral legitimacy creates new opportunities for brands to become allies in several movements. Considering this, as pursuing legitimacy includes multiple strategies, communication can be a tool to gain legitimacy, framed by the CSR communication view. Understood as a documentation discipline, CSR communication replies to the growing need and expectation for accountability and transparency in brand activism activities. However, as a rhetorical device, CSR communication is nothing but 'a PR invention' (Amazeen, 2011; Ellerup Nielsen & Thomsen, 2018). With the above perspectives in mind, brands need to conquer legitimacy to be part of the conversation. (Ellerup Nielsen & Thomsen, 2018).

9 Conclusions and Avenues for Future Research

As brand-related interactions with causes are increasing worldwide, the potential of brand activism messages becomes particularly valuable (Vredenburg et al., 2020). However, brand activism still has many unanswered questions.

The choice of a social cause has been pointed out as crucial by several reports, researchers and marketing managers, who believe it is essential to have a causal association that relates and connects with the values of the corporation. Nevertheless, this still doesn't have clear empirical support. Considering the youth of brand activism, the future research opportunities are waiting to be explored: (1) the definition is fragmented, giving empty spaces for more specific topics (Ciszek, 2017); (2) little scholarship attention has engaged brand activism strategy with communication for development and social change; (3) researchers lack of knowledge about how brands are taking sides in the LGBT conversation (Zhou, 2021); (4) there's no guideline to help brands to move toward an activist positioning (Sibai et al., 2021); (5) implementing a brand activism strategy demands congruence between leadership, stakeholders and corporate social responsibility, demanding a broader scope of investigation to understand how to manage these different areas; (6) developing consumer-oriented studies and brand-oriented studies to create new and relevant knowledge and (7) promotion of research about these constructs with context-sensibility and considering all the different social, political, legal, cultural and geographic realities.

All the possible avenues for future research have theoretical and managerial implications, namely, (1) thinking about LGBT brand activism and communication through the lens of business and management; (2) understanding how brands can

influence policymakers, work with activists and associations, and make the difference; (3) overpass the historical distrust of LGBT people about brands taking stands and (4) explore how brands and the community can work together to achieve mutually positive outcomes.

Future research must embrace the opportunity to deepen the investigation to understand and explain how brands are adopting LGBT activism, overpassing the allyship and advocacy status. On one hand, the expected theoretical implication is to examine the nexus between marketing, activism and community. On the other hand, the expected managerial implication is to identify the relevant factors to design successful campaigns. In sum, future research may provide insights for researchers, practitioners and policymakers who believe that brands should have values and motivate societal change.

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"To Adopt or Not to Adopt, That is the Question": Are Social Marketing Strategies Effective to Stimulate Animal Adoption?

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Abstract Thousands of animals are abandoned each year in Portugal. Shelter associations as kennels or catteries dependent on municipal or parish councils are overcrowded and with limited conditions to warrant a good quality of life to all sheltered animals, despite their continuous and relentless efforts. This paper builds on how social marketing and its techniques, working on communication strategies through social media content and followers' engagement, become relevant in the promotion of animal adoption from shelters. Hence, the purpose of this paper is to present the results of a case study of a social marketing strategy employed by a Portuguese non-for-profit organization dedicated to provide shelter for abandoned animals and promote careful and responsible adoption. It explores the potential of social media within social marketing campaigns to alter individuals' attitudes and behaviours regarding animal abandonment and adoption in desirable ways. This study contributes to the literature on social marketing, addressing animal abandonment, a theme that has been scarcely explored in the area. Two research methods were developed simultaneously: (a) a survey about animal adoption to 312 respondents; (b) a case study of a Portuguese Animal Shelter Association (ASA), including a netnographic approach to 90 social media publications, which generated 8,637 reactions through emojis, 345 comments with positive feelings, 77 comments with negative feelings, resulting in 11,389 shares. The findings allowed identifying the reasons that most motivate individuals and families to adopt animals instead of purchasing them. The most important reason pointed out by the respondents was empathy for the animals' often-precarious situation and life story triggered by a social media publication, which not previously suggested in the literature. Second, identifying the most relevant elements in the online communication that influenced animal adoption, which is Publications, where photographs and videos of animals are shared. Finally, finishing with a set of recommendations that might lead to the desired social behavioural change explored in this study, i.e., animal adoption.

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1 Introduction

Concerns about animal welfare have been witnessed growing interest over the last decades, not only in Europe but across the globe. Discussions on animal welfare demand a definition on what constitutes animal needs, namely food, water, comfort and health and invites us to critically think on our ethical responsibility to provide for their needs. Many organizations and institutions around the world (e.g., the World Society for the Protection of Animals, the Royal Society for the Protection of Animals, the International Fund for Animal Welfare, the Animal Legal Defense Fund) work daily to protect their rights to the point of campaigning together to achieve a Universal Declaration on Animal Welfare (UDAW) at the United Nations, hence recognising that this is an issue that needs to be dealt with as part of the social development of nations worldwide (Bousfield & Brown, 2010).

Some countries have embraced serious legislation to deal with animal welfare and animal rights issues. Despite the legislation created, associations, shelters and kennels/catteries are increasingly overcrowded, without physical and financial capabilities to give a dignified life to the animals they welcome. This situation is due to the overpopulation of stray animals, aggravated by the infrequency of sterilization campaigns. Hence, situations of abuse, abandonment, especially the abandonment of companion animals such as dogs and cats and the violation of their rights, continue to take place in today's society, constituting a growing problem (Baquero et al., 2017; Coe et al., 2014). The European Society of Dogs and Animal Welfare (www.esdaw.eu) estimates more than 100,000,000 abandoned pets in Europe, most of which in EU member states. In Portugal, according to recent data, around 30,000 animals are abandoned per year, most of them dogs (National Association of Municipal Veterinarians, ANVETEM, 2022). Given this context, this paper raises the question on how non-for-profit organisations (NFPO) might promote changes in citizens' perceptions and attitudes towards animal abandonment and animal responsible adoption. To answer this question, it also suggests that the Social Marketing framework might be utterly helpful to embrace such challenging problem. Social marketing aims to promote changes in people's undesirable behavioural, but it might also work as a powerful tool to appeal and influence citizens to act for a cause. Thus, if well implemented within NFPO's communication strategies, it might constitute a valuable tool to discourage people to abandon their companion animals, and awaken and encourage citizens to responsibly adopt animals living in kennels or shelters. In fact, in social marketing research, this topic has received little attention. The internet has radically changed the way NFPOs in general, and animal shelters, in particular, communicate the animals they house for adoption. Thanks to the ease of the process, the growing adhesion of organizations to social media platforms is notorious, aiming not only at communicating their work but also to raise population's

awareness to the problem of animal abandonment and consequently, the urgent need to find them new homes. However, to what extent is the digital communication effective in encouraging the adoption of animals? Based on a case study of a Portuguese Animal Shelter Association (henceforth ASA), this paper explores the potential of social marketing strategies, and particularly the influence of social media communication, on the adoption of a pet from a shelter, exploring the following research goals: (i) understand citizens' motivations to adopt an animal from a shelter; (ii) diagnose the social marketing-mix of the shelter, (iii) analyse ASA's communication in social media and explore feelings generated in their followers through its publications, (iv) identify which actions are most frequently taken by followers of social media when faced with a publication and lastly (v) identify which characteristics of social media publications most influence followers to adopt an animal.

The paper is organized as follows. It first reviews the theoretical frameworks adopted to explore the potential of social media as social marketing tools to reduce animal abandonment and animal responsible adoption. The following section presents our research methodology, combining two methods of collecting and analysing data: a survey to 312 respondents and a case study with a netnographic approach to the NFPO's presence on Facebook. It then introduces the case study and findings. Finally, the last sections provide a set of recommendations and concluding remarks, where we suggest that NFPO's dealing with animals' sheltering could grasp the opportunity to embrace social marketing strategies to better communicate with their followers, which can contribute to reduce animal abandonment and stimulate responsible adoption.

2 Theoretical Background

This section is divided in three main theoretical frameworks. First, as this research is focused on animal abandonment and adoption, it is crucial to understand the magnitude and main implications of this social problem. Secondly, the social marketing framework is presented given its potential and contribution to solve this problem, in the sense that it entails not just a theory or a set of techniques, but a process for developing social change programs. Lastly, the third section explores the role of social media to serve the purposes of social marketing campaigns dedicated to foster abandoned animal adoption.

2.1 Animal Abandonment Versus Animal Purchase/Adoption: What Do We Know?

Considerable changes emerge in a family's domestic daily life with the arrival of a companion animal. These changes can be positive or negative, considering different

aspects, especially if the adoption or purchase is not planned and carried out by mere impulse. Literature on this topic reveals that when pet owners' perceptions of costs of bringing an animal home surpasses the benefits, they feel that their expectations were not met and that no longer are able to keep the animal, leading to their abandonment or relinquishment. Changes in family dynamics, increases in financial burdens, animals' needs, difficult adaptation to the new reality, the possible pre-existence of other animals in the house or even a "too wild" personality of the animal (Hirschman, 1994) are the most common reasons that lead to abandonment of animals. However, the most frequently presented justification for giving up companion animals and abandoning them is the bad behaviour of these animals (Salman et al., 2000). According to Hemsworth (2003), these and other less positive attitudes towards animals are associated with less humane behaviour and vice versa.

Several motivations lead to the adoption or purchase of a companion animal. Previous research revealed that reasons such as companionship, security or protection, pleasure or happiness, affection or love, companionship for children, prestige, the common "good" of the family, and the possibility of doing new friendships through the animal, lead to the adoption or purchase of a companion animal (Endenburg et al., 1994; Serpell, 2004). Katcher and Beck (1983) argued that companion animals could function as a "replacement" for children in families that could not have them or had lost them. The choice for adoption over purchase is encouraged for several reasons. Valuing the animal for "himself", for its personality and characteristics, as well as the possibility of offering a home and dignified conditions to animals originally in unfavourable conditions are the purposes that lead thousands of people to adopt pets. These people look for an animal for affective motivations and not for reasons of utility (Serpell, 2004). On the other hand, there are those who prefer to acquire a pet instead of adopting one so that they can choose the animal, depending on its breed and characteristics. The purchase of a purebred animal from a breeder reduces the uncertainty regarding the costs/benefits compared to adopting an animal from a shelter, making it possible to study the propensity for certain diseases allowing to predict the personality and characteristics of the animal in their adulthood. Other reasons such as personal development, reaching a certain social status and the feeling of possession or ownership also lead to a preference for purchase. This motivation, which translates into a perception of owners in relation to "toy" animals, or in relation to themselves as creators of status or brands, is considered by the authors as the dark side of keeping a companion animal (Frank & Carlisle-Frank, 2008).

All these arguments somehow explain the huge number of animals that are abandoned across the globe and consequently urge the need to reverse this behaviour. This paper suggests that social marketing approaches might be of help in this endeavour. The application of social marketing to animal causes is still very scarce in the literature. Currently, the objectives of social marketing include educating the population regarding animal rights and changing paradigms about the food chain. The following section explores this framework.

2.2 Social Marketing Framework

The first steps in the study of marketing of social causes, now recognised in the literature as the social marketing framework, were first advanced by the sociologist Wiebe (1951) who asked "why don't you sell effectively [values like that of] fraternity like you sell soap?" (p. 679). Wiebe argued that advertising could sell social ideals and shape behaviour, if one looked at a social cause campaign as a product campaign. Later on Kotler and Zaltman (1971) formally defined social marketing as "the planning, implementation and control of programs whose objective is to influence the acceptance of social ideas, taking into account the product, price, communication, distribution and marketing research" (p. 5). This definition implies the explicit use of marketing competences to induce desired responses from the audience. From a different point of view extended the definition of social marketing, by considering it not just a theory or a set of techniques, but a process for developing social change programs (Andreasen, 1994, 2002, 2006), and defined social marketing as "the adaptation of commercial marketing techniques to programs designed to voluntarily influence the behaviour of the target audience, in order to improve their well-being and the society of which it is part" (Andreasen, 1994, p. 110). In 2013, the International Social Marketing Association (ISMA), the European Social Marketing Association (ESMA) and the Australian Association of Social Marketing (AASM) proposed a more encompassing definition: "social marketing seeks to develop and integrate marketing concepts with other approaches to influence behaviours that benefit individuals and communities for the greater social good" (2013). Later on, French and Russell-Bennett (2015) suggested that social marketing is a valuable perspective to deal with social challenges, by providing social offers framed as products, services and policies, aimed at influencing citizens' behaviour.

One important contribution for advancing the field of social marketing was the proposal of the key aspects of a social marketing campaign by Kotler and Roberto (1989), encompassing the cause (social problem to be solved), the agent of change (individual or organisation seeking the social change), the audience (target of the campaign), the channels (associated with communication and distribution of the cause), and the change strategy (the program adopted by the change agent to induce alterations in the target's behaviour). Years later, Andreasen (2002), and clearly adopting marketing language to social causes, Andreasen (2002) suggested six benchmarking criteria to successfully design and implement a campaign. The first benchmark implies the definition and design of the behaviour change that the social marketing programme aims to work upon and evaluate. The second benchmark points toward the need to research and understand the target audience before the intervention. It involves pre-testing the campaign actions to be developed and implemented and monitoring these actions. The third involves the design of the segmentation and targeting strategies to safeguard the optimal use of resources, especially when these are scarce. The fourth benchmark embraces exchange as the central element of the strategy and is related to the design of creative and attractive motivational exchanges with the target audience. The fifth, and utterly important, is the design of

the social marketing-mix, known as the 4 Ps, namely the definition of the product (creating attractive benefit packages to motivate the desired behaviour change), the price (minimizing the perceived costs to change to the desirable behaviour), the place (facilitating the process of behaviour change), and promotion (crafting communication strategies to target audiences). The last benchmark respects the analysis of the competition faced by the desired behaviour.

From the set of above-mentioned benchmarks, the social marketing-mix (product, price, place, promotion) deserves special attention. The definition of the product, in particular, requires thorough analysis. In social marketing, products refer to desired behaviours. Hence, what is at stake is the design of the brand strategy and positioning and the brand personality, namely tone and image. The price does not relate to the monetary value of the desired behaviour, but the set of "psychological, social, geographic, among others rewards and punishments caused by these everyday behaviours" (Lefebvre & Flora, 1988, cit. in Lefebvre, 2011, p. 62). The place concerns the efficient and effective distribution of information to the target audience. That is to say that distribution needs to guarantee that the targeted public has access to clear and relevant information to help them make informed choices and change or adopt new behaviours accordingly. These dimensions—product, price and place—also need to be holistically integrated with the promotion strategy, which entails designing convincing messages that enable the target audience to grasp the promising value of exchanging their behaviours (Lefebvre, 2011).

In sum, social causes that involve transformational processes of changing beliefs and behaviours, as in the case study presented in this paper, will be the most challenging and hard to accomplish. This includes campaigns that aim to minimize undesirable behaviours such as animal abandonment (Kotler & Roberto, 1989).

2.3 Bridging Social Marketing and Social Media Platforms to Promote Animal Adoption

The exponential growth of social media has dramatically changed communications between individuals, communities and organizations (Kietzmann et al., 2011). The use of social platforms in the scope of social marketing strategies brings several advantages. Since it allows to reach larger audiences, it brings obvious opportunities to define and segment the target audience. Moreover, it also promotes followers and users' engagement in long-term relationships with the organisation. When used correctly, online social platforms enable companies to place users and followers at the centre of social marketing processes, which in turn are able to promote and stimulate behavioural changes (Thackeray et al., 2012).

Organizations and followers interact in a variety of way through social media platforms. One of the most common ways of interaction is portrayed by emojis and emoticons that add particular tones and resonances to conversations and allow interlocutors greater ease in interpreting a message. Emoticons are graphical representations

of facial expressions that allow users to express their feelings and emotions (non-verbal communication) in a message, helping readers to understand it. Usually, the emoticon symbolizes the facial expression that the user would have in a face-to-face conversation (Novak et al., 2015).

Emojis, in turn, are colourful digital ideograms that, not only represent facial expressions, but also ideas, concepts, activities, animals, objects of interest, among others, thus allowing some understanding regarding online human behaviour. It appears that the way a person communicates online versus face-to-face can be different, which influences the way users are virtually seen by other users (Kaye et al., 2017). The sentimental analysis of emojis performed by Novak et al. (2015) showed that online communication on Twitter platform is significantly different whether or not it has an associated emoji and that there are three sentiment values associated with emojis: negative—neutral—positive, with the majority of those used being positive, provoking greater engagement with the other interlocutors. Consumers expose their reactions and feelings on social media pages, when sharing certain publications, allowing to analyse the influence they have on those who follow them online. This analysis facilitates the development of strategies seeking to improve the interaction between pages and followers.

Presence on social media has been shown to be beneficial for all sorts of organisations, namely NFPOs. With easy access to platforms, these organizations are able to convey their messages and purposes to a large number of internet users, strengthening their impact and allowing greater involvement with their brands. In the particular case of kennels and animal shelters, research revealed that social media provides means for efficient communication and allows to reach consumers and impact their perceptions, as long as they convey an educational, informative and, above all, consistent message. Sharing relevant content on networks such as Facebook or Instagram leads to interaction with consumers and it is through these publications that, increasingly, a first contact is established for the adoption of an animal (Lampe & Witte, 2015; Winduwati, 2016).

3 Methodological Considerations

A mixed-methods approach was employed to explore the usefulness of social marketing tools to the resolution of a complex social problem—that of animal abandonment and animal responsible adoption. Two research methods were developed simultaneously: (a) a survey about animal adoption to 312 respondents; (b) a case study of a Portuguese Animal Shelter Association (ASA), including a netnographic approach to 90 social media publications, which generated 8637 reactions through emojis, 345 comments with positive feelings, 77 comments with negative feelings and leading to 11,389 shares.

3.1 Survey: Procedures and Sample

An exploratory survey was developed, divided into 4 major themes. The first theme addressed questions about motivations for animal adoption versus non-adoption versus animal purchase. The second theme focused on the use of social media and online pages of animal associations followed by respondents, as well as characteristics of publications most valued by followers. The third topic focused, particularly, on ASA and its presence on digital platforms. Finally, the last topic focused on retrieving sociodemographic data from respondents. The questionnaire was made available on the internet and shared on Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp. A pre-test was carried out to ensure that the questionnaire was clear and accessible. With the completion of the pre-test, some changes were made namely on the structure and the order of the questions. Additionally, the groups of questions were redefined and funnelled so that, according to the answers, respondents could be referred to different questions. Typing errors were also corrected and rewritten questions more clearly and accessible to interpretation.

The target population was defined as individuals residing in Portugal, aged over 18 years, who have pets and who have an account on the social media platforms Facebook and Instagram. Regarding the sampling process, a convenience non-probabilistic sampling technique was employed.

3.2 Case Study

The case study was built up to better understand the research goals set up for this paper. To do so, the first step was to perform an exploratory interview with ASA's responsible, which was followed by a netnographic analysis.

3.2.1 Interview

An exploratory semi-structured interview was carried out with the person in charge of ASA, allowing the collection of information about the association and the challenges faced by NFPO leading with animals sheltering. For the interview, a script was prepared, to collect information related to the history of the association and contextualization of the topic addressed in this paper. The interview was not subject to rigid techniques of content or thematic analysis, since it aimed at contextualizing and building up the case study.

3.2.2 Netnography

To implement a netnographic approach, reactions and user comments were retrieved from ASA's Facebook which allowed the collection of comments and reactions from the shelter's users and followers. As mentioned above 90 social media publications were analysed, which generated 8637 reactions through emojis, 345 comments with positive feelings, 77 comments with negative feelings and leading to 11,389 shares.

Netnography allows the researcher to analyze and interpret users' reaction to social media contents and understand their perceptions and feelings, through the expressions of their opinions and emotions (Kozinets et al., 2018). This methodology is becoming increasingly relevant, as consumers, regardless of their ages, use forums, personal pages on the World Wide Web, and many other online platforms to relate and engage with other persons and organizations. Through netnography applied to comments and reactions, it was possible to understand the followers' feelings generated by ASA's publications.

The months of February, September and the period from November 16 to December 13, 2020 were selected for the netnographic analysis of the ASA social network Facebook. The comments and reactions to the posts were analysed during the three months: 47 posts on Facebook in February 2020, 21 posts in September 2020 and 22 between November 16 and December 13. The relevance of choosing these three months was based on 3 aspects:

(a) February is the month after the Christmas season, when animal adoptions are more pronounced; it was also the pre-confinement month, where the harmful effects of Covid-19 were not yet felt in Portugal;
(b) September is the post-summer vacation month, when the number of adoptions decreases and the number of abandonments increases; month in which the effects of the pandemic were severely accentuated;
(c) November to December is the pre-Christmas season, where usually the number of adoptions increases.

4 Findings

This section introduces the findings of this study and is organised in two parts. Firstly, the results of the survey regarding respondents' motivations to adopt or purchase an animal are presented. This is followed by the results obtained from ASA's case study which was developed from the in-depth interview with their manager, specific questions about ASA retrieved from the survey and the nethnograpic analysis performed to their Facebook page.

4.1 Survey Results

A total of 312 respondents completed the survey, from which 75% were female and 25% were male and majority are aged between 26 and 35 years old. Regarding marital status, the distribution is quite balanced with 48.4% of respondents being single and 44.2% being in a relationship. Because this research deals with bringing animals home, the type of residence was found to be an important variable. To this regard, 61.5% of respondents live in an apartment while 37.2% live in house. Table 1 resumes the socio-demographic data.

Table 1 also shows cases that from the total number of respondents, 69% currently have a dog or cat living in their home. From the universe of respondents with animals at home, the survey revealed that the majority, 72.4% of respondents, adopted all their animals while 13.6% indicated that the animals were purchased. 14% of respondents indicated they had both adopted and purchased animals. Regarding the source of the animal, Table 2 reveals that most animals were adopted from a private person or family member (32.2%), followed by animals adopted directly from the streets (28.5%), from an association (12.6%) and from a kennel or cattery (8.4%). About respondents who purchased an animal, 14% opted for a breeder while 4.2% opted for a store.

Respondents were also asked if they adopted an animal they had previously seen on social media and only a small percentage said they had already done so (29.4%). Finally, the frequency of carrying out certain actions when respondents came across a publication of the association or kennel/cattery that they follow on social networks was also analysed. Table 3 reveals the reactions in social media that were mostly performed by respondents.

Table 1 Characterization of the sample

		%			%
Gender	Female	75	Type of residence	Apartment	61.5
	Male	25		Single family house	37.2
				Studio	0.6
Ages	18–25	22.4		Farm	0.6
	26–35	31.1			
	36–45	22.1	Household type	With dependents	44.2
	46–55	12.5		Without dependents	28.2
	56–65	10.3		Lone person	16.7
	+ 65	1.6		Single parent family	10.9
Marital status	Single	48.4			
	Married/Cohabiting	44.2			
	Divorced/Separated	12.5			
	Widower	0.3			

Table 2 Source of the animal

	%
Adopted from a private person or family member	32.2
Adopted directly from the streets	28.5
Animals purchased from a breeder	14.0
Adopted from an association	12.6
Adoption directly from a kennel or cattery	8.4
Purchase at a store	4.2

Table 3 Reactions in social media performed by the respondents

	Mean (1–5)
Ignore	2.13
Click like button	3.99
Make a comment	2.63
Public sharing on social media	3.52
Share by private message	2.84
Hide post	1.15

Respondents revealed their sensitivity to the publications they see on social media, getting involved in the community of each association, trying to help them in the dissemination of their messages. Considering the reactions on social media regarding an animal's appeal for adoption, Table 4 reveals that respondents show greater engagement and stimulus to engage with the post when they feel sensitive to the animal's situation.

In order to understand what is of interest and relevance in choosing and adopting an animal through social media, respondents were asked about the reasons that led them to adopt an animal. The majority (59.6%) indicated that empathy for the animal's situation was the most important influencing factor towards adoption, followed by empathy for the fact that the animal has no family (19.2%). It is thus clear that the respondents felt empathy for the animal, wanting to improve their life situation. Animal welfare and quality of life were considered more important than choosing a purebred animal that met certain physical and personality requirements.

Table 4 Stimulus to engage in social media

Stimulus to engage	Like %	Comment %	Share %
Photo/video	22.5	8.1	9.4
Text	13.8	12.5	9.4
Animal situation	54.4	42.5	46.9
Connection to the association/Kennel or cattery	3.8	6.3	2.5
Alert others to the post	–	20.6	26.9
Other	5.6	10	5

In contrast, the survey also asked about the obstacles for not having an animal. Concerning the main obstacles to have a dog or a cat, respondents in this situation consider 3 main barriers: *Lack of space* ($M = 3.39$), *Lack of time* ($M = 3.37$) and *Not having a place to leave the animal during the holidays* ($M = 3.31$).

4.2 Case Study: ASA

ASA is a non-for-profit association for the collection and shelter of animals living in precarious and abandoned situations, located in the North of Portugal. It was born in 2011 to tackle the problem of overpopulation of animals (dogs and cats), providing them with health care, food and shelter. The association relies on the daily work of *employees* exclusively on a voluntary basis. Their space has a current capacity to shelter about 60 animals. Because every year, there are about 100 animals adopted through ASA, the rotation of animals due to adoptions, allows to house between 120 and 150 animals per year. It operates in various areas, such as population control of stray animals, animal adoption, awareness programs to fight against animal abandonment, information campaigns on responsible animal ownership, among others. It also embraces a project aimed at providing monetary help and assistance to people who take care of packs of dogs alone and to families with animals that are going through periods of economic need. Additionally, ASA organises "open day" events to introduce animals to potential adopters, to collect donations and goods and to communicate its mission.

The association also counts on a charity shop where the money obtained from the store's sales reverts to further develop their activities. Funds are also collected from sponsors and memberships. Furthermore, they created a virtual veterinary hospital to inform their members, sponsors and followers on the health status of hospitalized animals and to encourage them to make donations to settle the amounts spent on healthcare treatments.

The survey employed in this study included two groups of questions, specifically about ASA. The first set of questions was dedicated to its presence on social media and the interactions with its community. The second questioned the role of media in influencing animal adoptions from ASA. Results revealed that most respondents follow ASA's Facebook page (63%) and do not follow their Instagram page. For this reason, this paper only explores the Facebook page. Through the survey, it was also possible to understand respondents' reactions when they see a publication from ASA. Table 5 summarises these reactions and allows to conclude reactions are mostly translated by sharing the posts (62.1%), followed by the use of emojis (56.1%).

Table 5 Reactions from respondents when faced with ASA's publications

	%
Share	62.1
Reactions through emojis (like)	56.1
No action at all	18.2
Comments	12.1
Monetary donations	10.6
Goods' donations	10.6

4.2.1 ASA: Social Marketing-Mix

The ASA marketing mix was analysed from the benchmarks and the social marketing mix perspective reviewed in the literature review. In total, 10 dimensions were analysed, which allowed for a comprehensive understanding ASA's social marketing strategy. Table 6 provides the characterization of each dimension.

4.2.2 ASA: Netnographic Analysis

As highlighted in Table 6, ASA's communication strategy depends almost exclusively on social media. According to ASA's manager, interviewed for the purposes of this research, around 95% of adoptions come from social media, with the remaining 5% coming from face-to-face events such as "open days". They are present in 4 digital platforms (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and Twitter), but Facebook and Instagram have greater expression, with particular emphasis on Facebook. This is followed by YouTube, where they publish sporadic publications and, finally, Twitter, where the association realized that it did not receive effective returns. The association also has its own website to communicate its projects, collect donations and register members and sponsors of resident animals. This paper only presents the netnographic analysis of the Facebook page, as it is the platform where the greatest engagement of the followers is observed.

In order to understand the influence of this strategy and also the presence that ASA occupies in the digital world, an exploratory study of the publications made by ASA on the Facebook platform was carried out, comparing the months of February, September and the period of November 16 to December 13, 2020 as explained above. Adopting a netnographic view, we sought to study the behaviour and feelings/emotions and dynamics of followers in the online environment. Table 7 showcases the netnographic data retrieved, namely, the number of publications, the number of likes, comments and shares of the publications, the type and number of emojis used and the types of comments made by followers. It was also possible to extract feelings and emotions perceived from the comments made by followers, and to understand which kind of responses are generated by the content shared by ASA. The content shared addresses the daily life of the association, the medical care that animals inspire, calls for adoption and donations and shares animals' stories.

Table 6 ASA's social marketing-mix

Product	ASA's product represents behavioural change, seeking to raise awareness of animals in disadvantaged situations and responsible animal adoption
Price	Price includes the barriers that individuals have to overcome in order to adopt behaviour aimed at responsible adoption, ending with the abandonment and purchase of companion animals. It also includes psychological barriers that pet owners sometimes have to overcome in order to treat animals with dignity and offer them quality of life
Place	Refers to the association itself as a shelter space and "channel" for animal adoption and as an entity for behavioural change
Communication	Mostly online, through the social media (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube) with particular emphasis on Facebook. Through these platforms, ASA shares the daily life and health stories of their animals and raises funds to support their work
Organization and competition	ASA in the North of Portugal for several years, belonging to a range of small, medium and large associations that work in favour of animal rights. The association has employees on a voluntary basis and seeks to find tutors for the animals it houses
Costs	This dimension refers to the costs associated with maintaining the usual behaviour, which will result in an increase in the number of stray animals in disadvantaged conditions. It also relates to costs associated with behavioural change, which is translated by the number of animals adopted responsibly, the creation of stricter legislation in favour of their rights and the consequent decrease in stray animals
Consumers	ASA is an association oriented towards its followers, with a presence mainly on social media. Their consumers are followers of all age groups, residing in Portugal, with a particular interest in animal welfare and protection. The association seeks to involve its community and co-create value with it. The objective is to find new homes for the dogs and cats in a fruitful way for the adopted animals and for those who adopt them
Processes	The association is based not only on an online strategy to engage with its community, but also on the creation of events such as walks with the animals they shelter, fundraisers and collections of goods. It oriented to volunteering and social work, seeking to find adoption families for the animals they collect from precarious situations. With regard to processes, the most relevant is that of animal adoption
Channels and Strategies	this variable covers all of the above, with the aim of finding guardians who adopt the animals collected by the association in a responsible way and that lead to the reduction of abandoned animals

Table 7 Netnographic data retrieved from Facebook

February, 2020		September, 2020		November–December, 2020		Total of data analysed
Publications	47	Publications	21	Publications	22	90 publications
Emojis used	5864	Emojis used	1238	Emojis used	1545	8637 emojis
	3614		780		823	5217 likes 
	1151		287		347	1785 loves 
	1		83		93	177 cares 
	1068		80		262	1410 sads 
Comments with positive feelings	241	Comments with positive feelings	46	Comments with positive feelings	58	345 comments with positive feelings
Comments with negative feelings	48	Comments with negative feelings	7	Comments with negative feelings	22	77 comments with negative feelings
Shares	8340	Shares	840	Shares	2209	11,389 shares

First period of analysis: February, 2020

During the first period of analysis, ASA published 47 times on Facebook and achieved three adoptions. These publications generated 5864 likes, divided into 7 types of emoticons, with emphasis on the usual Like (used 3614 times), followed by Love (1151 times) and Sad chosen by followers 1068 times. They also generated 458 comments, most of which (241) were positive feelings/emotions, followed by neutral/doubtful/non-relevant comments (169) and finally comments with negative feelings/emotions (48). It was also possible to perceive that publications where photographs of animals are shared, especially puppies or baby cats, generate more interactions and engagement compared to publications of, for example, fundraisers or events. The publications were shared 8340 times and those presented in video format had a great reach in terms of the number of views. Focusing on the type of emojis and comments and based on the above about the most chosen by followers (positive comments and use of the Love emoticon), it was possible to perceive the types of emotions and feelings generated by the publications in the page's followers. For the most part, feelings generated in followers are positive, usually associated

with joy, affection, tenderness for animals and praise of ASA's work. On the other hand, negative comments were associated with feelings of sadness and dissatisfaction with the abandonment and mistreatment of animals, the conditions in which they are found and the medical care they inspire.

Second period of analysis: September 2020

In the second period of analysis, the number of publications made by the association decreased around 45% compared to the first period of analysis. Consequently, the month's total number of emojis and comments is lower. ASA made 21 publications on Facebook, generally maintaining the same type of content published in February 2020. There was also a record of 4 adoptions, one more than in February. These publications originated 1238 emojis. The emoji Like used 780 times stands out, followed by the Love used 287 times and the Care chosen by the followers 83 times. The pattern of positive and negative comments on the publications was similar, although fewer (106 comments). As in February, publications that generated more interactions with followers were those containing photographs of animals, usually requesting to be adopted by a family.

Third period of analysis: November to December, 2020

Regarding the period from November 16 to December 13, the association made 22 publications, which resulted in 1545 emojis, with great emphasis on the Like (used 823 times), followed by Love (347 uses), and Sad (used 262 times). The remaining emojis were used less frequently or not at all. In this period, 8 adoptions were registered. This relative increase in adoptions was due to the fact that the association took baby puppies from the litter, which are usually more sought after and more easily adopted.

5 Discussion and Conclusions

Social marketing has been applied to a variety of empirical contexts dealing with complex social problems, but studies applied to the specific cause of sheltering animals in precarious life situations and provide them with new homes, are scant. This research aimed at contributing to the ongoing debates on how social marketing strategies can be employed to solve social problems, but it is particularly dedicated to explore its usefulness to embrace causes that fight against animal abandonment and foster responsible animal adoption instead of animal purchasing. Thus, it reinforces the urgent call from Bousfield and Brown (2010), to recognise that such problem needs to be recognised as part of the social development of nations worldwide.

The findings of the mixed-methods approach reported in this paper grants support to previous arguments that social marketing tools grounded on social media communication might act as powerful devices at the service of NFPO (Thackeray et al., 2012), and particularly those dealing with animal sheltering (Winduwati, 2016). On one hand, the survey allowed to shed light on the reasons that most motivate people

and families to adopt animals instead of purchasing them. The alarming number of animals living on the streets, the desire to provide them with a better quality of life and the search for company are the most relevant factors pointed out by respondents, thus corroborating previous research (Endenburg et al., 1994; Serpell, 2004). However, the most important reason pointed out by respondents—empathy for the animals' often-precarious situation and life story triggered by a social media publication—was not previously suggested in the literature.

On the other hand, the case study grounded on the netnographic analysis combined with the results retrieved from the survey, provided relevant insights about the role social media platforms might play to support the work developed by NFPO such as ASA. Firstly, findings from this case study corroborate previous results on the potential of social media to promote NFPO's work in the virtual world, specifically on advertising animals living in shelters and available for adoption, thus communicating to an audience, geographically distant from the organisation, that would be not possible to reach in other contexts (Lampe & Witte, 2015). Their presence in these platforms allows to create long term relationships with their followers and other internet users who are interested in their message. These, in turn, manifest their interest and desire to get involved in the work developed by the NFPO by sharing and reacting to their publications. Social platforms, as the name implies, have a more social and interactive character compared to websites and it is through these that NFPO, as ASA, are able to develop relationships with its community. Is also possible to raise funds (monetary or goods) directly on Facebook and Instagram, availability of several interactive tools such as private messages, polls, surveys.

Furthermore, a connection is made between the potential of digital platforms as social marketing tools. Thus, this investigation allowed us to understand that these can also constitute new tools at the service of social marketing, contributing to the perception of this discipline as a broad field, with a political and social intervention role (French & Russell-Bennett, 2015). More importantly, it draws attention to the advantages of adopting social marketing principles, namely, on how to design innovate products and communication strategies to challenge, and ultimately change, discriminatory behaviours towards animal abandonment and adoption, a theme that has been scarcely explored in this area.

Regarding practical contributions, our findings provided a set of recommendations to be adopted by animal shelter associations in order to increase their interactions with their communities, creating and strengthening relationships with a view to increasing the number of adoptions. It also highlighted the need, and potential, to create digital strategies that appeal and boost the adoption of animals under kennels/catteries and similar associations, proving that designing creative and breakthrough campaigns leading to desirable behaviour changes are of great relevance to societies.

This study was exploratory way thus observing some limitations. Although the area of social marketing is developed, the literature and available studies are scarce and limited when applied to animal causes. For future investigations, we suggest more detailed and in-depth investigations into the application of social marketing tools to causes associated with animal rights and welfare. It is relevant to develop similar case studies of other associations and a netnographic analysis of the interactions in

their social platforms, deepening the study of emotions associated with comments and reactions to content. Another research approach to the sampling process is also recommended, since this study was based on a non-probabilistic convenience sample, limiting the potential for generalization to the universe under study.

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The Role of Non-Profit Organisations

Scientific Contribution in the Field of Nonprofit Governance: A Bibliometric Analysis

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Abstract The topic of Governance is an emerging research area within the Third Sector. However, the majority of bibliometric analyses in the field of governance tends to focus on the corporate dimension rather than on the nonprofit field. A bibliometric analysis on governance of nonprofit organizations (NPO) was conducted to identify publication trends. The sample consists of 71 articles selected from the Web of Science database based on the theme "nonprofit governance". Publications included were published between 1996 and 2021. The bibliometric analysis was conducted using the VOSviewer software involving, among others, the analysis of co-citations. The results of this study show the most productive countries, journals, and authors in this area. Cluster analysis highlighted two major research themes in nonprofit entities governance: the functioning of Boards and the relationship between Boards' characteristics and organizations' Performance. Our findings are limited by the use of a single database and the type of publication chosen (articles). Notwithstanding the limitations, this research offers valuable insights to the literature, providing a theoretical map of the intellectual structure of Nonprofit Governance.

Keywords Nonprofit Governance · Third sector · Bibliometric analysis · Systematic literature review

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1 Introduction

In recent years, there has been a growth in the Third Sector, which is responsible for providing social and cultural support and for suppressing some of the gaps evidenced by the state in relation to the population (Salamon & Anheier, 1997). However, this sector is also known for its inequalities, mainly due to its dependence on public funds, which may require governance agreements (Cornforth, 2011).

In terms of management, nonprofit organizations (NPOs) use models and practices from the business sector, as there is scarce information available in the nonprofit one (Carvalho & Braga, 2010). NPOs adopt a business perspective by showing a mimetic isomorphism attitude (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983) and implementing some of the best governance practices of the profit sector (Brown, 2002). In the perspective of Speckbacher (2008) nonprofit governance is associated with the creation of value and cooperation among stakeholders towards a collective goal. For this reason, the Third Sector is challenged with the need to create and develop a governance model adapted to its characteristics (Speckbacher, 2008).

Previous literature has explored the mechanisms adopted by these organizations, according to theories such as the Agency Theory and the Resource Dependence Theory. The Agency Theory preconizes the separation between ownership and management. In this way, non-executive directors must supervise and control the actions of executive directors (Jensen & Meckling, 1976, 2000). Since there is no shareholder figure in Third Sector organizations, it is the responsibility of the administrators to ensure that the organization's mission is fulfilled, avoiding conflicts of interest and power that result from different perspectives and motivations within the organization (agency conflicts), particularly between managers or governance boards and private or public donors (Bradley et al., 2003). It is expected that both parties execute their functions effectively and, if not, donors should solve these divergences by using convenient incentives for the agent, known as agency costs (Jensen & Meckling, 1976). Rather, the Resource Dependence Theory, states that boards of directors should recruit resources for organizations to enhance their performance (Brown, 2005). Some theoretical approaches (Alexander & Weiner, 1998a; Callen et al., 2003; Carvalho et al., 2017a) focus almost exclusively on internal agency problems, emphasizing a "principal-agent" relationship between members of the organization and organizational stakeholders such as their staff, trustees, donors, or clients. Despite not having owners in the sense of shareholders, organizational stakeholders have a stake in the organization and, therefore, can be considered as principals (Jegers, 2009). However, since principals have different objectives (Balser & McClusky, 2005; Jegers, 2009), a comprehensive principal-agent approach of nonprofit organizations must consider multiple principals. In his work, Steinberg (2010) applies the Agency Theory to NPOs and concludes that the existence of multiple principals, with different objectives, hinders the potential of Agency Theory to solve questions of nonprofit accountability, such as disclosure. According to Carvalho et al. (2017a), the Stakeholder-Agency Theory contributes to the understanding of how management

can satisfy the competing interests of stakeholders in the Third Sector, recognizing their interests and assuming they have equal importance in the accountability process.

Whilst some bibliometric analyses have been carried out on the corporate dimension, there is still very little scientific understanding of the nonprofit aspect. Thus, this study seeks to obtain data which will help to address these research gaps by mapping the intellectual structure of nonprofit governance and identifying the main research trends. According to Pritchard (1969), the bibliometric methodology makes it possible to identify the trends and growth of a specific research area; to measure the impact of publications and studies; to understand the amplitude of publication sources; and to know the productivity patterns of the different authors.

Regarding the structure of this paper, in the section below we present the literature review contextualizing the topic of nonprofit governance. The following chapter describes the methodology adopted for the development of the research. A summary of the main findings, together with the literature network analysis is then provided. Finally, the last section provides the most relevant research trends and the main conclusions of this investigation.

2 Literature Review

Governance emerged as a topic of interest for scientific studies in the nineties. During this period, the collapse of companies and accusations of fraud against directors stimulated the interest in matters such as accountability, performance monitorization and creation of auditing guidelines for private sector firms (Siebart & Reichard, 2004). In their research, Gibelman and Gelman (2001) found that governance is a subject that needs scientific development, as the presence of irregularities in Third Sector organizations is suggestive of failures or bad practices on governance.

However, considering the novelty of the nonprofit governance approach in NPOs and the wide scope of the subject of governance, the term has been wrongly appropriately by the scientific community. In fact, it is a generic and complex concept that is used in different contexts and, consequently, displays a diversity of meanings that vary according to the person who use or interprets it (Hyden & Court, 2002).

According to Schmitter (2002), governance is a procedure used in the resolution of several problems, in which the different actors make decisions and cooperate with each other to implement them. Likewise, other authors argue that governance includes a combination of methods that are aimed at solving issues in public and private organizations (Kooiman, 2003) and promoting social movements with common goals (Dodgson et al., 2002; Stoker, 1998).

Nowadays, governance models promote more responsibility over management practices. Corporate Governance is predominantly used in the second sector of civil society, while Nonprofit Governance is responsible for the implementation of management mechanisms considered crucial for the development of NPOs (Alexander & Weiner, 1998a). As noted by Alexander and Weiner (1998b), the governance methods presented by Third Sector organizations arise from the fusion of the

two (corporate and nonprofit) models. The adoption of this "hybrid" model results from the contact and demand of companies whose services include consulting, and from the recruitment of employees from the business sector (Powell & DiMaggio, 2019). In general terms, this model demonstrates the importance and impact of board composition in reducing the likelihood of management failure. Therefore, researchers have focused their attention on the factors that influence the composition of nonprofit governance boards. The concept of "inclusive governance", introduced by Brown (2002), argues that governance boards should opt to recruit differentiated individuals, since heterogeneous groups are more likely to be innovative and productive. Furthermore, the size of the organization is also a variable that influences the composition and formalization of governance boards (Carvalho et al., 2017b; Cornforth & Simpson, 2002). The underrepresentation of women in governance positions should also be taken into consideration. In his investigation, Shaiko (1996) found four organizational/structural factors that inhibit women at attaining "high governance positions": budget, age, geographical location of the organization; and the presence of other female members on governance boards.

3 Methodology

Bibliometric studies are a very popular method among researchers (Ding et al., 2014) due to the emergency of scientific databases and the development of bibliometric software, which date back to the fifties (Wallin, 2005). This quantitative and statistical technique is often used to measure the production and dissemination of scientific knowledge in several fields of research (Pritchard, 1969).

The techniques for bibliometric analysis can be divided in two categories: the performance analysis and the science mapping (Donthu et al., 2021). The performance analysis is descriptive in nature and aims to examine the contributions of different research elements such as the authors, institutions, countries and journals (Cobo et al., 2011). There are many different metrics for performance analysis, but the most popular are the number of publications and citations by year or by research elements. Whilst the measurement of the number of publications concerns the productivity, the number of citations is an indicator of impact and influence in the research field (Noyons et al., 1999). On the other hand, science mapping verifies the relationships that are established between research elements (Cobo et al., 2011) by analyzing intellectual interactions and structural links. The most common used techniques for science mapping include citation analysis, co-citation analysis and keyword co-occurrence analysis. Citation analysis is the process in which the citations obtained reflect the intellectual linkages among the publications (Appio et al., 2014). Since the number of citations determines the impact of each publication, articles with a higher number of citations have a stronger influence on the development of the field of research. The co-citation analysis allows to classify cited references, authors, and publication sources. According to Small (Small, 1973) co-citation is the number of times two articles are cited together. Usually, the publications that are cited

together have similar thematics (Hjørland, 2013). So, the co-citation analysis allows to find the most influential publications and the thematic clusters in the research area. Finally, in the co-occurrence analysis, the words used are extracted from the title and abstract of each publication, as well as from the list of keywords provided by the authors. This technique is particularly useful in exploring the contents of the publications and identifying the research areas. The combination of these techniques with the respective network analysis is crucial for the construction of the bibliometric and intellectual structure of the research field (Tunger & Eulerich, 2018).

In the present investigation, we conducted a bibliometric analysis on nonprofit governance using data from Web of Science, which is one of the most distinguished databases of scientific citation. In a first approach we used "nonprofit governance" as a research topic (combination of title, abstract, author keyword, and keywords plus) having identified a total of 90 publications. Then we applied two filters restricting the analysis only to articles and to the Social Science Citation Index (SSCI). After the application of the filters, a sample of 71 articles was collected between 1996 (the year of the first publication) and 2021 (Table 1).

According to Donthu et al. (2021), if the research field is still small, within 50 to 300 articles, it does not warrant the use of bibliometric analysis. Instead, the authors suggest the use of alternative review methods, such as meta-analysis or systematic literature reviews.

Nevertheless, the mapping of the intellectual structure of the nonprofit governance thematic should be considered since scientific progress is the basis for the economic and cultural development of each country. For this reason, a bibliometric analysis was chosen to gain a detailed understanding of the position held by the different countries. Moreover, the outcomes obtained by using this method contribute to the provision of government funds for scientific research (Okubo, 1997; Weingart, 2005) and help to predict the development of each country in the future (Allik, 2008; Moed, 2005).

Once the methodology has been justified, the sample size that will be used in the bibliometric analysis must be validated. Regarding the sample size, Lehmann et al. (2008) and Sjöstedt et al. (2015) recommend the use of, at least, 50 articles to generate conclusions with a low degree of uncertainty. Additionally, the studies conducted by Glänzel and Moed (2013) and Seglen (1994) advocate for the use of

Table 1 Systematic literature review characteristics

Search stage	Details
Database	Web of Science
Search	"nonprofit governance" (title, abstract, author keywords, and keywords plus)
Document types	Articles
Research categories	Year of publication: 1996–2021
Outcomes	Selection of 71 articles from 1996 to 2021

a size sample of approximately 50 to 100 articles. Together, these studies seem to suggest that the sample size chosen in the current study (71 articles) is adequate.

The structure of a scientific field can be identified through its research activity (Ronda-Pupo, 2017). To perform the data analysis the software VOSviewer was used.

4 Results

Considering Fig. 1 it is possible to observe a gradual increase in the number of publications in recent years. Specifically, the period between 2011 and 2021 was responsible for the publication of 46 articles, which represents about 64.7% of the sample. The data also show that, from the year of the first publication (1996) until 2021, only in five years there were no publications of scientific papers related to this theme.

It is also pertinent to mention that 2012 and 2020 correspond to the years during which the highest number of publications occurred, with a total of 9 articles per year.

A possible explanation for the overall increase in the number of publications between 2009 and 2012 is the financial crisis that occurred in 2008. According to Marx and Davis (2012), in 2010 the United States of America (country with the highest number of publications in our sample) was recovering from the worst economic crisis since "The Great Depression". Thenceforth, the studies aimed to improve the performance of nonprofit management (Marx & Davis, 2012) and to assess the relationships between the governance boards (Reid & Turbide, 2011) during turbulent economic times. Similarly, the peak of publications observed in 2020 coincided with the Covid-19 pandemic that allowed researchers to dedicate more time to the development of scientific research, particularly regarding the adaptations of

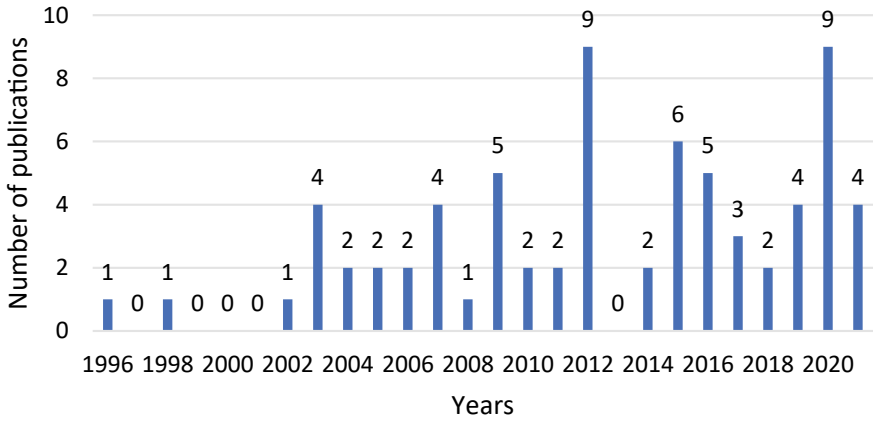

Fig. 1 Evolution of number of publications per year on Nonprofit Governance topics (1996–2021)

governance boards in terms of management and leadership (McMullin & Raggo, 2020).

Regarding the countries responsible for producing the largest number of articles, the United States stands out with 42 articles published, which represents more than half of the articles in the sample (59.15%), followed by Canada, with 7 articles published (see Table 2).

The 71 articles in the sample have a total of 1677 citations; seven were never cited and one had a total of 149 citations (maximum of citations). Table 3 emphasizes the top 5 most cited publications.

The most cited article, "Understanding the behavior of nonprofit boards of directors: A theory-based approach" from Miller-Millesen (2003) attempts to contribute to the development of nonprofit governance boards. The author defined three main objectives: to establish a link between theory and practice, for example, by identifying the theoretical premises that are the basis of the literature; to present a theoretical framework related to the behaviour of nonprofit boards of directors; and to provide potencial research topics. The theoretical perspectives addressed by the author are useful to understand the behaviours adopted by nonprofit boards of directors and how they influence organizational performance. Firstly, the Agency Theory predicts that nonprofit boards of directors should select members in charge of supervising the administrative activity to guarantee that their interests are aligned with the expectations of their constituents. Alternatively, the Resource Dependency Theory proposes that the board of directors should hire new members who might facilitate the access to significant resources, promoting the survival and development of the organization. Lastly, the Institutional Theory seeks to explain the structure and functioning of organizations as a socially constructed reality. From this point of view, organizations are seen as entities that act according to the rules, procedures, beliefs, and values that prevail in each context. The author suggests that future research should verify empirically the influence of each theory on the behaviours adopted by the board of directors.

Regarding publication sources, the 71 articles in the sample were published in 35 academic journals and had a total of 1677 citations. Table 4 shows that Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly (19 articles) and Nonprofit Management Leadership (10 articles) are the journals with the most published articles. Closer inspection of the Table 4 also shows that there are three publication sources that stand out regarding the

Table 2 Most productive countries on nonprofit governance topic

Countries	No. of papers	% of papers
United States	42	59,15
Canada	7	9,85
England	6	8,45
Spain	4	5,63
Australia	3	4,23
Germany	3	4,23

Table 3 Top 5 most cited papers

Total of citations	Paper	Author	Year of publication
149	Understanding the behavior of nonprofit boards of directors: A theory-based approach	Judith Miller-Millesen	2003
141	Board composition, committees, and organizational efficiency: The case of nonprofits	Jeffrey Callen, April Klein and Daniel Tinkelman	2003
123	Acting in the public interest? Another look at research on nonprofit governance	Melissa Stone and Francie Ostrower	2007
121	When government becomes the principal philanthropist: The effects of public funding on patterns of nonprofit governance	Chao Guo	2007
108	Nonprofit Governance Research: Limitations of the Focus on Boards and Suggestions for New Directions	Chris Cornforth	2012

number of citations: the Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly (861 citations), Nonprofit Management Leadership (163 citations) and the Public Administration Review (121 citations).

Concerning authorship, 126 authors are responsible for the 71 articles in the sample. As shown in Table 5, Francie Ostrower and Melissa Stone are the most cited

Table 4 Most productive and cited publication sources

Publication sources	No. of articles	Publication Sources	No. of citations
Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly	19	Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly	861
Nonprofit Management Leadership	10	Nonprofit Management Leadership	163
Voluntas	7	Public Administration Review	121
Journal of Business Ethics	2	Voluntas	79
American Review of Public Administration	2	Journal of Policy Analysis and Management	74
Fordham Law Review	2	Administration and Society	53

Table 5 Most productive and cited authors

Authors	No. of articles	Authors	No. of citations
Cornforth, C	3	Ostrower, F	174
Willems, J	3	Stone, M	174
Ostrower, F	2	Miller-millesen, J	149
Stone, M	2	Callen, J	141
De andres-alonso, P	2	Klein, A	141
Bradshaw, P	2	Tinkelman, D	141

authors, with 174 citations each and Chris Cornforth and Jurgen Willems appear as the authors with the most articles published, with 3 publications each.

In the next section, the literature networks are presented and analyzed, namely the co-occurrence networks of references, publication sources and authors. A co-occurrence analysis of the keywords is also presented to enhance understanding of the nonprofit governance thematic.

5 Literature Network Analysis

Prior to the co-citation analysis of the references, the initial sample of 71 articles was filtered to aggregate only articles with at least 9 citations. The respective co-citation network was built based on this new sample. The figure below (Fig. 2) illustrates the formation of two clusters.

Table 6 presents an overview of the publications that constitute the two clusters: cluster 1 (red) related to the performance of the governance boards and its impact on organizational effectiveness; and cluster 2 (green) connected to issues about the composition and characterization of governance boards.

The articles in cluster 1 focus their attention on the impact that governance boards have on organizational effectiveness, exploring the best governance practices that affect the performance of the boards. In general, the articles considered in this cluster aim to improve the performance of governance boards and, overall, the effectiveness of the organizations. Several articles from cluster 2 have resorted to the Agency Theory to analyse the composition and characterization of governance boards. This perspective preconizes the separation between ownership and management, preventing the existence of conflicts of interest between managers and administrators. Thus, the Agency Theory is crucial, arguing that different agents should share the same expectations and motivations to ensure the fulfilment of the organization's mission, despite personal interests.

The co-citation network concerning publication sources was generated for a minimum of 25 citations per source (Fig. 3).

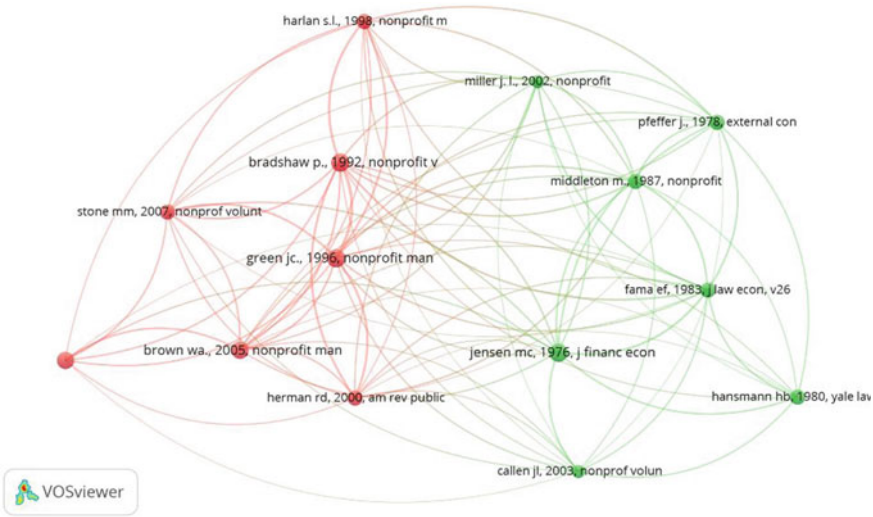

Fig. 2 Co-citation map of cited references

Table 7 shows the three clusters that were created in the co-citation network of publication sources. Cluster 1 (red) refers to sources in the field of public administration and social problems, cluster 2 (green) illustrates publications in the field of management, and cluster 3 (blue) includes journals from the economics and finance fields.

Considering the author co-citation network (Fig. 4), the authors with the most co-citations are Bradshaw (39 citations), Brown (36 citations), Cornforth (38 citations), Herman (51 citations) and Ostrower (37 citations).

Table 8 shows the clusters referring to the most cited authors. As can be seen from the table, in cluster 1 (red) the authors are mostly related to the areas of management and economics; in cluster 2 (green) the authors are mainly focused on the areas of organizational behaviour and nonprofit governance; and in cluster 3 (blue) there are predominantly authors from the management area.

To increase the knowledge and understanding of the topic, a co-occurrence analysis of keywords was performed. The co-occurrence networks are formed by words extracted from the title and abstract of the publication, as well as from the list of keywords provided by the author. The map of the keyword co-occurrence network can be seen in Fig. 5.

The results from the co-occurrence network of keywords are set out in Table 9. The terms in cluster 1 (red) are related to the performance of governance boards and their impact on organizational effectiveness; cluster 2 (green) presents practices adopted by nonprofit governance; cluster 3 (blue) identifies functions involved in the governance of organizations; cluster 4 (yellow) illustrates characteristics of nonprofit governance boards; and cluster 5 (purple) suggests potential research topics in the nonprofit governance area.

Table 6 Clusters from the co-citation network of references

Paper	Main conclusions
Cluster 1—Performance of the governance boards and its impact on organizational effectiveness	
Do Nonprofit Boards Make a Difference? An Exploration of the Relationships Among Board Structure, Process, and Effectiveness (Bradshaw et al., 1992)	This article reveals that strategic planning, common vision for the organization, engaging in daily operations, acting according to the guidelines of good management, and avoiding conflicts among the team contributes to organizational effectiveness. It also shows that the board of directors does not have a significant impact on increasing the budget, despite playing an important role in the financial health of the organization (keeping the finances positive).
Exploring the Association Between Board and Organizational Performance in Nonprofit Organizations (Brown, 2005)	The main findings of this study are the following: larger organizations tend to present directors who have better performance and, consequently, may obtain a better financial result; defending the organization's mission, values and social purposes shows positive levels of correlation with organizational performance; organizations with better performance tend to be represented by boards that supply strategic guidance; the discussion of important issues is correlated with profit/revenue; and promoting group processes and developing relationships between board members is positively correlated with organizations that operate with considerable financial resources.
Nonprofit Governance Research: Limitations of the Focus on Boards and Suggestions for New Directions (Cornforth, 2011)	The author analyzed three limitations of the studies on nonprofit governance. Firstly, most of the investigations are restricted to the board of directors; neglecting the supervisory structures and the internal actors that contribute to the execution of governance tasks. Secondly, the studies focus predominantly on the boards of directors of unitary organizations, although many organizations already present more complex governance structures. Finally, the empirical research has paid more attention to the characteristics and the behaviour of the board of directors, instead of focusing on the evolution and development of governance structures and their practices.

(continued)

Table 6 (continued)

Paper	Main conclusions
Board Performance and Organizational Effectiveness in Nonprofit Social Services Organizations (Green & Griesinger, 1996)	This study has shown that boards of directors of "effective" organizations compared to "less effective" ones tend to be more involved in functions related to policy formation, strategic planning, management and resource development, financial planning and control, and program review.
Contracting and Patterns of Nonprofit Governance (Saidel & Harlan, 1998)	One of the more significant findings to emerge from this study is that governance activities are carried out by both the members of the executive and the board of directors. Although the literature considers that governance structures are led by the executive in several activities, the results demonstrated that the administrative board also contributes with its resources. Additionally, administrative members provide contacts that play an important role at the decision-making level, thus improving the political capacity and the "political influence" of the organizations.
Board practices of especially effective and less effective local nonprofit organizations (Herman and Renz 2000)	The results of this investigation show that the most frequently used practices by "especially effective" boards are writing expectations about potencial contributions, board self-evaluation, and the role of the chief executive in board nominations. This research also found that "effective" NPOs are composed of more prestigious boards compared to the "less effective" ones.
Acting in the Public Interest? Another Look at Research on Nonprofit Governance	According to the authors, there is a considerable gap between the research on public governance and on nonprofit governance. Nevertheless, recent literature on public management presents interesting approaches and topics for future research within the nonprofit governance field. It is fundamental to expand the focus of research beyond boards of directors. Further research needs to examine more closely the links between the governance of organizations and the general public; the incorporation of a wider vision of governance process that involves several actors; and other topics related to governance and performance.
Cluster 2—Composition and characterization of governance boards	

(continued)

Table 6 (continued)

Paper	Main conclusions
Separation of ownership and control (Fama & Jensen, 1983)	This study identified four steps of the decision process: initiation (creating proposals); confirmation (deciding which proposals will be implemented); implementation (implementing the proposal); and monitoring (measuring the impact of the decision). The researchers argue that an efficient control system implies a separation of the confirmation and monitoring phases (control process) from the initiation and implementation phases (decision process). The efficiency level of any organization is based on this decision-support system.
Theory of the firm: managerial behavior, agency costs and ownership structure (Jensen & Meckling, 1976)	Considering the agency divergences between managers and directors/donors, the authors argue that these conflicts of interest could be solved through monitoring procedures, auditing and by creating an incentive system to achieve the organization's goals.
Board Composition, Committees, and Organizational Efficiency: The Case of Nonprofits (Callen et al., 2003)	The results of this investigation show that the proportion of administrative expenses in relation to the total expenses tends to decrease in proportion with the presence of significant donors on the board of directors and with their respective donations. Furthermore, the proportion of fundraising expenses in relation to total costs increases significantly as the size of the organization increases. Other major finding is that the presence of a large percentage of donors in the board finance department is positively correlated with the efficiency of the administrative expenses.
The Board as a Monitor of Organizational Activity The Applicability of Agency Theory to Nonprofit Boards (Miller, 2002)	The main findings of this study suggest that nonprofit administrative board members do not expect the existence of conflicts between the executive director and the purpose of the organization. The data also suggests that, despite situations of questionable behaviour, the members of the administrative board tend to defer to the executive director during critical periods of decision making.

(continued)

6 Discussion and Conclusion

Nonprofit governance presents a strong impact on management models and practices adopted by Third Sector organizations. The purpose of the current study was to map and analyze the scientific production in the nonprofit governance area, which

Table 6 (continued)

Paper	Main conclusions
The Role of Nonprofit Enterprise (Hansmann, 1980)	According to the author, the prohibition of profit distribution in NPO is known as the "nondistribution restriction". The non-distribution of profits benefits NPO as it makes them more reliable when compared to for-profit companies in situations of "contractual failure", since the governance board does not financially benefit from it.. In addition, the chances of "contractual failure" are lower when governance members are focused on the mission of the organization.
The External Control of Organizations: A Resource Dependence Perspective (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978)	The aim of this article was to examine the external constraints that influence organizations. From a Resource Dependence perspective, topics concerning resource availability, manager's responsibilities, interdependency between organizations, and organizational structure were discussed. According to the authors, organizations rely on the external environment to ensure their sustainability and the dynamics of dependence arise from the governments and resources of other organizations. The results also indicate that, generally, organizations with a greater dependence on governments are better able to adapt to their requests.
Nonprofit Boards of Directors: Beyond the Governance Function (Middleton, 1987)	This study has identified the four functions executed by the board of directors: representing the organization in external constituencies; establishing "exchange relationships" with constituencies in order to ensure the entry of resources into the organization and reduce resource dependency; ensuring the organization's competitivity in relation to the external environment; and protecting the organization from external information, by only communicating messages that are vital for its functioning. According to the Resource Dependence Theory, the duties and responsibilities of the board of directors involve ensuring that the necessary resources are available to achieve the organization's goals.

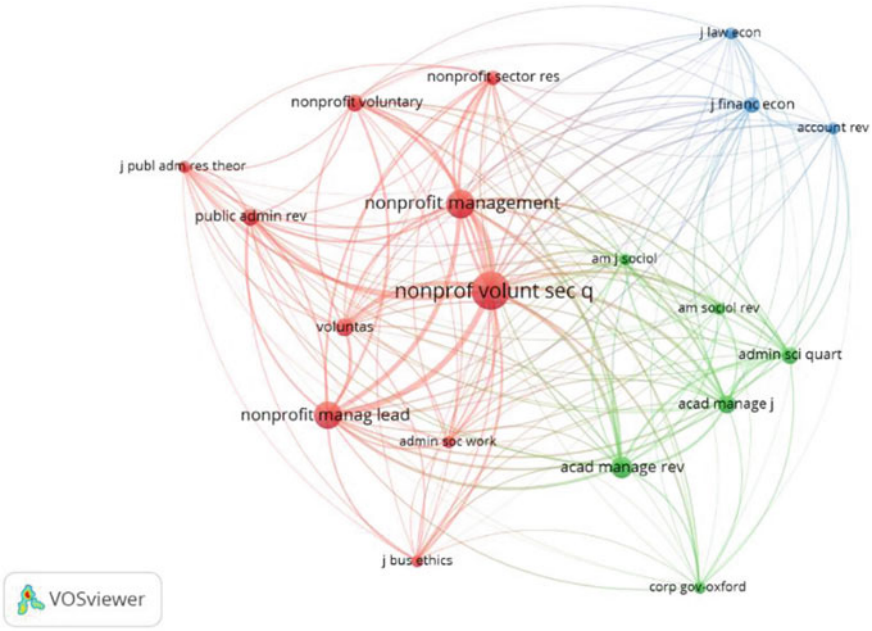

Fig. 3 Co-citation map of cited publication sources

Table 7 Clusters from the co-citation network of publication sources

Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3
Administration in Social Work (29 citations)	Academy of Management Journal (60 citations)	Accounting Review (27 citations)
Journal of Business Ethics (25 citations)	Academy of Management Review (83 citations)	Journal of Financial Economics (42 citations)
Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory (29 citations)	Administrative Science Quarterly (52 citations)	Journal of Law & Economics (25 citations)
Nonprofit Management & Leadership (135 citations)	American Sociological Review (27 citations)	
Public Administration Review (53 citations)	Corporate Governance—an International Review (26 citations)	
Voluntas (57 citations)		

represents an important contribution to the rapidly expanding field of research in the Third Sector.

The bibliometric analysis conducted highlights a high number of publications in the nonprofit governance field in the last ten years. Between 2011 and 2021, 46

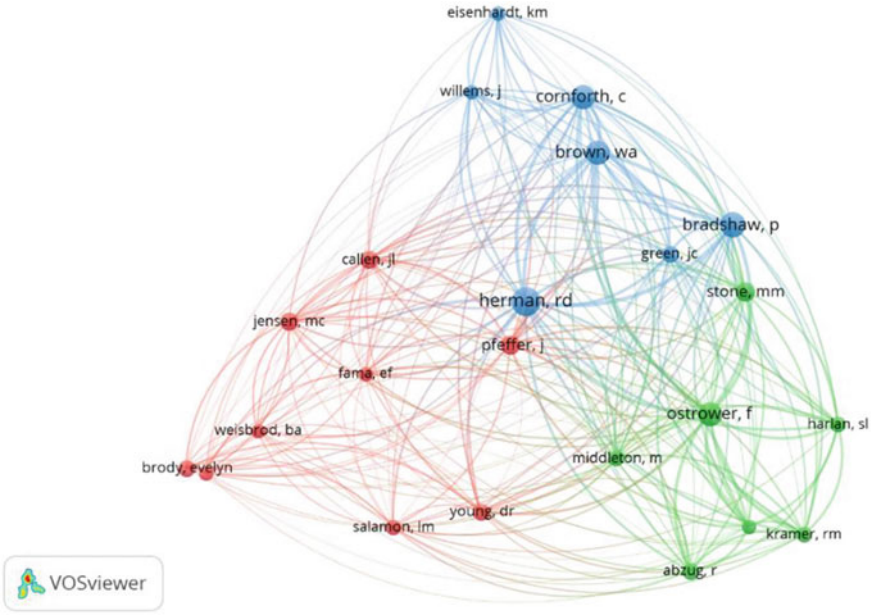

Fig. 4 Co-citation map of cited authors

Table 8 Clusters from the co-citation network of authors

Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3
Brody, E. (19 citations)	Abzug, R. (18 citations)	Bradshaw, P. (39 citations)
Callen, J. (21 citations)	Harlan, S. (16 citations)	Brown, W. (36 citations)
Fama, E. (14 citations)	Kramer, R. (16 citations)	Cornforth, C. (38 citations)
Hansmann, H. (14 citations)	Middleton, M. (16 citations)	Eisenhardt, K. (14 citations)
Jensen, M. (21 citations)	Ostrower, F. (37 citations)	Green, J. (18 citations)
Pfeffer, J. (24 citations)	Stone, M. (23 citations)	Herman, R. (51 citations)
Salamon, L. (15 citations)	Zald, M. (14 citations)	Willems, J. (14 citations)
Weisbrod, B. (14 citations)		
Young, D. (18 citations)		

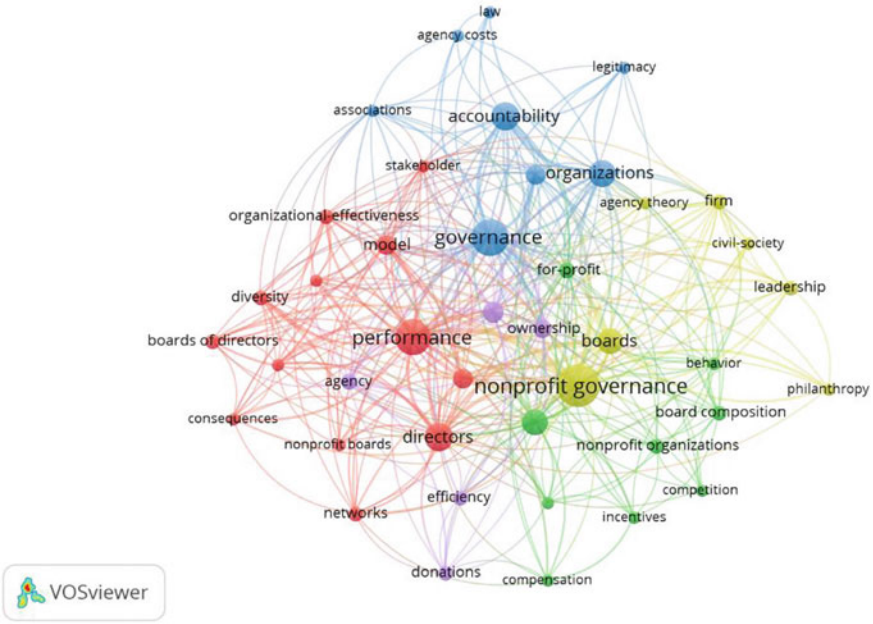

Fig. 5 Co-occurrence keyword map

Table 9 Most representative keywords

Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4	Cluster 5
Directors (14 occurrences)	Corporate Governance (17 occurrences)	Accountability (15occurrences)	Boards (12 occurrences)	Agency (5 occurrences)
Model (7 occurrences)	Nonprofit Organizations (4 occurrences)	Governance (24 occurrences)	Nonprofit Governance (33 occurrences)	Donations (4 occurrences)
Performance (22 occurrences)	Incentives (3 occurrences)	Management (7 occurrences)	Firm (4 occurrences)	Efficiency (4 occurrences)
Power (7 occurrences)	Compensation (3 occurrences)	Organizations (13 occurrences)	Leadership (4 occurrences)	Nonprofit (8 occurrences)
Organizational-effectiveness (4 occurrences)	Competition (3 occurrences)	Law (3 occurrences)	Philanthropy (3 occurrences)	Ownership (6 occurrences)
	Firm Performance (3 occurrences)	Agency costs (3 occurrences)	Civil-Society (3 occurrences)	

articles were published, which represent 64.7% of the sample. Regarding the publication sources, The Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly, Nonprofit Management Leadership and the Public Administration Review stand out as the most cited. In relation to authors, the most cited are Francie Ostrower and Melissa Stone, while Chris Cornforth and Jurgen Willems are responsible for the highest number of publications. Concerning the keyword network, the most frequent terms are "directors", "performance", "accountability", "corporate governance", "organizations", "boards", "governance", and "nonprofit governance".

The findings reported here shed new light on the theoretical mapping of the intellectual structure of nonprofit governance. There are two worth considering. The first one is related to the performance of the governance boards and its impact on organizational effectiveness. Most of the articles included in this theme address the performance of the governance boards according to different theories and focus on the causality between performance and organizational effectiveness, identifying the factors and variables which contribute positively to this correlation. In contrast, the second theme highlights the composition and characterization of the governance boards, theorizing the characteristics of the governance structures, as well as the relationships that are established, especially between the administrative and executive elements. A notable perspective in the literature is the Agency Theory, which advocates the separation between ownership and management. Further research regarding the role of governance in the Third Sector and its application to existing models in nonprofit organizations is required. In particular, the variables founded in the conceptual structure and in the clusters have significant implications for the performance and management practices of NPOs.

Nevertheless, this research has some limitations. The major limitation of this study is the use of a single database (Web of Science), despite being one of the most recognized databases within the academic community. Another limitation lies in the fact that the sample only includes articles in detriment of other types of publications.

Notwithstanding the limitations, this work offers valuable insights into Nonprofit Governance. Based on this bibliometric analysis, a research project will be carried out to identify the nonprofit governance factors that influence organizational performance and the variables that will be used come from the keyword network presented founding in this research.

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Crisis Management and Planning in Portuguese Nonprofit Organizations During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Lara Santos, Luisa Lopes, and Salete Esteves

Abstract The COVID-19 pandemic has created several challenges for all organizations. However, Nonprofit Organizations (NPOs), due to their unique specificities, when compared to other types of organizations, face unique challenges. NPOs are extremely vulnerable during crisis, although the literature suggests that it is not known to what extent these organizations are prepared to deal with crises and have proper crisis management and planning strategies. Given this literature gap, this research aims to better understand the impact of this crisis on Portuguese NPOs through the research question: What is the impact of a crisis like COVID-19 on NPOs' perceptions of crisis management and planning? A mixed method is used, including document analysis, qualitative interviews, and a quantitative methodology through a questionnaire survey. Study 1 provides an explanation on why Portuguese NPOs had no planning and were unprepared to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic. Study 2, comprising a larger sample, diagnoses and suggests an insufficient level of planning and preparedness as the main finding, substantiated by the lack of planning activities, teams, infrastructures, and communication practices. The findings of each study, implications, and avenues for future research are addressed.

Keywords Crisis management · COVID-19 · Nonprofit Organizations (NPOs) · Crisis planning · Portugal

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1 Introduction

The coronavirus outbreak (SARS-CoV-2) and the COVID-19 disease have affected all aspects of people's and organizations' lives, not just because organizations are the image of the society in which they operate, as result of the interactions they develop in their surroundings, but also because of the adjustment they have to make to it (Mendes & Pereira, 2006). It is recognized that individuals and communities choose to associate and meet their needs in services through organizations. With the rapid development of the nonprofit sector that has taken place over the past 30 years, NPOs have increased in number and complexity. Far from being marginal in the life of most countries, NPOs are rooted in almost every aspect of life in society, from birth to death, and are one of the major players in the economy (Courtney, 2002). Like in other countries, the diversity of NPOs in Portugal is enormous. In fact, while revealing similar principles and practices, NPOs show a great variety in terms of legal forms, sector, size, and outreach (OCDE, 2020). In Portugal, the nonprofit sector employs approximately 237 thousand people (full-time equivalents), representing 5.3% of the total workforce and 3.0% of the gross value added to the Portuguese economy (INE, 2019). There are almost 72 thousand social economy entities considered in Portugal, with: cooperatives (2343), mutual associations (97), holy houses of mercy (387), foundations (619), subsectors and self-management (1678), and associations with altruistic purposes (66,761) (INE, 2019). Regarding the universe of entities that own social facilities and have the status of Private Institution of Social Solidarity (IPSS), in 2020, there were 6806, of which 71% corresponded to non-profit entities (GEP/MTSSS, 2021).

The terminology for classifying organizations belonging to the non-profit sector varies from country to country, such as the areas of activity in which the sector is relevant (Courtney, 2002; Wrigley et al., 2003). Non-profit organizations are designated by Salamon and Anheier (1992, p. 126) as organizations that act in a "distinctive social space outside the Market and the State", integrating heterogeneous social realities. These organizations are created by non-state initiative, must be conceptualized as a dimension in the public space of civil society (Evers, 1995; Salamon & Anheier, 1992), in the production and distribution of products and provision of services, contributing to the promotion of well-being, and income, by encouraging social change and/or restoring needs (Dees, 1998; Mair & Marti, 2006; Peredo & McLean, 2006; Spillan, 2003). According to O'Neill and Young (1988, as cited in Sisco, 2012), legal restrictions, sources of revenue, type of employees, and the nature of their government, combined, make NPOs unique. A profitable organization is traditionally guiden by revenue and return on investment, but NPOs often use the values and norms of the community to guide their behavior and actions (Sisco, 2012).

NPOs should continually guarantee that their customers are protected. NPOs, in times of crisis, are particularly exposed organizations (Sisco, 2012). Nevertheless, little is known about the degree to which these organizations are strategically able to cope with crises (ECLAC, 2020; Santos & Lopes, 2021; Schwarz & Pforr, 2011). On the one hand, the literature on crisis management is abundant, on the other hand,

and with NPOs, few studies have explored the subject (Spillan, 2003). Given this gap of the literature, the present investigation aims to better understand crises in Portuguese NPOs, through the following research question: What is the impact of a crisis like COVID-19 on NPOs' perceptions about crisis management and planning? Specifically, it intends to:

- know the level of crisis preparedness;
- explore the reasons for the level of planning;
- investigate what practices and activities can enhance crisis management prevention and planning.

The study is divided into four main sections. In the first section, and with the literature review in mind, it deepens the knowledge about crisis management and allows its adaptation to this specific context, NPOs. It, then, in the second section, presents the methods used and clarifies the data collection process. In the third section, it examines and discusses data and results obtained. Finally, the last section presents the conclusions and implications for future investigations.

2 Research Background

Due to the day-to-day operations, organizations need to put in place crisis management plans to achieve business continuity (Spillan, 2003). The talent to perceive crises at an initial stage, as well as the level of crisis preparedness, is crucial (Schwarz & Pforr, 2011). The capability to deal a crisis can point the organization's disaster and/or survival (Spillan & Crandall, 2002). Though, there are organizations that don't believe planning and crisis management critical, others do (Spillan, 2003). Fink (2002), one of the main authors in the area, states that a crisis is anything that is important or even vital, which positively and negatively impacts an organization. Regarding crisis types, it would be observed that the organizations are endowed with sensitivity to an infinite number of crises, and crises can come in different shapes, sizes, complexity, intensity, and magnitude (Eriksson & McConnell, 2011). Given the panoply of crisis types, and by way of example, the Institute for Crisis Management (2021) outlines 17 types: personal accidents, class actions, cybercrime, product defects/cancellations, catastrophes, executive dismissal, discrimination, environmental damage, "white-collar" crime, financial damage, hostile takeover bids, employment issues, sexual harassment, mismanagement, whistleblowing, and on-site violence of work.

Several authors have proposed three phases of the crisis "Pre-crisis; Crisis; Post-crisis" as is the case of Coombs (2006), Coombs and Laufer (2018), and Devlin (2007). However, other authors present four and/or more crisis phases (Table 1).

A key aspect of organizational crisis management, and most important to the public, is communication (Ozanne et al., 2020). According to Coombs (2006), a crisis can generate three related threats: financial loss, public safety, and loss of reputation. Dilenschneider (2000, as cited in Coombs, 2006) adds that any type of

Table 1 Phases of the crisis

Study	Phases of the crisis
Smith (1990)	Management crisis; operational crisis; legitimation crisis
Pearson and Mitroff (1993)	Signal detection; preparation/prevention; containment and limitation of damages; recovery; learning
Myers (1993, as cited in Crandall et al., 2014)	Normal operations; emergency response, interim processing; restoration
Richardson (1994)	Pre-crisis/disaster; crisis impact/rescue; recovery/death
Coombs (2012)	Pre-crisis (signal detection, prevention, and preparedness); crisis (recognition, containment, response); post-crisis (recovery, assessment, learning, memory, post-crisis)
Crandall et al. (2014)	Contextual diagnosis; strategic planning; organizational crisis management
Coombs and Laufer (2018)	Pre-crisis (prevention and preparation); crisis (response); post-crisis (learning and review)

Source Own elaboration

crisis threatens to damage an organization's reputation. To reduce and contain reputational damage, reduce negative perceptions, and protect stakeholders, the organization needs to communicate strategically with its public (Allen & Caillouet, 1994). Coombs (1995) reported that very thin attention has been paid to the adequacy of crisis response strategies and crisis types. Allen and Caillouet (1994) argued that crisis response strategies seek to protect an organization by reducing/eliminating reputational damage, and "the selection of the crisis response strategy must be related to the crisis situation" (Coombs & Holladay, 1996, p. 280).

Nearly all the research on crisis management approaches the for-profit sector. Nevertheless, NPOs should also have a plan for manage the unpredictable (Spillan & Crandall, 2002). Crisis management planning is one way that NPOs have to protect themselves, reduce or minimize the impact of a sudden and catastrophic disaster, whether internal to the organization or a pandemic in society, such as COVID-19 (Corvo et al., 2022; Ferreira et al., 2022; Meira et al., 2022; Shearer et al., 2020). These organizations act as a crucial catalyst for new approaches to social problems and needs (Leadbeater, 1997; Salamon & Anheier, 1992), as they can respond more effectively than public and private sector organizations, and with a wider range of services and goods (Barrett et al., 2005; Ben-Ner, 2002). In other words, NPOs have been developing activities that aim to fill needs that are not satisfied either by the State or the Market, and have also been performing functions of relational, affective, and geographical proximity "between those who provide the service and those who resorts to it" (Amaro, 1997, p. 91). The competitive environment in which NPOs

operate, that is, the growing competition for subsidies and donations, the recognition of their contribution to job creation and economic growth, as well as changes in the characteristics of their target groups, makes the role of these organizations in the economy and society unquestionable (Ferreira et al., 2022; Klafke et al., 2021; Shoham et al., 2006; Sullivan & Weerawardena, 2006). In the same way, NPOs are under the conventional constraints of the private sector, as well as the challenges they face today, that is, challenges in terms of effective solutions and sustainability for social problems (ECLAC, 2020; Meira et al., 2022). In addition to conventional constraints and the challenges faced, the turbulent and competitive environment, in which these organizations act, forces them to adopt a more competitive posture in their interventions, as well as to focus on results orientation, and to exercise new strategic, adaptable and innovative ways in the creation of superior social value to their clients/users (Davis et al., 1991; Mair & Marti, 2006; Sullivan Mort et al., 2003; Weerawardena & Mort, 2006). In this sense, NPOs must decide to improve their performance, and these decisions involve the interpretation of the environment, the development and implementation of programs and services, the creation of processes and structures, to control resources and equally, in order to have an impact on performance (Alvord et al., 2003; Brown & Guo, 2010; Ferreira et al., 2022; Meira et al., 2022). For Barton (1994), in the context of threats, companies are vulnerable to different types of crises and need professionals capable of analyzing, deciding, and implementing actions, despite pressures. Likewise, Mitroff et al. (1987) refer that every organization must attend not only to crises that are well known but to the many disasters that can now happen to any organization and all sectors.

3 Methodology

This study uses a double data collection process. Qualitative and quantitative data are united through a mixed method approach (Creswell, 2009). Based on the literature review, the Study 1 begins with an qualitative and exploratory data collection, where analysis and results inform the Study 2 (quantitative phase developed afterwards).

Carried out in May 2020, Study 1 includes six in-depth semi-structured virtual interviews, with six executive directors of Northern Portuguese NPOs, representing 36 different social institutions. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, examined, and categorized. Two of the authors participated in all interviews. As for the method of conducting the interviews, due to the pandemic of COVID-19, were carried out online, through the Zoom platform. Study 2 uses quantitative methodology through a questionnaire survey. Table 2 encapsulates the major methodological features used in the data collection.

A convenience sample for this interview process was conducted, corresponding to the stratification described on Table 3. Considering their amount of experience, the respondents are familiar with the context. These NPOs represent a range of social activities such as support for children and young people, and family support and protection for the most vulnerable groups.

Table 2 Methodological synthesis of Study 1 and Study 2

	Study 1	Study 2
Temporal basis	Cross-section	Cross-section
Unit of analysis	Executive directors—36 social facilities	Technical directors and executive directors
Sampling	Convenience	Convenience
Sample	236 min; 6 interviews	174
Data collection	Semi-structured interview	Online survey
Date	May 2020	June to September 2021
Data analysis	Qualitative: exploratory and explanatory	Quantitative: confirmatory, multivariate

Source Own elaboration

Table 3 Sample stratification for the interview process

Interviewee	Age	Northern Portugal City	N. of social facilities
JR	49	Melgaço	7
JB	49	Porto	3
CR	54	Vila Real	5
AG	66	Mirandela	13
AC	65	Bragança	5
PA	40	Braga	3

Source Own elaboration

In Study 1, it was conceivable to design an investigation grid (Table 4), inspired on the work of Coombs and Laufer (2018), used in the data organization, transcribing the positions taken by the six interviewees concerning the categories and subcategories considered. For the time (May 2020) it was only possible to study pre-crisis and crisis phases.

The population of Study 2 is composed of 1124 Portuguese NPOs, from a database (GEP/MTSSS, 2021) of social economy organizations in mainland Portugal, resulting in a convenience sample of 174 (15.5% rate response) executive directors and NPO technical directors. For each institution and respondent, social and demographic profiles were assessed. Data collection started in June and ended in September 2021 and was carried out through an original questionnaire developed and distributed via the internet, through institutional emails, and on social networks (five NPO Facebook groups). It was made available electronically through the Lime Survey platform. The data collection instrument was developed according to the literature review and considering what could be applied to an NPO scenario. To adapt

Table 4 Categorization structure of the interview process

Categories	Sub-categories
Pre-crisis (prevention and preparation)	• Definition • Types • Critical themes • Preparedness • Lack of preparation and planning
Crisis phase (response)	• Type of actions • Contingency planning practices • Procedures and activities

Source Based on Santos and Lopes (2021)

the research to the specific characteristics of the third sector, in addition to ensuring great harmonization, the words "institution" and "beneficiary" were used. A pre-test of the questionnaire was carried out with six experts in the field, each with more than six years of experience, who suggested minor changes. The total instrument (of Study 2) is composed of four parts: sociodemographic characterization, pre-crisis, crisis, and post-crisis. Sociodemographic data included a brief characterization of the individual respondent (gender, age, education, role, and experience) and the institution (number of employees and volunteers, before and during COVID-19, area of intervention, social facilities, district, and legal form).

Representatives of NPOs, in middle-level (technical management or similar) and top-level (executive management or top management) positions, participated voluntarily by answering the questionnaire on behalf of the institution. Similar studies have similar valid responses (e.g., Martins & Pinto, 2021, $n = 329$; Adro et al., 2022, $n = 135$). The social-demographic characteristics of the sample (Table 5) contain the dominant female gender (75.3%). Respondents were, on average, 43 years old, 55.7% had higher education (Bachelor/Graduate), and 40.2% Pos-Graduate/MBA/Master/Ph.D. Regarding the position held in the NPO, 25.3% of respondents are in top management as executive directors (president, provider, general manager, administrator…) and 70.7% as technical directors. The average number of years of the respondent in the NPO is 13 years and the average number of years of experience in the current position is 11 years. The average number of employees at the NPO where he works was 59 before COVID-19, rising to 62 during COVID-19. Regarding the district where the institution is located, responses were obtained from all districts of mainland Portugal.

The obtained answers about the intervention area (target population) of the responding NPOs revealed that 64.4% (112) of these NPOs work with the elderly, 52.3% (91) work with children and young people, and 23.6% (41) work with family and community in general. Other areas of intervention are targeted by NPOs, but with a lower frequency in the sample (see Table 5).

Table 5 Sample characterization

Variable	Frequency	%
Sex		
Female	131	75.3
Male	41	23.6
Prefer not to say	2	1.1
Age		
Mean ± standard deviation	43 ± 9.36	
Function		
Executive direction	44	25.3
Technical direction or coordination	123	70.7
Other	7	4.0
Education		
9th grade completed	1	0.6
Secondary school completed	6	3.4
Higher education (Bachelor/Graduate degree)	97	55.7
Postgraduate/MBA/Masters/Ph.D	70	40.2
Number of years in the NPO		
Mean ± standard deviation	13.1 ± 8.7	
Number of years of experience in the current position		
Mean ± standard deviation	10.9 ± 8.3	
The average number of total employees (before COVID-19)		
Mean ± standard deviation	58.9 ± 69.3	
The average number of total employees (during COVID-19)		
Mean ± Standard deviation	61.7 ± 75.9	
Legal form		
Association	80	46.0
Parish and Social Center	33	19.0
Foundation	15	8.6
Religious Institute	12	6.9
Holy House of Mercy	34	19.5
Intervention area		
Children and youth[a]	91	52.3
Children and youth with disabilities[a]	27	15.5
Children and youth in danger[a]	32	18.4
Old people[a]	112	64.4
Adults with disabilities[a]	37	21.3
People in dependency situation[a]	21	12.1

(continued)

Table 5 (continued)

Variable	Frequency	%
Homeless people[a]	8	4.6
Family and community in general[a]	41	23.6
People with HIV/AIDS and their families[a]	6	3.4
Drug dependent person[a]	9	5.2
Victims of domestic abuses[a]	8	4.6

Source Research data
[a] Dichotomic variable—the results represent the answer "Yes"

4 Data Analysis and Results

The impact of a crisis like COVID-19 seems transversal and independent of the type of NPO. In this research, regarding the degree of severity of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the institution (Fig. 1), measured on a scale of 1 (none) to 5 (high), most respondents (56.9%) answered with a minimum of 4 assuming that the COVID-19 pandemic had a strong impact on NPOs (mean = 3.64; SD = 1). To look for associations between the variables of education, years of experience in the current position, seniority in the institution, the average number of total employees (fixed + casual) (before COVID-19), and the degree of severity, Spearman's correlation was used. The NPO dimension was associated with the degree of severity: the greater the number of employees, the greater the degree of severity (rs = 0.173; *p*-value = 0.022). Education also showed a correlation with this item: the higher the education level, the greater the perception of the impact of COVID-19 on the institution (rs = 0.163, *p*-value = 0.031). These correlations, although low, were statistically significant for these two variables concerning the degree of severity of the COVID-19 pandemic impact on the institution. The remaining variables were not statistically significant. As the literature mentions, all organizations are impacted by crises, which can occur in any organization and all sectors (Mitroff et al., 1987).

In what emergency preparedness concerns, crisis management implies four interrelated factors: preparation, prevention, response, and revision (Coombs, 2015, as cited in Coombs & Laufer, 2018). This work congregates these factors into the more unanimous proposal of three phases: pre-crisis, crisis, and post-crisis.

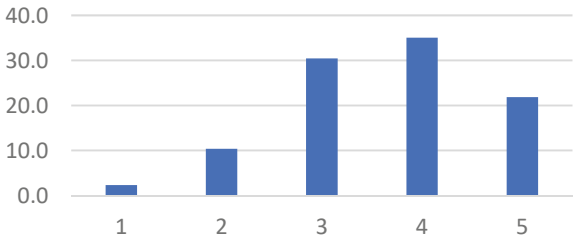

Fig. 1 Severity degree of impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. *Source* Research data. Scale ranging from 1 (none) to 5 (high)

4.1 Pre-crisis Phase

In Study 2, on one hand, most respondents (75.9%) recognize that there was no crisis management plan in place before COVID-19 and, on the other hand, 24.1% (42) respondents indicated that their institution had a plan. It is noted that 13.3% (4) reported that the frequency of the plans' updating was less than one year, 46.7% (14) between one and two years, 3.4% (6) between three and four years, and the same number 3.4% (6) say they review the plan after four years. Furthermore, 67.2% (117/174) assumed that they had no contingency plan in place before the Portuguese Social Security Institute rules and guidelines, and 74.1% indicated that there was no previous crisis response team.

Study 1 had already suggested this finding when some respondents mention that this crisis was unpredictable, as follows: "A crisis is always something that constrains, so it's always in the negative aspect… the crisis always changes the course of events, changes the organizational models, changes practices, therefore changes the regular functioning of the institutions, forces us to, in a very short period, reformulate everything and get out of the box, so we cannot be in a functionalist structure, we have to rethink all the strategies, all the organizational models, the practices, the intervention models and adapt them to the moment of crisis." (JB)

All interviewees said that they were not prepared at all, as no one could plan a pandemic crisis like COVID-19, given its size and importance. Respondents, of Study 1, expressed plainly:

"Predict a situation like this, with this magnitude? Nobody is prepared for a hurricane. (…) What is normally required, we try to comply and try to have minimally legal things." (PA)

"Nowhere was predicted a situation like this (…) it never crossed my mind, going through the situation I did (…) in March I had very bad days! (…). Before Covid-19 we had no plans." (AG)

"We were neither prepared nor mentalized." (AC)

Crossing variables ("the existence of a crisis management plan before COVID-19") with the NPO's area of intervention, it was possible to verify significant differences (p-value < 0.05), such as institutions with children and young people in situations of danger, homeless people, and drug addicts had a higher level of planning for a crisis. It should be noted that the NPOs with intervention in the elderly public had a lower level of planning than all the others (p-value < 0.01).

Descriptive analysis of the degree of implementation of the preparation and planning activities presents average values below 3, showing insufficient implementation of these activities is (Table 6).

Recent literature also defends the importance of scenario planning and response activities could focus not only on strategic responses such as support operations (i.e., reduction, such as what to cut), but also on those that help maintain core services and stakeholder relationships, as well as collaborate with other organizations, seek additional resources, and engineer new ways to accomplish the organization's mission (i.e., innovate) (Fuller & Rice, 2022; Mendes & Pereira, 2006).

Table 6 Degree of implementation of planning activities in the pre-crisis phase

Variables	%			Statistics	
	<3	3	>3	Mean	SD
Risk and vulnerability audits carried out by multidisciplinary teams	54.6	21.8	23.5	2.4	1.24
Impact studies of potential crises	75.9	17.8	6.3	1.83	0.98
Surveillance and detection systems with the definition of indicators and warning signs	46	36.6	22.4	2.56	1.18
Contingency plans (technical and communication procedures)	51.7	23.6	24.7	2.56	1.29
Preparation of teams, people and procedures	36.8	30.5	32.7	2.87	1.14
Classroom simulations and real scenarios (training and exercises)	50	29.3	20.6	2.51	1.13

Source Research data; SD—standard deviation; Likert scale: 1 = none to 5 = high

In the descriptive analysis of the degree of agreement related to preparation and planning (Table 7), only three items have means above 3. Thus, most respondents agree that the leadership team created a plan to respond to crises, that the institution's infrastructure facilitated crisis resolution, and that the institution had systems and policies that could trigger crises. It is also important to note that the majority (63.2% of respondents) assumed that they do not have an area (department, section, or division) for communication, public relations, or something similar. Literature is, then, confirmed as it seems that many managers of these organizations disregard the risks and vulnerabilities that exist in their organizations or are not aware of it (Spillan & Crandall, 2002).

4.2 Crisis Phase

There are two ways to perceive a crisis: prepare to prevent and manage a crisis or ignore the signals and react (Spillan, 2003; Spillan & Crandall, 2002). In Study 1, it can be said that the NPOs of the sample, tend to react and respond to the moments of crisis, simply following the guidelines of official bodies, and creating contingency plans oriented by these entities. As can be demonstrated by the following transcripts:

"It was reactive in the sense that we were reacting, we started adapting what were the guidelines that were left by the official and public organisms." (JR)

"We are going to react a little to situations." (CR)

"The structures are reactive and not proactive." (JB)

Table 7 Degree of agreement on the existence of pre-crisis preparation and planning activities

Variables	%			Statistics	
	<3	3	>3	Mean	SD
The institution had areas vulnerable to crises	41.4	31.6	27	2.79	1.21
The institution had situations and practices that, when ignored, could lead to crises	55.2	28.2	16.7	2.40	1.15
The institution was aware of uncomfortable situations that it did not face	73	19.5	7.4	1.96	0.99
The institution had systems and policies that could provoke crises	78.7	15.5	5.7	1.81	0.94
The leadership team created a plan to respond to crises	28.7	17.8	53.5	3.30	1.31
The institution allocated appropriate resources for crisis prevention	40.2	31.6	28.2	2.76	1.20
The institution's infrastructure facilitated crisis resolution	27	20.7	52.3	3.28	1.20
The organizational culture favored a prompt response to crises	21.3	27	51.7	3.36	1.12

Source Research data; SD—standard deviation; Likert scale: 1 = totally disagree to 5 = totally agree

In Study 2, regarding the descriptive analysis of the implementation of damage containment strategies during the crisis, all items present averages equal to or greater than 4.03, that is, on average the respondents agree with the statements. Furthermore, most respondents strongly agree that the institution implemented damage containment/limitation strategies during the crisis (Table 8).

About the communication channels used to communicate with different audiences during the crisis, it was found that 86.8% of respondents (151) referred to the telephone, 86.2% (150) to email, 74.7% (130) to social media, and 68.4% (119) communicated via videoconference (Skype, Zoom, Teams, among others). Mann–Whitney test was used to compare answers and the existence of area (department, section, or division) for communication positively influences the actions taken (p-value < 0.05), meaning that: the institution took care of and satisfied the interests of all stakeholders; the messages communicated to the different stakeholders were adequate, and the communication channels used were appropriate. In a different way, not asked here, similar studies, about communication on COVID-19, ad that social economy organizations struggled with digital illiteracy from their beneficiaries (Martins & Pinto, 2021).

Table 8 Degree of agreement on the actions taken in the crisis phase

Variables	%			Statistics	
	<3	3	>3	Mean	SD
The institution implemented damage containment strategies during the crisis	2.9	9.8	87.4	4.34	0.79
The institution was able to control information relating to the crisis	5.7	10.3	83.9	4.20	0.89
The institution took care of and satisfied the interests of all stakeholders	5.7	18.4	75.9	4.03	0.94
The messages communicated to the different stakeholders were adequate	5.7	18.4	75.9	4.04	0.95
The communication channels used were appropriate	5.1	15.5	79.3	4.13	0.90

Source Research data; SD—standard deviation; Likert scale: 1 = totally disagree to 5 = totally agree

In Study 1, concerning the procedures and activities of crisis management prevention and planning, as for the crisis phase, the interviewees referred that there is a need to create exit and entry systems; reintroduce hygienic-sanitary practices; operationalize shifts or mirror teams; create circuits; reception, and transport protocols segmented; concept and implement communication teams and offices (internal and external); identify and prepare a list of several volunteer entities and platforms (of health, care, and support staff) beside recruitment mechanisms and partnerships to provide reserve human force. Some citations of interviewees were:

"Regardless of the contact with the family and communication with the population in general, it must be well defined who does this, how they do it, what information should be conveyed and how often, in each type of crisis." (JR)

"Updated phone book"; "signage"; "routines"; "mirror teams." (PA)

"Complaints management"; "A specific plan for each social facility." (CR)

In agreement with Study 1, in Study 2 the NPOs have organizationally adapted to the COVID-19 pandemic reacting to the moment of exception never experienced before. It was found that 86.8% (151) of the respondents indicated the creation of new rules and procedures, 75.3% (131) the organization of mirror teams, 32.8% (57) opted for closure, 23.6% (41) for the reduction of working hours and 20.1% (35) for the creation of crisis offices/teams. Regarding the existence of attacks (by users' families and the media, among others) it should be noted that 78.7% (137 out of 174) of NPOs say they have not suffered any type of attack.

Descriptive analysis of the degree of implementation of crisis management activities shows average values close to 4 are found, showing that the implementation of these activities is reasonable (Table 9). It seems that, during the crisis, NPOs

Table 9 Degree of implementation of crisis management activities

Variables	%			Statistics	
	<3	3	>3	Mean	SD
Identification and recognition of the phenomenon	3.4	17.2	79.4	4.14	0.87
Operational impact assessment	8.0	26.4	65.6	3.83	0.98
Assessment of reputational impact with different stakeholders	16.1	31.6	52.3	3.49	1.07
Identification and characterization of stakeholders and audiences	12.6	29.9	57.5	3.60	1.01
Definition of crisis response strategies and tactics	4.0	19.0	77.0	4.07	0.87
Activation of the response system (principles, people and procedures)	3.4	23.6	73.0	4.03	0.86

Source Research data; SD—standard deviation; Likert scale: 1 = totally disagree to 5 = totally agree

were more concerned with recognizing the phenomenon and activating response systems and tactics, than with the assessment of reputational and operational impacts, suggesting a contingency management action, more reactive than proactive.

The preparation and prevention stages include the development of crisis exercises for training and simulation as well as a crisis team (Pearson & Mitroff, 1993). In Study 1, respondents point out as reasons for the absence of preparation and planning: non-professional management, insufficient training in management and planning, issues of leadership, insufficient human resources, historical reasons, and other reasons.

"Have I delegated in the technical staff responsible for each valence (…) to specify it in detail? What are the steps? It doesn't pass me by." (PA)

"We have "big ships" coping with non-professional management for years. (…) We had contingency plans, we followed the guidelines that came from different public institutions. (…) We had some human resources that allowed us to organize, creating offices/teams." (JR)

"We are talking about structures that have an administrative and bureaucratic system that is often very slow, which obeys very strict criteria that are framed in specific legislation. (…) There is also a devaluation of planning, on one hand, and on the other, there is little training and awareness in the areas of planning. (…) NPOs do not think like market companies (…) are dependent on subsidies and state funding. (…) They are controlled by the State that gives NPO guidance. Not receiving guidelines, these structures consider that there are no reasons to do so, they are not obliged to do so, and therefore they do not do it. (…) Structures that work a

Table 10 Reasons for the lack of crisis planning

Reason	Frequency	%
Historical reasons	22	28.2
A slow and rigorous bureaucratic and administrative system	39	50.0
Intervention area	21	26.9
State dependency	29	37.2
Devaluation of planning	34	43.6
Lack of human resources with training in management	61	78.2
Subsistence with a high degree of volunteering and solidarity	20	25.6
Lack of leadership	9	11.5

Source Research data

lot from volunteering and with people's solidarity. (…) People have no training in management and planning." (JB)

Regarding the existence of a shortage of crisis planning, in Study 2, about 44.8% (78) answered yes and 24.7% preferred not to answer, not recognizing this gap. The reasons for this situation, mentioned by the 78 respondents, are found in Table 10, highlighting the lack of human resources with management training.

4.3 Post-crisis Phase

Regarding the degree of importance of learning from the crisis experience, around 96.3% (159 respondents) consider it important or very important to learn from this crisis to produce changes in the future in terms of structure, people, procedures, etc. Most respondents (78.2%) say that changes have already been implemented as a result of the pandemic.

For the importance of implementing the post-crisis activities, most respondents consider it important or very important to carry out post-crisis audits (assessing effects, the effectiveness of systems, structures), operational and reputational recovery, and the creation of organizational memory and learning (balance, learning from mistakes) (Table 11).

In the final assessment about the importance of the level of planning and preparation for COVID-19, most respondents (70.3%, 116/174), on a scale ranging from 1 (none) to 5 (high), rate a minimum of 4, demonstrating the high relevance and concern that this topic assumes.

Within the scope of the type(s) of crisis that may jeopardize the performance of NPOs, it is observed that the most mentioned category is disasters (natural disasters, fires, floods, epidemics…) with 73% (127) of respondents; then, mismanagement was identified with 66.1% (115) of the respondents; financial damage with 59.2% (103) of respondents; work problems with 41.4% (72); personal accidents with 35.6% (62), cybercrime with 24.1%, among other types mentioned less frequently.

Table 11 Degree of importance/agreement on the actions taken in the post-crisis phase

Variables	%			Statistics	
	<3	3	>3	Mean	SD
Post-crisis audit (assessing effects, effectiveness of systems, structures)	12.7	25.5	61.8	3.81	0.94
Operational and reputational recovery	4.2	14.5	81.2	3.69	1.05
Organizational memory creation and learning (balance, learn from mistakes)	7.3	22.4	70.3	4.20	0.89

Source Research data; SD—standard deviation; Likert scale: 1 = not important to 5 = extremely important

Regarding the question "In the future, which will be the critical issues of crisis prevention in NPOs?", with multiple options, it appears that the five most selected responses were human and physical resources (84.5%, with 147 responses), balance/financial capacity (65.5%, 114 responses), sustainability (64.4%, 112 responses), management skills (49.4%, 86 responses) and population aging (29.9%, 52 responses).

5 Discussion and Conclusions

The third sector has contributed significantly to the development of the Portuguese economy. It is a constantly growing sector, and it has helped to reduce the unemployment rate, offering more jobs, whether full-time or part-time. A crisis management plan is not just for for-profit organizations, but also for NPOs. Most organizations do not dedicate time to operations and crisis relevant to their risk profiles (Fuller & Rice, 2022; Ulmer, 2012). A maioria das organizações não dedica tempo ao planeamento de operações e crises.

The new coronavirus pandemic (SARS-CoV-2) and its disease (COVID-19) had an important impact on Portuguese NPOs. Regarding the degree of severity of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the institution, most respondents of the present work indicated that the COVID-19 pandemic had a strong impact on NPOs. Several impacts were informed in coherence with other studies (e.g., Fuller & Rice, 2022; Martins & Pinto, 2021) like a decrease in the number of volunteers, donations, and revenues. In this way, this research pandemic has reinforced the idea that a plan to contain crises is extremely important in organizations, as literature (Coombs & Laufer, 2018) suggests. In the present study, most respondents assumed that there was no crisis and contingency management plan in place at their institution, before the COVID-19 crisis, and stated that one of the most important reasons for this

situation is the lack of human resources with management training. Literature is, then, confirmed as it seems that many managers of these organizations ignore the risks and vulnerabilities that exist in their organizations or are not aware of it (e.g., Spillan & Crandall, 2002).

Regarding the degree of severity of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the institution, most respondents stated that it had a strong impact on NPOs, confirming that although NPOs dealt with the COVID-19 crisis in different ways, the pandemic had moderate to severe negative impacts on them (Fuller & Rice, 2022). It's also important to note that the NPO dimension was associated with the degree of severity: the higher the number of employees, the greater the degree of severity. Education also showed a correlation with this item: the higher the education level, the greater the perception of the impact of COVID-19 on the institution. These correlations, although low, were statistically significant for these two variables concerning the degree of severity of the COVID-19 pandemic impact on the institution. Additionally, crossing the existence of a crisis plan with the NPO's area of intervention, it was possible to conclude that institutions with children and young people in situations of danger, homeless people, and drug addicts had a higher level of planning for a crisis. It should be noted that the NPOs with intervention in the elderly public had a lower level of planning than all the others. The impact of COVID-19 on elders does not appear to have been adequately explored to date (D'cruz & Banerjee, 2020). Local, regional, and national government actions taken to attenuate the spread of the pandemic disease have thus shield older people from the virus, and these ones have been particularly hard hit, dying in an unevenly higher numbers, especially in long-term care facilities (Miller, 2020).

Managing a crisis requires a lot of effort on the part of these organizations, considering that managing a crisis requires not only a plan but also a crisis management team, with highly trained leaders, as well as a crisis communication plan so that it can communicate effectively with its stakeholders (Coombs & Laufer, 2018; Young & Searing, 2022). Most respondents agree that, during the crisis, the leadership team created a plan to respond to crises, that the institution's infrastructure facilitated crisis resolution, and that the institution had systems and policies that could trigger crises. The reactive response to crisis occurred confirming that the social economy has been mitigating impacts of COVID-19 crisis and complementing government responses (OCDE, 2020). Doing so, an increase of Portuguese NPOs' flexibility and speed of adaptation happened (Martins & Pinto, 2021). In the present research, it is also important to note that the majority of institutions assumed that they do not have an area (department, section, or division) for communication, public relations, or something similar. About the communication channels used to communicate with different audiences during the crisis, it was found that most respondents referred to the telephone, email, and social media. Communication is a fundamental capability for NPOs and engaging in external communication activities contributes to their skill to persevere and innovate (Fuller & Rice, 2022).

Within the scope of the type(s) of crisis that may jeopardize the performance of NPOs in the future, the most mentioned category is disasters (natural disasters, fires, floods, epidemics…), mismanagement, and financial damage. Regarding the critical

issues of crisis prevention in NPOs, the respondents indicate human and physical resources, balance/financial capacity, sustainability, and management skills. Other similar results announce that the main needs of Portuguese IPSS are the economic-financial support (focus on personal protection equipment), reinforcement of communication and networking with public organizations, and an increase in the number of qualified operational workers (Martins & Pinto, 2021). Despite the constant growth of NPOs in Portugal, it was noticeable that these organizations have received very little attention, in terms of volunteering, given that this had a large reduction at the time of the pandemic disease, accordingly with other studies (Martins & Pinto, 2021; Meira et al., 2022; Young & Searing, 2022).

This study suffers from certain limitations with the key issue having considered only crisis management. In fact, additional dimensions of NPO literature would consolidate its contribution considerably. Data collection took place during the pandemic situation and is only based on the Portuguese case of NPOs and, specifically, those with the status of IPSS. Other limitation of this study concerns the fact that the surveyed and convenience sample includes a small sample size due to the insufficient available contacts on Carta Social data base (GEP/MTSSS, 2021), impeding representativeness. In summary, the present research, echoes a partial reality.

Future research, resulting from this project and literature review, should focus on four fundamental areas: risk and vulnerabilities assessment, planning competences, active leadership, and organizational communication as primary tools for crisis management. Also, Study 1 pointed an increased effort of different NPOs on working together and developing partnerships with local authorities in order to cope with unexpected and undesirable events in COVID-19. Similarly, recent research (Fuller & Rice, 2022; Martins & Pinto, 2021) also observed as an opportunity the inter-cooperation with similar organizations, municipalities, and local health entities. This confirms that, during periods of crises, historically, there is a rise in the value placed on co-operation and solidarity (OCDE, 2020). So, it seems interesting to deep knowledge about how external stakeholders, partnerships, and competition are managed to work solutions through co-operation in order to help mitigate the direct impact of the crisis, especially for the most vulnerable groups, and provide services. Future studies might replicate this one in the highly diverse universe of organizations of the social economy, and a broadener range of countries around the world.

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Territorial Marketing Perspectives

Double Visual Identity of the Place Brand: Coat of Arms and Logo. The Case of Poland

Anna Adamus-Matuszyńska and Piotr Dzik

Abstract Brand identity is an essential theoretical and practical subject in place branding. It is a complex phenomenon that includes, among others, visual identity systems and design programs. One of its key elements is the logo. Places, contrary to corporations, often have a double visual identification of the brand: a coat of arms and a logo. In this matter, the authors consider the case of Poland because, after the political changes started in 1989, more than 2,400 territorial coats of arms have been adopted. At the same time, almost 1,000 logos of Local Government Units (LGU) have been developed and implemented. Although the problem of the relationship between coats of arms and territorial logos has been discussed in the Polish literature, the positions expressed tend to be postulating rather than based on empirical research. Therefore, the purpose of the article is to provide empirical data and describe the relationships between coats of arms and logos. The starting point of this research is the theory of place marketing, whose key element is the concept of place branding. The authors used content analysis as a research method to analyse the content of the logos. In the literature, it is postulated that the functions of the coat of arms and the logo are separate. In practice, the relationships between the coat of arms and the logo are much more complex. Place brand identity models should consider the coexistence of the territorial logo and the coat of arms and their parallel use.

Keywords Place branding · Logo · Coat of arms · Place marketing · Visual identity

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1 Introduction

Place branding began to separate as an independent discipline at the turn of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries (Campelo, 2017) and two books published in 2002—"Destination Branding" and the special issue of the Journal of Brand Management entitled "Nation Branding" (Foroudi et al., 2020: 3) qualified place branding as a multidimensional field. Review and so-called state-of-the-art articles started to be published after 10 years of discipline development (Gertner, 2011; Lucarelli & Berg, 2011). Subsequent works summarizing the state of the place branding appear almost every year (van Ham, 2008; Lucarelli & Brorström, 2013; Vela 2013; Oguztimur 2015; Green et al., 2016; Vuignier, 2017; Ma et al., 2019, Kumaret al., 2019; Foroudi et al., 2020; Hao et al., 2021). Regardless of objections raised regarding the state of the discipline and its theoretical and research problems, it can be concluded that there is consensus that the term 'brand' can be applied to places, that is, municipalities, cities, regions, and countries (Hanna & Rowley, 2007; Vuignier, 2017), and place branding refers to the general form of branding dedicated to local or national government units, both in research and analytical work; however, place brands are structurally different from commercial brands (Mollerup, 2013: 208). However, the concept of 'brand' in the most common currently Component Model raises doubts in the literature on the subject (Avis & Henderson, 2022; Gaski, 2020; Manning, 2010). As Gaski writes *A large fraction of empirical brand literature is ambiguous because the definition, meaning and therefore measurement of the focal construct, 'brand', is unclear* (Gaski, 2020: 517). This reservation also applies to place brands (Kalandides & Kavaratis, 2009; Vanolo, 2017). Therefore, in this chapter, the authors have adopted the unambiguous Label and Association Model [LAM] (Avis & Henderson, 2022: 36)] which defines 'brand in the following way: "A brand is a trade name / logo that identifies a product or firm, usage of which may be limited by legal structures and practice". In this sense, the logo and/or coat of arms are the brand of the place, and the visual identification system is one of the elements that creates and maintains a place branding process.

Summarizing, visual identity is one of many instruments of place branding (Ashworth, 2009; Ashworth & Kavaratzis, 2007) and referring to Martina Löw's approach (2001) that stresses two dimensions of place: *spacing* and *synthesizing,* place identity must be visible, so visual elements are needed to make a brand perceived. The logo and coat of arms are visual elements of the identity of the place and they both have practical consequences.

Although in corporate branding the existence of coats of arms is not conceptualized as a theoretical and practical challenge (Faroudi and Gupta, 2017, Kim & Lim, 2019), it should be stressed that the existence and simultaneous use of traditional coats of arms and promotional logos by places is a structural difference between place and corporate branding.

Heraldry, understood as a scientific discipline, has an immovable place as an auxiliary science of history. However, until recently this area has not attracted

much interest among marketing specialists (Starzyński, 2018). For example, a Google scholar search showed that 'place branding' + 'coat of arms' gives 221 results and 'place branding' + 'urban heraldry' only 46 results. Similar results can be found in larger databases of scientific publications.

In the literature on place branding, a coat of arms is mentioned only in case studies on the process of creating a city logo. The thesis that the coat of arms can be an inspiration and source of solutions for the city brand identity and a symbol of place identification is widely accepted (Florek et al., 2006; Michelet and Giraut, 2014; Grandi, 2015; Pompe, 2017, Lucarelli et al., 2021). In addition, there are only single mentions indicating that places (mainly cities) merely have coats of arms (Benedek, 2017, Krebs, 2015, Matlovičová, 2010, Popescu, 2017), or it is stressed that city authorities use them as official symbols (Trukchachev, 2017) indicating authority and sovereignty (Diacov & Percinschi, 2016; Kaufmann and Durst, 2008), sometimes even majesty (this is how the German term *Hoheitlich* should be translated into English see: Beyrow & Vogt, 2015: 10). There is also an approach that separates territorial brands from official symbols, such as the flag, the national anthem, and the coat of arms (Goretti and Casaroto, 2019: 32, Muratovski, 2012). A coat of arms is an issue that is analyzed by specialists in various disciplines, such as, for example, geologists (da Silva, 2018). Da Silva defines a coat of arms as an image that acts as a complex code of communication between the people who create the message, the people who exhibit the coat of arms, and the people who read and receive the message built into the coat of arms (da Silva, 2018: 954), which in a formal sense shows similarity to the Component Model of Brand.

In theoretical considerations, coats of arms are treated as sources of specific traits for the logo-making process, and they are perceived as fitting to the discourse of cultural heritage, not to contemporary practice (Järlehead, 2020: 18). Such studies indicate that the concept of company/corporate heritage is an inspiration for the creation of logos (Balmer and Greyser, 2003; Balmer and Greyser 2006; Balmer and Urde, 2007; Balmer and Burghausen 2015; Wilson, 2017). Hakala et al. suggest the model of 'place heritage' (Hakala et al., 2015: 266), where a coat of arms is placed in the group 'place symbols' together with 'place name'. That is why a coat of arms is a kind of symbol that might reveal the essence or *genius loci* (*the spirit of the place*) of a particular place (Skinner, 2011). Adding that "as communicative genre city logos have become more corporatized over the years" (Järlehead, 2020: 17), one can hypothesize that coats of arms are such natural signs in the lives of cities that they are virtually invisible to place branding researchers and practitioners, which is why they are not an element of inquiry in place branding research.

However, in Eastern Europe, including Poland, the 1990s was a turn towards a free-market economy and democracy. Therefore, two phenomena occurred simultaneously in the case of coats of arms. First, a return to the heraldic continuity, interrupted by Soviet emblems, which meant that during the fall of communism in 1989–1990 (Kaneva & Popescu, 2011) and later, coats of arms began to arouse wider interest again. In Poland, the term 'live heraldry' is even used for

local and episcopal heraldry created after 1989 (Górzyński, 2018: 3). After 1990, more than 2,400 coats of arms of local government units were recognised in Poland (Znamierowski, 2017: 6; Strzyżewski, 2005). Legal and administrative regulations regarding their formation and application were also introduced in 2000, and a consulting and advisory body was established—the Heraldic Commission at the Ministry of Internal Affairs (Wiszowaty, 2013; Zwolak, 2017)]. Up to now, new coats of arms have been created and old ones have been modified; some of them are approved, some not by the Heraldic Commission (Suchodolska, 2018). Second, the practice of place marketing is another phenomenon that occurs after 1989 (Duczkowska-Piasecka, 2013; Rudolf, 2016; Szromnik, 2016). Since then, self-governments, both local and regional, have started to introduce modern marketing solutions that include a visual symbol such as a logo. On 1 August 2022 930 logos are used by Polish local government units, which play different roles than coats of arms in the LGUs practice. A logo is a symbol created for marketing purposes and a coat of arms for solemn circumstances and official celebrations (Adamus-Matuszyńska & Dzik, 2017b: 57 and following). In 2013, among Polish specialists, practitioners and researchers, a discussion of the functions of logos and coats of arms began (Studio Otwarte, 2013). At the same time, the local authority of Słupsk introduced a new city logo referring to the coat of arms. Similar decisions were taken by the local authorities of Wadowice and Rybnik. Therefore, the issue has begun to be noteworthy, also from the theoretical point of view, because the question arises not only about the relationship between the coat of arms and the logo, but also about the importance of the coat of arms in place branding.

Relationships between coats of arms and logos have also begun to be separately analysed in place marketing literature. According to the Heraldic Commission, entities that use coats of arms should not use the logo to avoid violating or weakening the function of the coat of arms as an identifying sign (Strzyżewski, 2005; Suchodolska, 2018; Pogorzelski, 2012; Widłak, 2020). The coat of arms should be protected and applied only during special occasions, while the logo should function for promotional purposes (Augustyn, 2008). In turn, the authors of the book "Visual Identity" (Rychter et al., 2012) are of the view that interchangeable use of a coat of arms and a promotional sign is justified in many cases. Another approach to relationships between logos and coats of arms suggests that cities should implement three types of visual identification (Włoszczyński, 2016):

1. An official coat of arms as a sign used for representative purposes.
2. A city brand mark, based on the coat of arms, to mark the city hall and for its informational and promotional needs.
3. A logo as a promotional sign.

In Poland, marketing practice has an impact on empirical research and theoretical discussions on the relationship between the city logo and its coat of arms (Adamus-Matuszyńska & Dzik, 2017b; Rudolf & Wrześniewska-Szymańska, 2018). One can formulate the thesis that market signals, as well as practitioner discussions, have affected the use of coats of arms in the visual identification of local

governments (Goretti & Casaroto, 2019). A place coat of arms is designed to be the visual expression of the autonomy and individuality of a particular place (Da Silva, 2018: 950). A place logo is a particular and distinctive visual symbol that has two purposes: description and distinction (Mollerup, 2013).

This article seeks to deepen the understanding of the relationships between coats of arms and logos in the practice of place branding, taking into account Polish cities, regions and counties. The presented research differs from those undertaken by marketing researchers due to its focus on graphic symbols, considering a wide range of literature, also including the perspective of graphic designers, which makes this approach unique. When exploring the websites of the places and conducting individual deep interviews (IDI) with the officials responsible for the promotion of the places in the offices of the Local Government Units, all available coats of arms and logos were collected. By studying the literature and examining place branding practice, the paper tries to answer the following research questions:

1. Is a coat of arms an element of place branding practiced today by marketing specialists?
2. What is the function of a coat of arms in place branding practice? Is it just an element of heritage or a contemporary element of place branding practice?
3. How is a coat of arms applied in place branding practice? How often is this authorised visual sign considered a logo or a component of a place logo?
4. Does an analysis of a coat of arms improve place branding theory?

2 Municipal Heraldry in Poland. A Brief Introduction

The heraldry of Polish land (regional, powiat, and local) has a long history and is characterized by some particular features related to the unique heraldic system of the Polish nobility and the history of the country. There are some important qualities of the Polish heraldry system that should be mentioned when characterizing the relationships between arms and logos.

The coats of arms of lands and cities date back to the thirteenth century (Municipal Heraldry 2009, Strzyżewski, 1999). Until 2000, there was no fixed graphic model of a coat of arms or a universally accepted set of rules governing the Polish heraldic system (Znamierowski, 2017). Tradition, heritage, and legislation influenced the graphic heraldry system. Originally, municipal arms were created by autonomous civic authorities. Visual features of the Polish arms consisted of a shield, which has not been divided, the colours used are two metals, gold and silver, i.e., yellow and white, and four tinctures: red (very often practiced), blue, green, and black. If the element of the coat of arms is a charge, then it must be framed with a black contour line. The charge in the coat of arms has a proper antinaturalistic heraldic stylization. Only in the Polish heraldry there are such charges

as “łękawica”, “krzywaśń”, “półtorakrzyż” and “półtrzeciakrzy”[1] (Widłak, 2013; Znamierowski, 2017). In the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (1385–1795), the heraldic system of the nobility was adapted in urban heraldry (Chomicki, 1939). After World War II, towns previously inhabited by Germans and afterwards populated by Polish citizens changed their names and arms, which had been influenced by German, Prussian, and Brandenburg heraldry (in former East Prussia and Western Pomerania) as well as Austria and Czech (in Silesia) (Strzyżewski, 1999). The current guidelines of the Heraldic Commission take this specificity into account and allow, for example, the division of the shield (Komisja Heraldyczna, 2020).

Along with political and economic changes in Poland and the restoration of local governments after 1989, the practice of using the coat of arms in official communication of cities, municipalities, powiats, and voivodships was restored (Adamczewski, 2014). After 1990, approximately 2400 territorial coats of arms were estimated to have been created (Znamierowski, 2017: 6). This is due to changes in the administrative division of the country. For example, 314 powiat coats of arms were created, which were designated de novo in this new administrative division.

In 2000, the Heraldic Commission was established by the Ministry of Administration, and since that year it has been suggested that municipal coats of arms should meet commission guidelines. However, the Heraldic Commission advises and gives its opinion about prepared arms without further restricted consequences. The Polish heraldic rules do not include restrictions on the use of specific visual symbols on arms. Therefore, the LGU uses a wide range of symbols in these signs.

To conclude, municipal heraldry has been renewed, and at the same time, cities and regions have begun to build territorial brands and practiced marketing activities. Thus, Wojciech Strzyżewski summarizes the role of the coat of arms by writing: *Therefore, the coats of arms were important elements of the city's propaganda and promotional activities, creating its positive image. It is still so today, as evidenced by the emblems of modern cities.* (Strzyżewski, 1999: 13).

3 Theoretical Background

Today, places, cities, and regions compete for visitors, investors as well as residents, and that is why they use instruments that allow them to become competitive on this distinctive market. Place branding is one of the ways a place can become attractive to clients. So, this idea is practiced and, at the same time, theoretically analysed (Moilanen and Ranisto, 2009; Govers & Go, 2009; Boisen et al., 2018).

[1] The names were left in the original because there are no relevant English terms recognized by specialists (Strzyżewski, 2020).

There are many definitions of place branding, although, generally, it is a kind of activity that mobilizes different resources to guarantee the emotion-laden place experience that consumers are seeking (Govers & Go, 2009: 17). In theory, the place brand is a bearer of the identity of the place, which means that it discloses the historical, political, social, cultural and economic characteristics of the place.

People and places are mutually constructed and constituted (Harvey, 2001). A social group creates a community where four types of identity are revealed (Jałowiecki, 2010: 315): (1) a sense of the bonds between the individual and the group with the society of the city, (2) a sense of relationship with the city's space, (3) a sense of bonds with the city's past, and (4) a sense of identity with the future of the city. As a result, the 'place' becomes a particular message of its identity. Therefore, all symbols, including visual ones, are used to show the specificity of this place. The place has its *genius loci*, which make it alive for people and determine its character and spirit (Jivén and Larkham, 2003).

The place identity is explored by different disciplines (Convery et al., 2012). Understanding identity is a key element in strategic brand management (Kapferer, 2008:171 and following), which defines brand identity as a concept of a brand designed and presented by an organization (Geuens et al., 2009). Identity draws on the brand's roots and heritage, everything that gives it its unique authority and legitimacy within a realm of precise values and benefits (Kapferer, 2008:178). A distinctive brand identity enables consumers to satisfy their self-definition needs to be unique (Berger & Heath, 2007; Ruvio, 2008; Tian et al., 2001). The same happens with respect to a place. Each place has its own identity, and because today places (cities, regions, countries) compete, they need to be governed to build a unique position on the market by creating, among other activities, the brand identity of the place (Florek and Janiszewksa 2013; Glińska, 2016). As stated by Aitken and Campelo (Aitken & Campelo, 2011): *Brands are commonly defined in relation to ideas of differentiation and identification* (Aaker, 1991; Wilson, Gilligan & Pearson, 1995; Kotler, 2002; Aaker, 2004). *As an identifier, the brand is linked to issues of ownership, and as a differentiator, the brand becomes a signifier of perceptions, meanings and values that separate it from competitors* (Ballantyne & Aitken, 2007).

Place branding cannot be separated from the governmental context because they are municipal organizations (city halls, town halls, regional offices) that undertake policy making procedures (Zenker & Braun, 2017: 275). Research shows that place branding is nowadays implemented as a government strategy for the socio-economic development of cities and regions (Kiryluk et al., 2020), involving in this process the many different stakeholders who have influenced the process itself, but also the place brand (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013).

Place brand is a multifaceted term which is defined by academics and practitioners representing variety disciplines such as marketing, place marketing, human geographers, sociologists, urbanists, graphic designers, public policy, etc. (Hankinson, 2015; Harvey, 2001; Jorgensen, 2009, Vanolo, 2017). It is the result of the place branding process. However, it should be stressed that a place brand is 'an unbalanced object' due to the dynamics of place branding processes.

It identifies the place, but also reflects its attributes and raises among receivers (visitors, citizens) the emotions and attitudes toward the place having, in this way, an impact on the place image (Cai, 2002). The meta-analysis done shows that the place brand is a complex, multi-layered, and multidimensional theoretical construct. However, it should be noted that logos, slogans and narratives are included in each of the analytical elements of this construct (Yazdanpanah Shahabadi 2019). A logo is a graphic sign (Wheeler, 2018: 50), the conventional solution of a visual symbol plus a wordmark (Healey, 2009: 7). It contributes to the identity of the brand. A logo allows socialization around something people are already proud of or engaged with (Govers, 2015). It seems that place marketers often perceive a logo as the most important element of place branding (Ashworth & Kavaratzis, 2010; Boisen et al., 2018), although this is a symbol that finalizes the long and dynamic process of creating and developing the identity of the place brand (Adams and Morioka, 1994:18). Historical influences on heraldry and contemporary design programs are described in the literature on the history of graphic design (Mollerup, 2013: 59). A coat of arms is one of the most crucial elements of heraldry, today being a source of visual motifs in place logos. This prerequisite was the theoretical basis of the research presented.

4 Research Methods

Referring to the theory of marketing research expressed by Hunt (2015), the inductivist route was used in this study. It suggests that the first step is the observation and recording of data (Hunt, 2015: 27).

Content analysis was used to examine both logos and coats of arms. It is one of the recognised methods of qualitative and quantitative research, which its creator, Bernard Berelson (1952)—defined as the objective, systematic, and qualitative description of the disclosed content of communication. This method is a valid research method for brand branding in places (Govers & Go, 2009; Hashim 2017: 215). The content analysis of the graphic symbols used in promotion consists of four stages (Rose, 2001: 56 – 66):

(a) Finding images—LGU logos were found on official webpages, social networks, and in other promotional publications. In doubtful situations, the researchers personally contacted the officials. This additional verification covered more than 200 cases.
(b) Devising categories for coding—coding means attaching a set of descriptive labels (or categories) to the images (Rose 2001: 58).
(c) Coding the images—applying distinguished categories to country logos.
(d) Analysis of results—formulation of conclusions and discussion of questions.

Using qualitative thematic coding methodology, a categorical framework was created for the classification of the logos studied. A content analysis approach was

applied to examine and assess the images used in the logos with a comparison of the coat of arms and their visual elements. During the research, 871 images were analysed for content in terms of motifs and themes. As a minimum of marketing, standardization of at least two so-called basic elements was considered (Healey 2010:7): name (logotype / wordmark), graphic sign, colours, fonts, and the 'fifth element' or additional decorative element (Mollerup, 2013: 59). Considering the above criteria, six modes of using the coat of arms in the logo or as the logo were identified:

1. The logo has two elements: the coat of arms used directly in conjunction with the name (wordmark).
2. The logo has at least three elements: the coat of arms (used directly) in conjunction with the name (wordmark) and an additional graphic element.
3. The logo is one-piece (simplified coat of arms), however there are variants with additional words.
4. The coat of arms is part of a complex multicomponent logo, but the coat of arms is modified or simplified.
5. Fragments and elements of the coat of arms (e.g., emblem, charge) are used in a logo.
6. The shape of the heraldic shield only.

The content analysis of a motif was completed in three steps following Rose (2001), Govers and Go (2009), Hashim (2017: 215- 216):

- Identification of actual objects (finding images)–identification of land logos
- Identifying the arrangement setting (categories for coding)—Identification of elements of the arms
- Identifying the contextualization (analysing the results)—Identification of the main arms motives in logos.

The Individual Deepening Interview (IDI) was the second research method implemented to clarify the prepared categories for coding and confirm that the identified motives are elements of coats of arms. The authors conducted 24 interviews (IDI) with eight designers involved in the creation of coats of arms and LGU logos, 14 officials responsible for the promotion and marketing of the place, and two experts in heraldry (historian and designer). Interviews were typically transcribed and analysed for qualitatively collected data. The following issues were raised during the interviews:

1. Perceived identity of the place and (if it existed) the identity of the place brand.
2. Was the coat of arms considered in the process of creating the place brand?
3. If the coat of arms was an inspiration, how did it influence the process of creating and implementing the visual identity of the place brand? Is it only a symbolic heritage, a source for creating a logo or something as 'living heraldry' that can be used today?
4. How do the respondents see the coat of arms and logo relationships?
5. Whether, when, and under what circumstances can and should the coat of arms be used as the sole/exclusive identifier of the visual identity of the place brand?

The authors collected logos of all Polish LGU's. The following LGUs were examined:

1. 16 regions (voivodships)
2. 380 counties and towns
3. 2477 communities.

5 Results and Discussion

The collection of all logos for the branding practiced in the place was the starting point of the research. Although there are 2873 local government units in Poland, 933 have developed and implemented these visual symbols in promotional and official communication (Table 1).

The examination carried out for the purposes of the research of the previous authors and this article indicated 202 confirmed situations in which the definite usage or the reference to the coat of arms in the visual identification of regions, cities, towns, and communities in Poland was clearly confirmed. It means that 20% of LGUs that implement logos in their promotional practice created them with some references to coats of arms. It also means that about 7% of all units researched have double visual identification: coats of arms and, at the same time, logos inspired by the coat of arms in their visual identification. The number is not very large, but it allows for preliminary classifications of such logos. The article does not analyse those self-government units (LGUs) that use only the coat of arms in communication with the environment. There are more than 1,800 local governments.

In the inductive route, after observation and data collection, the next step was classification of the items collected. The proposed classification was created by the authors after interviews with graphic designers and heraldry specialists. Heraldic graphic motifs (Mollerup, 2013; Fox-Davies, 2012) were the basic premise for building the classification (Table 2).

The first category—the coat of arms with the logo—is used, for example, by the Lower Silesian Voivodship, Kielce Powiat, Mrągowo, and Trzebinia. All these local governments have extensive visual identification systems that standardize the coat of arms, the name of the Local Government Unit, the fonts and colours used. Another example of logos are coats of arms appearing with the names of spectacularly written names of the towns, in which ligatures or unusual glyphs are used, such as in the Kościerzyna, Szydłowiec, or Wrzesiński powiats (counties). Some examples are presented in Fig. 1.

In the next group of logos, there is a combination of a coat of arms, town name, and additional decorative element; examples of Augustów and Miechów are worth showing (Fig. 2). In this group, coats of arms also appear in complex and multi-component signs, including several graphic elements such as names, promotional slogans, crests, and other pictures (Sulęciński county).

Table 1 Polish local government units using logos

Position	Type of LGU	Number of LGOs	Number of logos	Number of logos referring to the coat of arms	Remarks
1	Voivodships (regions)	16	16 (20)	2 (Dolny Śląsk, Śląsk)	Specialized identifications are used in three regions. Kujawsko-Pomorskie, in addition to the general logo, also uses tourist identification. The Śląskie region has a marketing logo and a coat of arms is additionally used for sponsorship purposes. The Wielkopolska region, which has a policy of specialized brands, uses tourist, economic, and cultural regional brand identities
2	Cities	66	58	16	It should be emphasized here that next to the city logos there are also metropolitan area logos, for example, Upper Silesia Metropolis
3	Counties	314	160	38	There are also visual identifications of joint promotional activities of counties and their communes, e.g., Regio Resovia
4	Communes	2 477	763	146	There are also some intercommunal promotional projects, for example, 'Beskidzka 5'
	Total	2 873	997(1001)	202	Double number because of voivodeships (regions) see position 1

Source Own research

Visual identification of Gdańsk requires a separate discussion. It uses three combinations of brand identity: (1) a coat of arms (the so-called great—with holders and a motto), (2) a coat of arms with an additional decorative element ("wicket"), (3) coat of arms, "wicket" and the slogan ("City of Freedom"). Furthermore, subsidiary companies and municipal institutions use separate

Table 2 Categories of logos referring to coats of arms (excluding regions)

Position	Description	Absolute numbers	Percentage (%)
1	The logo has two elements: the coat of arms used directly in conjunction with the name (wordmark)	27	14
2	The logo has at least three elements: the coat of arms (used directly) in conjunction with the name (wordmark) and an additional graphic element	47	23
3	The logo is one-piece (simplified coat of arms), however there are variants with additional words	32	16
4	The coat of arms is part of a complex, multicomponent logo, but the coat of arms is modified or simplified	12	6
5	Fragments and elements of the coat of arms (e.g., emblem, charge) are used in a logo	65	33
6	The shape of the heraldic shield solely[a]	17	9
	Total	200	100

Source Own research

[a] Polish heraldists express doubts as to whether only the shield-shaped logo is a heraldic reference (Strzyżewski, 2020; Widłak, 2020). However, the German literature presents a different position (Beyrow & Vogt, 2015: 158), which is why the authors of the presented maintained this category

identification, using a simplified and modernized version of the coat of arms (Fig. 3). The latter version is mentioned because from 2020 it starts to serve as an unofficial logo, e.g., on promotional gadgets.

The next group of logos uses a simplified and modernized version of the coat of arms. In this group of visual solutions, the pioneer was Słupsk in 2015. This successful project was followed by Gryfino, Rybnik, Starogard, and others. In all cases, heraldic inspirations are clear and visible/legible even for non-professionals. They are described in visual identification systems documents, promotional materials, or descriptions posted on town websites and social media. From the interviews conducted for the purposes of the research and descriptions included in the visual identification systems and strategic documents of the LGUs, it could be concluded that the simplification of the coat of arms is treated by the governors as a message which communicates modernity while maintaining respect for tradition (Fig. 4). It should be added that the authors found examples of using simplified coat of arms and, simultaneously, a logo. This is the case, for example, in Kraków poviat (county) and in the city of Zgorzelec. In such cases, the logo was classified as the carrier of visual place brand identity.

The next group contains the coat of arms as part of a complex multi-component logo, but the coat of arms is modified or simplified. There are relatively few such signs, and sometimes confirmation of heraldic references requires consultation (Fig. 5).

Fig. 1 Coat of arms with the wordmark *Source* Own elaboration based on the websites of territorial units

To function as a visual element in city signs, some charges are not only isolated from their shield but could be (a) used directly as an element of the logo, or (b) modified graphically (Beyrow & Vogt, 2015: 168). A change should be modified so that the heraldic origin of the subordinate remains symbolically observable.

When coat of arms fragments is implemented in a logo, far-reaching modifications are applied more often. Such solutions are practiced, for example, in the Chorzów logo (a characteristic letter 'H' refers to the symbol of the convent of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre—this symbol appears in the coat of arms and logo) or in the Chrzanów logo (the lines refer to identical ones visible in the coat of arms of this city). Also, the new logos of Białogard, powiats: Lublin and Kętrzyn use fragmentary coats of arms (this is due to descriptions and justifications). The cities of Kościan and Pleszew (Greater Poland) use emblem elements in the logo. In turn, the new logo of the city of Trzcianka (Wielkopolska) basically refers directly to the city's coat of arms, a slightly modified / stylized 'Ciołek' comes from that coat of arms (Znamierowski, 2017). It should be noted that this inspiration, that is, the use of a graphically processed element or fragment of the coat of arms, requires more thorough checking in promotional documents or contact with the relevant office. An example direction of inspiration in the example of Chorzów (Fig. 6). Such serious changes raise doubts among heraldry specialists (Widłak 2020).

Augustów logo	Justification and description
	According to the relevant city documents (Resolution XXII / 202/16 of the City Council of Augustów), the coat of arms refers to tradition and the decorative element is to indicate modernity. The colours used in the logo symbolize the richness of nature and the multitude of tourist attractions in the city.
Miechów logo	
	In the case of the Miechów commune, an additional decorative element is the 'tab' against which the name of the town appears. The logo is available in two versions, the first identifying the community and the second identifying the town hall.
Sulęciński County Logo	
	The official interpretation of the Visual Identification System indicates a combination of tradition (coat of arms) and natural attractions.

Fig. 2 Coat of arms + wordmark + additional decorative element. *Source* Own elaboration based on the websites of territorial units

Gdańsk – coat of arms, decorative element, and a slogan	Gdańsk – example of municipal institution identification
	

Fig. 3 Coat of arms + wordmark + additional decorative element in the main logo and simplified coat of arms in the logos of municipal companies. *Source* Own elaboration based on the websites of territorial units

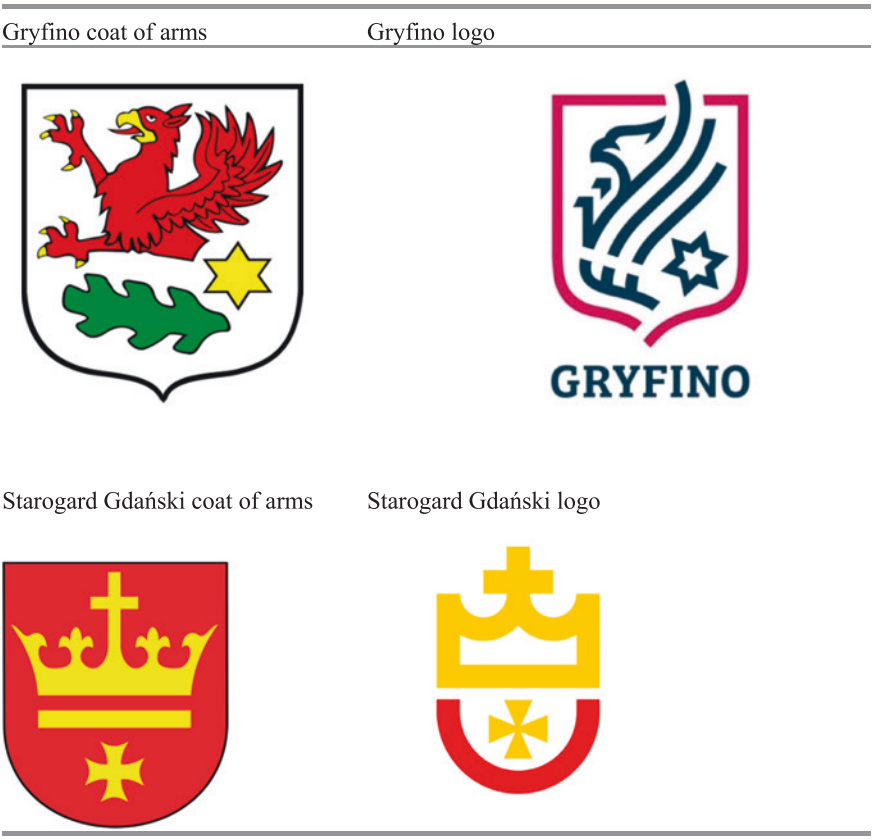

Fig. 4 Simplified coat of arms. *Source* Own elaboration based on the websites of territorial units

Fig. 5 Modified coats of arms as a component of a complex, multi-element logo. *Source* Own elaboration based on the websites of territorial units

Shields are the last group of heraldic inspirations in the logos of Polish cities and towns. Inspiration is understandable because coats of arms are always presented on a shield and signifies power. It seems that similar reasoning is behind logos using a form of a heraldic shield, the form itself being sufficient to indicate

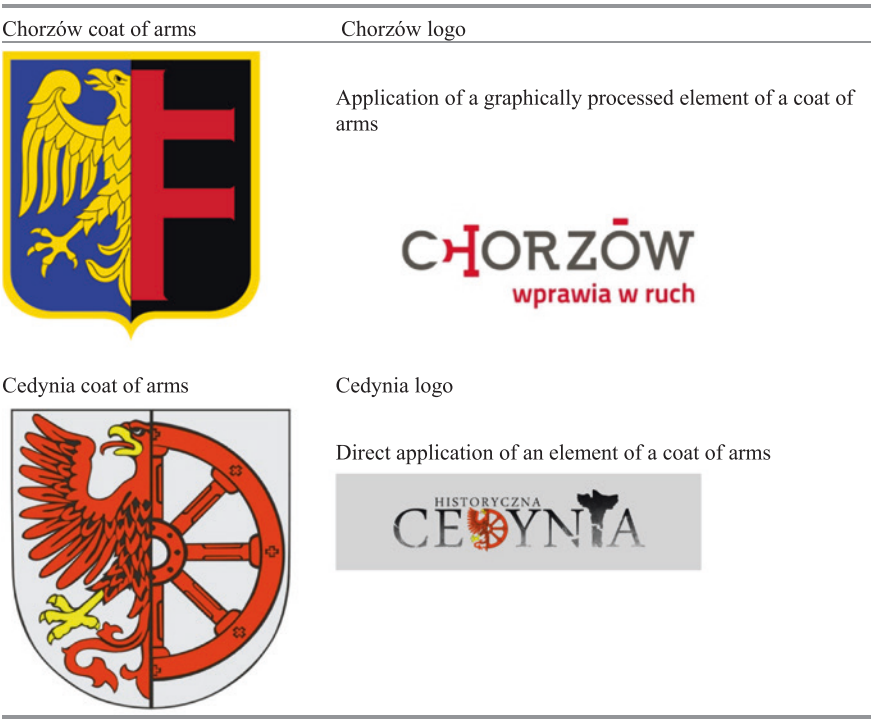

Fig. 6 Application of coat of arms elements. *Source* Own elaboration based on the websites of territorial units

that it is about territorial power. The logo referring to the shield also comes in two forms, one is simply a shield, and the signs on it have nothing to do with the coat of arms. Examples include the cities of Łomża, Maków Mazowiecki, and Turek. However, there are situations when there are closer references to the coat of arms—in the case of Gołdap, the logo shield is bipartite, identical to the shield of the coat of arms (Fig. 7).

It should be added that there are certainly more references to coats of arms in LGU logos. There are signs that refer only to the colours used in the coats of arms (e.g., Radomsko, Tarnowskie Góry, and Zabrze). The authors decided not to conduct an analysis of color because one of the heraldry tinctures almost always appears in the logo, which could lead to arbitrary interpretations.

There are also logos where one may only learn about heraldic inspirations from the description and justification. It should not be forgotten that some LGUs use, in promotional activities, a combination of a coat of arms and a slogan (e.g., Bochnia—"City of Salt" or "Bolesławiec powiat of six communes—one heart"). However, in the places mentioned, the form of the slogan is not standardised, which makes visual analysis impossible. There are also solutions that can be called 'logo like a coat of arms' (e.g., Górowski powiat), i.e., where the coat of arms

Logo of Turek	Logo of Gołdap

Fig. 7 Heraldic shape. *Source* Own elaboration based on the websites of territorial units

was not accepted by the Heraldic Commission, although such a sign resembles a coat of arms. This coat of arms functions as a logo, which does not require formal approval.

6 Conclusions

According to the examination, it should be emphasised that in place branding practice a coat of arms is considered as a place brand identity element. The study has shown, at least in the case of Poland, that the coat of arms fulfils the functions of a logo and can act as a logo in marketing communication directly or after some graphic modification. The study also confirms that a coat of arms can be either a component of a complex logo or a source of inspiration for creating a visual sign in place branding practice. As indicated by qualitative analysis based on interviews, the number of place logos referring to coats of arms is a growing trend. In only the first half of 2021 14 such signs have been introduced. Observation has shown that coats of arms in Poland are not a heritage or a memory of medieval tradition, but lively, up-to-date and useful graphic solutions suitable for creating a modern identity of a territorial brand.

As Foss writes (Foss, 2018: 4), a symbol is something that stands for or represents something else by virtue of relationship, association, or convention […] A symbol, in contrast, is a human construction connected only indirectly to its referent. This means that the coat of arms can play the same role as the logo.

The authors acknowledge for the thesis that the coat of arms, as a visible symbol of the brand place identity, can be used directly in territorial branding and marketing. Heraldic solutions have five attributes, which make this practice promising and effective due to the following:

1. Coat of arms is an **a**lternative in relation to so-called 'modern' solutions – this is important because places have a much longer history than commercial brands (Mollerup 2013: 268).
2. The coat of arms is **a**biding, stable, and unchanging, unlike fashionable and perishable logos.
3. The coat of arms is **a**pplicable i.e., in online communication.
4. Coat of arms is **a**ffordable, there is no need to engage costly branding companies – this is important, especially for the small communes.
5. The coat of arms is **a**cceptable, i.e., various stakeholder groups acknowledge it.

In summary, a 5A model of the practicality of coat of arms in place branding is proposed: alternative, abiding, applicable, affordable, and acceptable. However, the most important thing is that the coat arms, originally used on the battlefields, had to, from the very beginning, clearly identify and distinguish their owner from the others. And until today, this is the most important task of brand identity.

The historical and non-heraldic functions of coats of arms are described in various ways in the literature (Strzyżewski, 2016; Skupieński, 2017). However, it can be argued that its primary function is the identification of the owner and the differentiation of a place from other places. The descriptive function of the coat of arms can be discussed, which is postulated in the literature (Mollerup, 2013). It seems that the coat of arms does not describe the place and cannot define the contemporary roles of the place. The research carried out indicates that in practice this problem is solved by enriching the identification of the place with place names, slogans, and additional graphic motifs. However, this is a field for additional analyses, especially semiotic ones.

It should also be mentioned that, as the literature on the subject postulates, one should look at the place as a whole (Anholt, 2007: 12; Beyrow & Vogt, 2015; Löw, 2016). Considering the concept of *genius loci* (Norberg-Schulz, 1979; Skinner, 2011) or, as Martina Löw writes, "intrinsic logic of the city" (Löw, 2016), it can be stated that basically every place performs three functions simultaneously: (1) as management that is the most important for residents, (2) as a location to attract business, and (3) as a destination to attract visitors (Beyrow & Vogt, 2015: 9–10). However, these functions mean that their recipients have different expectations. So, the question arises: How can a visual sign express the identity of a place as a whole and, at the same time, direct these different offers to different recipients? If we treat the city (and not the companies, institutions, or organizations operating in it) that performs various functions, the research suggests that a coat of arms could meet the expectations of all target groups. This, in turn, is a field of pragmatic analysis.

As Polish heraldry specialists write, the main function of a coat of arms is to identify with history, heritage, and a sense of place. When an arm or elements of it are used in the place logo, one may stress that such an identification has three functions (Weichhart et al., 2006):

1. The identification of a logo with elements of the coat of arms recognizes the past of the place and stresses its heritage.

2. Being identified as: the logo with elements of the coat of arms identifies the place as having a specific history and heritage.
3. The identification with a logo discloses the identification of people with the place.

Place marketing and place branding combine practice and theory. The place branding follows consequences when analysing relationships between logos and coats of arms. In practice, coats of arms are present in public space, although one may stress that there is no norm which regulates in detail when and where they should be applied. Generally, it is worth highlighting that a coat of arms is used in the official LGU communication. Therefore, this fact should be considered in place branding analyses, primarily in research on the reception of messages sent from local authorities to stakeholders. Second, practice and theory distinguish between formal communication and promotion, raising some theoretical questions.

- Is the marketing communication of places so divergent that it requires more than one symbol? The authors' provisional answer is no.
- Does official communication (using the coat of arms, flag, seal) influence the shaping of marketing communication? The provisional answer of the authors is yes.
- Do two communications (official and promotional) carried out simultaneously affect reception? The provisional answer of the authors is probably yes, but it needs further research.

And finally, do those two frequently simultaneous communications affect the image of places? So far, the theory of territorial branding has not given a clear answer; however, considering some of the examples mentioned above, let us make the hypothesis that such an impact occurs.

Research on the multisensory perception of brands carried out within territorial marketing is based on the achievements of mainstream marketing. Therefore, considerations of the multisensorial impact of brands are justified (Schmitt and Simonson, 1997; Lindstrom, 2005; Rodrigues, 2019). Adams and Guy suggest taking advantage of five senses strategically to build a city brand (2007). However, in the world of digital communication, the most important sense that a brand can influence is sight and, to a much lesser extent, the sense of hearing. Therefore, our considerations remain valid.

Finally, the authors raise one more issue: the durability and stability of brands. Cities are permanent, and it is not surprising (at least in Europe) that they are several hundred years old. Coats of arms show similar durability, even 50 years of socialism in Poland did not break the heraldic tradition. However, logos are changeable, subject to fashion and election cycles (Adamus-Matuszyńska & Dzik, 2017c). The authors are familiar with examples of changing the logo by an arbitrary decision of, for example, the mayor. In summary, logos tend to be influenced by fashion, which means that after some time they may go out of fashion [Mollerup, 2013], which in the context of the permanence of the place seems problematic.

In summary, when exploring Polish logos and coats of arms, one may have the impression that there is a double visual identity of local government units. However, there are relatively few similarities between these marks in local government

practice. They are used by local authorities in a variety of ways; sometimes the coat of arms is well known, the logo is unknown, and sometimes the perception is opposite. Since 15% of LGUs use a logo similar to a coat of arms, a trend can be suggested, but it cannot be indicated that this is a common phenomenon. Some units have double identification because each of them has different purposes to fulfil.

The thesis on the double visual identity of Polish LGUs expressed in the title of the article is associated with previous research on the visual identity of brands in Polish local governments. In 2017, it was noted that there are logo-coat-of-arms relationships. However, in promotional practice they are complicated and ambiguous as well as going beyond a simple division: a coat of arms as a symbol of official communication and a logo as a symbol of marketing communication (Adamus-Matuszyńska & Dzik, 2017b: 325–327).

In strategic documents devoted to visual identification systems and in media statements carried out by officials and designers, the separation of the coat of arms and the logo was visible. They are intended to perform different functions. The logo and coat of arms must be a physical sign (Belting, 2011b:62) presented in various physical and virtual spaces. Their task is to indicate various areas of activity of local government authorities.

However, studies have shown that this mode of action has begun to be questioned. Research indicates that a trend is now emerging to incorporate local government heraldry into marketing communications. Nevertheless, the question should be asked: Is this trend Polish in nature or is it present in other countries with heraldic traditions?

Answers to such a question require further research, but at least two hypotheses can be formulated.

H1. The coat of arms is a feudal invention, so using the coat of arms in place branding by LGUs is a form of refeudalisation of urban space (Trubina, 2006).

H2. Return to *heraldic viva* indicates the broader sociocultural context of the issue discussed in this article (Khlebnikova, 2013; Vizgalov, 2011).

These hypotheses result not only from the research presented, but also from discussions in the Russian literature on the subject, where the difficulties in integrating heraldry and modern forms of visual communication are emphasized. As Rodkin writes: *Heraldry has become an extremely inflexible tool and communication product that is difficult to integrate into the modern communication process in its original form* (Rodkin, 2017: 287). As J.W.T. Mitchell stresses that *images had the power to influence human beings* (Mitchell 2005:7). But the question remains: How will the incorporation of heraldry into modern branding affect the behaviour of tourists, businesses, and residents? The questions remain unanswered for now.

The use of coats of arms as a carrier of the identity of a territorial brand is associated with several problems presented in Table 3.

In summary, the use of a coat of arms as a logo requires steps that bring it closer to the sensitivity and competency of a contemporary mass viewer. Such activities can be carried out in several ways such as (1) educating the recipients, (2) simplifying the coat of arms and modifying it, to make it closer to logo (due to the special features of national heraldry discussed above, Polish coats of arms are

Table 3 Coat of arms and logo in the place brand communication

Coat of arms	Logo
1. Heraldry is characterized by semantic redundancy, coats of arms are complex, multi-element, and in the image itself, they carry many meanings	1. Contemporary brand identification is a simplified message that basically uses only one semantic element (logos aim at simplification and schematization; they carry one sense / meaning)
2. Recognizing a symbolic element (for example: a city coat of arms) is not equivalent to understanding its content	2. Recognition of the logo should lead to understanding of the content; a logo that is unclear to the recipient means a mistake in the process of designing the brand identity
3. A place brand should denote and connote the identity of the place. Heraldic connotations are difficult to interpret for an unprepared recipient	3. A well-designed brand identity should convey an easily interpretable connotation (brand promise)
4. Heraldry was and is a closed system, elitist and intended for the qualified viewer in its perception	4. The logo is a kind of mass, open language; it should be easily and universally understood
5. Heraldry is a graphical system that is difficult to integrate with modern mass communication, especially in mobile media	5. The logo is currently designed especially for mobile media; that is why identification should be easy to adapt to favicons, application tiles, and other uses
6. A coat of arms as a kind of abstract drawing should be distinguished from a shield physically present in public space because it plays the role of power per procura and visually supports the declaration speech act	6. The logo has two key functions: to identify (the sender) and distinguish (it from others)

Source Adaptation based on Belting (2011b: 62–81), Mollerup (2013, 59), Rodkin (2017: 286–287)

easily subject to such manipulations), (3) the use of single figures (for example, lions whether birds of prey were a popular motif in heraldry and are still popular in visual identifications as is suggested by Mollerup), and finally, (4) free references to the coat of arms, which is an inspiration for a modern logo. All these options are practiced by local governments not only in Poland, for example, but the new city brand identity of Berlin also refers to the coat of arms figure (bear) (Vorbinger, 2020). It is not clear today whether any of these trends will be permanent and will gain international significance. However, it seems that referring to the heraldic tradition may be an interesting option for graphic designers of the identity of place brands.

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Marketing as a Management Tool of Biosphere Reserves to Achieve Agenda 2030 Goals

Katarína Vitálišová, Anna Vaňová, and Darina Rojíková

Abstract The aim of this paper is to identify the role of marketing places in the sustainable development of biosphere reserves and demonstrate it in the examples of Slovak biosphere reserves. The main sources of data are the international and national documents related to biosphere reserves, as well as interviews with managers of four biosphere reserves in the Slovak Republic—Slovak Karst, Poľana, Eastern Carpathians, and Tatras—and a chairwoman of the Slovak Committee for the biosphere, with the aim to identify the main problems of biosphere reserves development and their potential solutions. This paper proposes possible measures on how to develop marketing activities to eliminate the weaknesses of biosphere reserves management and thus raise the value of biosphere reserves.

Keyword Marketing · Marketing mix · Biosphere reserves · Strategical development · Agenda 2030

1 Introduction

Recent development in the world is characterized by significant, often turbulent, and unpredictable changes that pose numerous challenges for society. The sustainable development of the world economy is getting increasingly vulnerable and exposed to new challenges related to the processes of globalization. The technological revolution that transforms society is demonstrating itself in all the different spheres of life and often has a radical impact. But the key decisive factor lies in a long-term

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perception of management of limited natural resources, with the search for less energy-intensive production processes. The organization of the world is becoming more fragile, unpredictable, and closely linked to the interdependence of countries.

To eliminate the negative impacts of the above-outlined trends in countries, as well as to highlight how to achieve a sustainable future for all generations, the United Nations adopted the document titled 'Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development' (further referred as 'Agenda 2030') in 2015. This document contains perhaps the most comprehensive selection of global priorities selected to foster the concept of sustainable development. The aim of Agenda 2030 is to guide the structural political, economic, and social transformation of individual countries of the world in response to the threats currently faced by the human. The Agenda 2030 integrates all three dimensions of the sustainable development concept: economic, social, and environmental.

An important contribution to the achievement of the Agenda 2030 objectives in the environmental protection and sustainable use of biodiversity is realized by UNESCO. In particular, this organization holds a multidisciplinary mandate including education and public awareness of biodiversity and sustainable development. UNESCO highlights the links between cultural diversity, biodiversity, social aspects, and ethical issues.

In the paper, we focus especially on the role of biosphere reserves as a part of UNESCO heritage. Biosphere reserves are internationally recognized as model areas for the practical application of interdisciplinary knowledge to understand and maintain the relationship between man and nature and to coordinate change, including conflict prevention and biodiversity protection. Biosphere reserves are areas of international importance declared by the main body of the UNESCO Program Man and Biosphere—International Coordinating Council MAB (ICC MAB) (§ 28b paragraph 1 of Act No. 543/2002 on nature and landscape protection as amended).

In biosphere reserves, the sustainable management supports actively critical transformations, which contribute to the broader goals of natural resource management (Bridgewater, 2016; Olson et al., 2007; Reed, 2016) and to the achievement of the Sustainable Development goals in various ways (Stoll-Kleemann & O'Riordan, 2018; Pool-Stanvliet & Coetzer, 2020). They contribute significantly to the fifteenth goal of the Agenda "Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss", which is closely linked to all the other Agenda 2030 objectives. Maintaining resilient ecosystems and their services (e.g. the availability of drinking water, food, soil fertility, climate regulation, aesthetic values, etc.) and protecting our planet's biodiversity is the basis of the fight against poverty and the fight for human health and welfare. Biodiversity, as such, supports the achievement of most of the sustainable development goals, and the loss of biodiversity poses a threat to both security and peace (UN, 2015; UNESCO, 2021).

The aim of the paper is to identify the role of marketing places in the sustainable development of the biosphere reserves and demonstrate it on the examples of Slovak biosphere reserves.

The paper is organized as follows. In the first part, we define theoretically the functions of the biosphere reserves in sustainable development and the role of marketing places as a managerial tool in hands of biosphere reserves management. Then we characterize the used material and methods. In the analytical part of the paper, we present the characterization of the biosphere reserves of the Slovak Republic from the marketing point of view. To sum up the findings, we identify the potential solutions to develop marketing activities and thus raise the value and awareness of biosphere reserves.

2 Theoretical Framework

2.1 Biosphere Reserves as an Object of Marketing Places

Biosphere reserves were established in the 1970s under the UNESCO Man and Biosphere Program (MAB). The development of the international environmental agenda resulted in the second international congress on biosphere reserves in Seville, Spain, in 1995, where the Seville Strategy was formulated, including the Seville Vision for the twenty-first century. The key activities for implementing the biosphere concept and the Statutory Framework of the World Biosphere Reserves Network were defined. Biosphere reserves are the areas where the land management approach that harmonizes human-nature relations is implemented. They include countries of different characters defined geographically (Batisse, 1985; UNESCO, 1996; Bridgewater, 2002). These are representative territories with their role and mission beneficial to both nature and man. They serve as an example of sustainable living, acceptable balance, and the human relationship with the natural environment. They play an important role not only for the local population but also for the whole society. The global network of biosphere reserves currently consists of 727 territories in 131 countries. Of the total number, 22 biosphere reserves are cross-border. The number of biosphere reserves varies based on the ICC MAB decision (UNESCO, 2021).

Biosphere reserves are envisioned as local initiatives where stakeholders engage in self-management of natural resources in line with the common-pool resource theory (Ostrom, 1990) and in sustainable manner (Baird et al., 2018). They aim to achieve biodiversity conservation while still permitting human activities via integrated management of natural resources (Donevska, 2021).

Each biosphere reserve has three functions, namely: (a) protection—with an emphasis on protection at all levels, including the protection of landscapes, ecosystems, species, and genetic diversity; (b) development—is aimed at ensuring the economic and human development of the territory, which is socio-culturally and ecologically sustainable; (c) logistical support, including support for demonstration projects, environmental education and training, research and monitoring in relation to local, national, regional, and global issues of protection and sustainable development (Vološčuk, 1998; Donevska, 2021).

Under the Framework Statutes, each biosphere reserve should consist of three zones. The first zone, so-called nuclear zone, is the most protected and most valuable part of the territory in terms of natural values, with the preference to preserve biodiversity and monitor little disturbed ecosystems. This zone also contributes to maintaining ecosystem services—carbon capture, soil stabilization, or drinking water supply. In parallel to protection, certain human activities, such as environmental education, research, environmental protection, and rehabilitation, as well as recreational and eco-tourism activities, can be developed within this zone. The second zone, so-called buffer zone, surrounds the nuclear zone and can be used for environmentally compatible activities. This zone also reduces the impact of human activities on the nuclear zone and is essential to preserving biodiversity and cultural diversity. It promotes a biological link that acts as a natural corridor between the nuclear zone and the transition zone. The third zone, so-called transition zone, is a basis for the management and sustainable development of natural resources. A much wider range of economic activities that benefit the socio-economic development of the local population can take place in this zone. However, these activities must respect the specific objectives of each biosphere reserve (Fabriciusová & Slávik, 2010).

The precondition to developing sustainable all three types of zones in biosphere reserves is an application of a strategic and integrated approach, which according to Berman, West (1998) includes the systematic planning of the way of organization of changes and the creation of a society-wide consensus and a common vision for a better future and development of the place.

Strategic planning is the process of creating and maintaining a strategic balance between the goals and opportunities of the territory about changing market opportunities and societal needs (Kita, 2002; Vaňová, 2006). It is a systemic and integrated approach to territorial development that provides an opportunity to increase efficiency and strengthen the links that should work together to achieve synergies, stimulate territorial coordination and thus improve governance through stakeholder participation in defining and implementing development public policy (Dente, 2014). In the real conditions of the territory, these are specific planning documents that address the development of various areas of life in the territory.

The integrated conservation and development approach aim to overcoming the competing interests between development and nature protection (Fischer et al., 2015). This combined approach should identify the extent of natural resources and services that can be used without degrading the ecosystems or reflecting its ability to self-regenerate. To the most recent approaches how to manage the spatial development in integrated way belong marketing places (Vaňová, 1996).

According to Kotler (2002) and Holcomb (1994), places marketing means designing a place in such a way that the needs of the target segments are satisfied, and the territory is more desirable.

Places marketing is a continuous social process that provides the possibility to influence on the sustainable development of the territory more effectively by building a sustainable competitive advantage, creating conformity between demand and supply of the territory at the market by using specific marketing methods and tools. The process aims to minimize the risks of the territory associated with its

entering the market and maximize its social benefit in accepting its social role (Vaňová, 2006; Vaňová et al., 2017). Marketing places focuses on demand (because the needs and expectation of customer should affect directly the use of the build-up place); building the specific competitive advantage of a territory (an offer of territory creates the added value for the target customer); introducing new methods, tools, and management approach; creating conditions for the collective definition of objectives and direct participation of key entities (citizens, entrepreneurs, offices of public administration, nonprofit organizations, etc.) operating in the territory or relation to the territory. Without direct involvement and participation of these subjects, it is not possible to talk about the marketing approach (Vaňová et al., 2010). We assume that because the fact that the marketing places is an innovative approach to the spatial development based on the strong participation of relevant stakeholders and focused on achieving the win–win strategies, it can contribute also to find some compromises solutions between the integrated conservation and development (Donevska, 2021).

2.2 Toolkit of Marketing Places

In order to achieve the set objectives of the place and promote the place in the target markets, the places marketing uses a set of controllable and interconnected marketing tools, which are referred to as the marketing places mix. Due to the specifics of the territory, the marketing places mix differs from the classic marketing mix consisting of the tools: product, price, distribution, and marketing communication (Vaňová et al. 2017). Booms and Bitner (1980) added to the marketing mix tools—participants, physical evidence, and process (original 4 Ps to apply in the marketing mix concept of service); Judd (1987), Vaňová (1996) adds people; Kotler (1986) adds political power and public opinion; MaGrath (1986) adds personnel, physical facilities and process management; Vignalis and Davis (1994) adds services. Based on our previous researches (Vaňová et al., 2017) we identify the marketing places mix as product, price, accessibility, marketing communication, people, and participation. This definition fits to the needs of biosphere reserves because of the great impact on stakeholders' participation in the territorial development.

In marketing places, the product is everything what the place offers on the place market to its customers with aim to satisfy their needs (Vaňová et al., 2017; Hanuláková, 2004; Kotler & Armstrong, 2004). The product is a place. It could appear as a finished product offered in the market. On the other hand, it is also a variable product that consists of partial products and that is gradually changing over time and space. The partial place products can be in a form of tangible and intangible goods representing the natural, cultural, socio-economic, and innovative potential of the place (buildings, technical infrastructure, services, events, attractions, natural, cultural, historical monuments, institutions, work, educational, investment opportunities, etc.) (Vaňová et al., 2017). When we apply this definition of product to the issue of biosphere reserves, the biosphere reserve with all natural, cultural, socio-economic, and innovative potential can be understood as a product

of marketing places. The limitation is that all this potential can be exploited only in line with the restrictions defined by the type of zone and by that way it contributes fulfilling the main functions of the biosphere reserves (protection, development, and logistical support). In the case of biosphere reserves, not only physical aspects of the places are important, but also the unique value of nature, which is confirmed by UNESCO. UNESCO (2022a) highlights especially the outstanding biodiversity, ecosystems, geology, and superb natural phenomena. This unique value can be a core of competitive advantage building in the biosphere reserves (Borseková et al., 2017).

Price as a tool of marketing mix is a relative value of the place attribute(s). By other words, it is represented by the prices of partial products (prices of real estate, rents, services, labour force, financial instruments within the competence of place management) determined by the place potential, the place brand, demand for the place and its partial products, competition, quality, legislation, and other internal and external factors (Vaňová et al., 2017). Price reflects the quality of the place as a unit; sub-products of the place; its location; its functions; the conditions in the place; image, attractiveness and the importance of the place, etc. The price in biosphere reserves can be reflected in entrance fee to the strictly protected zones, fees for parking, etc. or can be used as a financial incentive like subsides, grants to motivate human behaviour (e.g. to maintain the traditions and cultural values) or eliminate the undesirable behaviour (e.g. the industrial activity which affects negatively the environment).

Communication as a process from finding needs and wishes through marketing research to sale of product and after sale communication covers plenty of activities with the aim to persuade the customer to buy the product, or in our case to visit a place, to inform the public about the territory, to awake interest or to engage stakeholders in development activities (Lee, 2022). In case of biosphere reserves, the managers should understand people's perceptions while promoting habitat conservation. The strategic communication that's why should be oriented also on the internal audience, to engage and involve them in discussions, decision making as well as enhance local and social capacity within the community (Harwell et al., 2020).

For this purpose, it is inevitable to prepare a comprehensive promotion strategy. It includes the activities of traditional communication tools as well as innovative ones. Unlike traditional forms of marketing communication, innovative forms of marketing communication make possible to reach target segments massively and at the same time individually; to maintain the interest of target segments; to convey individually tailored information and obtain feedback. Even though marketing communication, like other tools of the marketing places is very important for the territorial development, it is often underestimated by the place management and without particular attention.

Accessibility, as a precondition for the further social and economic development of the area, can be understood as: "position and geographic location of the place, accessibility from and to other places, orientation marking in the place, character of transport connection (roads, railway, air, and water transport), number, speed, and quality of transport infrastructure in terms of time and distance, activities contributing to a commercial character of the product of place, the so-called organization of direct

and intermediated "sale" of the place as a total product and sub-products to potential buyers" (Vaňová et al., 2017, p. 30). In the case of biosphere reserves, attention should be paid to supporting environmentally friendly technological transport means, including electromobility. The important aspect is also a construction and maintenance of hiking trails with the aim to preserve the natural heritage.

The key tools that should integrate all other tools of marketing places are tools—people and partnership. The people are an important and unthinkable element of place. It is represented by the skilled managers of biosphere reserves as well as by other actors of the territory that contribute to its development. In the territory, a key role has whether as a subject activating and implementing changes in the territory or as an object, which is close-knit with the character of territory as a product, with activities related to territory development and by marketing approach with orientation on the customer as well. The fact, if the territory will prosper and develop or not, is depending on the people, who live, work, do business, shop, relaxing in the territory, and on people, who manage the territory, on their ability to use all existing resources of territory and to create supply, which will be interesting for the market. In biosphere reserves, the role of manager is very important. It should be not only an expert in natural resources, but also the "mediator" among the stakeholders in the territory in negotiations of their various interests in context of natural conservation and development (Kirkpatrick & Kiernan, 2006; Bernbaum, 2019; Donevska, 2021). Managerial decisions should be based on sound science and knowledge, including local traditional knowledge. The management interventions should be consistent with the strategic plan and conservation objectives. They should reflect knowledge of the distribution of the area's key environmental assets and monitored to assess their impact on biodiversity and other protected area objectives (Kirkpatrick & Kiernan, 2006).

The tool people influenced strongly also the partnerships of stakeholders within the territory and their willingness to be engaged in satisfying the needs of customers of the territory as well as in the development of the territory. The research studies (Seixas & Davy, 2008; Donevska, 2021) confirm as a basic principle of biosphere reserve the participatory decision-making process of relevant stakeholders that affect the achievement of integrated conservation and development.

Considering the fact that the place is a combination of unrepeatable features and qualities, it can be stated that each place has a comparable chance to attract its group of customers and investors. It only requires using the right methods and tools, which can be offered by marketing in hands of place management (Vaňová et al., 2017).

3 Material and Methodology

The aim of the paper is to identify the role of marketing places in the sustainable development of the biosphere reserves and demonstrate it on the examples of Slovak biosphere reserves.

In the paper, we define firstly the functions of the biosphere reserve, their role in the strategical development in the context of marketing places based on the literature review of domestic and foreign scientific and professional sources. Subsequently, we analyse the current state of art in biosphere reserves of the Slovak Republic regarding the tools of marketing places and based on synthesis and generalization we identify the problem areas for their further development.

The main source of data is the international and national documents related to biosphere reserves. The review of this material was followed by the detail interviews with the managers of four biosphere reserves in the Slovak Republic—Slovak Karst, Poľana, Eastern Carpathians, and Tatras and a chairwoman of the Slovak Committee for the biosphere to identify the main problems of biosphere reserves development and their potential solutions. In the last part of the paper, we propose possible measures how to develop marketing activities with the aim to eliminate the weaknesses of the biosphere reserves management and raise the value and awareness of biosphere reserves.

4 Research Results and Discussion

4.1 Slovak Biosphere Reserves and Marketing Places

The issue of biosphere reserves is gradually developed in the Slovak Republic from 1977 when the first biosphere reserve the Slovak Karst was announced by UNESCO. On 9th March 1993, the Slovak Committee for the Human and Biosphere Program was established as an advisory body to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic and responsible body for the implementation of the UNESCO MAB Program in the Slovak Republic. It is an organizational part of the Slovak Commission for UNESCO under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic.

From the marketing places point of view, the product is a whole territory of biosphere reserves as well as all the goods and services that the actors from the territory offer. In the Slovak Republic, the Slovak Karst (1977), Poľana (1990), Eastern Carpathians (1992), Tatras (1992) were recognized as biosphere reserves. The Tatras Biosphere Reserve and the Eastern Carpathians Biosphere Reserve are cross-border biosphere reserves. By § 28b paragraph 1 of Act no. 543/2002 Coll. on nature and landscape protection, as amended, biosphere reserves are areas of international importance. All four are simultaneously large protected areas (3 are national parks and 1 protected landscape area). Until 2014, the biosphere reserves in the conditions of Slovakia were not dealt with in any particular Slovak legislation. Although the amendment to the Nature and Landscape Protection Act, as amended by the Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic Act No. 543/2002 Coll., effective as of 1 January 2014, the situation has changed, and biosphere reserves have been given the status of internationally significant territories.

The Slovak Karst Biosphere Reserve is the largest karst-type karst area in Central Europe in south-eastern Slovakia, on the border with Hungary. It is an important area in terms of the occurrence of geological, geomorphological phenomena, and groundwater resources in terms of the occurrence of unique species of fauna and flora. The total area of the Slovak Karst Biosphere Reserve is 74,500 ha. The karst landscape is characterized not only by relief and subsoil but also by special hydrology. There are 1,300 known caves in the Slovak Karst, which since 1995, together with the caves of the neighboring Aggtelek Karst in Hungary, have been inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List under the name Caves of the Slovak and Aggtelek Karst. The diversity of the habitats of the Slovak Karst and the very diverse vegetation reflects its climatic and geological conditions and geomorphologically different karst phenomena. Its flora is one of the richest in Central Europe. Most of the forests are woody plants from repeatedly cut deciduous trees and forest plantations grown by foresters. Forestry with agriculture predominates on the plateaus. Population density is very uneven but generally low. Settlements and related economic activities are concentrated in river basins and river valleys. The region has an industrial-rural character and more people are employed in agriculture than in industry.

The Poľana Biosphere Reserve is the highest volcanic mountain range in Slovakia. The whole area is part of the Carpathian arch. Due to its extension to the south and an altitude range of almost 1000 m, thermophilic as well as mountain species of plants and animals occur in a relatively small area. The unique geological and geomorphological character of this area is the result of volcanic activity in the period 13–15 million years ago. Forests cover about 85% of the area. Poľana is characterized by large beech forests, fir beeches, and hilly forest communities. In the past, deforested areas, today they represent meadows and pastures with the occurrence of valuable vegetation of peat bogs and waterlogged meadows. Mountain and subalpine grass species are typical. Rock communities increase the overall biodiversity of the area. Horses and traditional agricultural tools are used in the area for agricultural purposes. The unique landscape structure is highlighted by traditional wooden houses, barns, potato cellars, painted wooden crosses, and other folk art. The current area of the Poľana Biosphere Reserve is 24,158.23 ha (2016) (Fabriciusová & Miňová, 2016).

The Eastern Carpathians Biosphere Reserve is located in the easternmost part of Slovakia at the crossroads of the political borders of three European countries—Poland, Slovakia, and Ukraine. It is the first tripartite biosphere reserve in the world, consisting of Polonny National Park (Slovakia), Bieschadsky National Park, Krajobrazowy Doliny Sanu Park, Ciśniańsko-Wetliński Park Krajobrazowy (Poland) and Užany National Nature Park, Nadsyansky Regional Landscape Park (Ukraine). The territory of the Slovak part of the BR overlaps with the territory of the Poloniny National Park. On 28 June 2007, the Carpathian Beech Forests located in the Slovak part of the BR were inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List as a cross-border serial nomination (Ukraine/Slovakia). This World Heritage site has been gradually expanded to include components in other European countries, with the last expansion taking place in 2021. It currently has the name Old Beech Forests and Beech Forests of the Carpathians and other regions of Europe. The total area of BR currently represents 40,689.92 ha. Preserved vegetation beech forests, mowed meadows, pastures, and

special mountain meadows "polonins meadows"—predetermine the natural diversity of biocenoses. Forest covers more than 90% of BR and more than half of BR forests are private. Forestry is the dominant economic activity, and it provides opportunities for low-skilled jobs.

The Tatras Biosphere Reserve is located in the northern part of the Slovak Republic. The territory of the biosphere reserve includes two national parks and their protection zones located on both sides of the Slovak-Polish border. The Slovak part consists of the Tatras National Park—Tatra National Park (TANAP) and the Polish side consists of the current Tatras National Park—Tatrzański Park Narodowy (TPN). The uniqueness and picturesqueness of the natural conditions of the biosphere reserve lie primarily in their alpine character. This is reflected in the significant differentiation of the country, which depends mainly on the orographic arrangement, size, extent, and height of the mountain range. The biosphere reserve consists of the Eastern Tatras, Western Tatras, Podtatranská kotlina, and Podtatranská brázda. After adjusting the borders as part of the periodic evaluation in 2017, the BR Tatras occupy an area of 101,819.05 ha. The diversity of the area is enhanced by the preserved features of traditional folk culture. The folk culture and folklore of this region have a lot in common, but they also differ significantly from the neighbouring regions in Poland and Slovakia. The traditional use of the biosphere reserve is agriculture and forestry, spas and sports, and recreational activities. Since the beginning of historical development, agriculture has been associated with cattle and sheep farming. Tourism began to emerge in 1871. The mountain landscape with tourist centers is a transition between cultivated and natural parts of the region, including many types of forests, with great biotic diversity.

All the biosphere reserves have plenty of natural and cultural uniqueness. They should be protected and maintained by the activities of all actors in the territory. However, in the case of the Slovak Republic due to the ignorance of the mission and the importance of biosphere reserves, the biosphere reserve is often perceived as another category of a protected area and the associated restrictions or bans. Biosphere reserves are not typical protected areas; they are model areas where the protection of natural values is supported by sustainable human land use. At the same time, such an approach should guarantee compensation from the state in practice for owners and users who preserve cultural traditions and natural values in these territories. This condition is not adequately reflected in the case of the Slovak Republic.

This aspect of biosphere reserves is a part of the price as a tool of marketing mix. It includes also other forms of pricing specific products in biosphere reserves. As was mentioned in the theoretical part, there can be also the entrance fees to biosphere reserves, in the Slovak Republic, they are not applied. To the price as well as to the communication belong also the regional brand of products. With the local producers in the biosphere reserves are connected to these regional brands—Podpoľanie, Gemer-Malohont, Karsticum.

The tools of human factor and partnership include the management of biosphere reserves as well as networking and partnerships with stakeholders within the territory. Currently, the management of biosphere reserves is coordinated by the State Nature Protection Authority of the Slovak Republic. But from 1. 4. 2022 there is established

a new organizational structure—3 biosphere reserves will be a part of national parks (Slovak Karst, Eastern Carpathians, Tatras). Poľana stays still under the umbrella of the State Nature Protection Authority of the Slovak Republic, specifically protected landscape area Poľana. In the case of the Slovak Republic, Poľana is an example of best practices in the management of biosphere reserves. As a key body of biosphere reserve is a coordination board where participate various stakeholders. It meets regularly and solves various problems in development of the biosphere reserve. We can understand it as a participative platform used to engage the stakeholders into the development of the territory. However, this platform is working only in the case of Poľana. The other three biosphere reserves are characterized by a lack of deeper cooperation and partnership. We presume that the situation is going to be changed by the reform of the national parks.

Another point of tool human factor is strategical management realized in biosphere reserves. Currently, there are no direct managerial activities oriented toward the biosphere reserves with exception of Poľana. The biosphere reserves do not have sufficient capacity to implement development activities strategically. The Slovak biosphere reservations lack the key development documents, action plans, promotion strategies, as well as methodological procedures for preparing such documents. Based on good practice from abroad, we can identify as a weakness also the missing guidelines in the field of management and functioning of biosphere reserves considering the specific conditions of the Slovak Republic.

This lack of a strategic approach to the development of biosphere reserves is closely linked to the lack of analyses of biosphere reserves, especially in terms of socio-economic, socio-demographic, and innovative potential. This problem is associated also with the lack of data at the lower level of territorial administration. The biosphere reserves cover usually a few districts as well as some parts of districts, and to gain some specific economic and social data are not available in the Slovak Republic.

Promotion as a marketing tool includes various activities realized by the Slovak Committee for the Human and Biosphere Program or management of individual biosphere reserves. But there is missing a common promotion strategy that should promote the uniqueness of the natural heritage and present its importance for sustainable development. Currently, the biosphere reserves are promoted by the common website (http://www.sopsr.sk/web/?cl=1600), videos, some leaflets, and events. But there is a lack of activities oriented at increasing awareness about biosphere reserves and their specifics through the educational activities on issues of biosphere reserves (e.g. workshops for children and students), videos with more educational purpose explaining the value of the UNESCO label.

Accessibility as a tool means localization of the biosphere reserves and transport with the forms of transport within the territory and out of the territory. The localization of the biosphere reserves is illustrated in Fig. 1.

Three biosphere reserves are localized close to the borders in the middle and east part of Slovakia. They are mountain areas, from this point of view, the important is also the infrastructure of hiking tracks and orientation signs in buffer zones. Their maintenance is in hands of national parks or protected landscape area Poľana. In

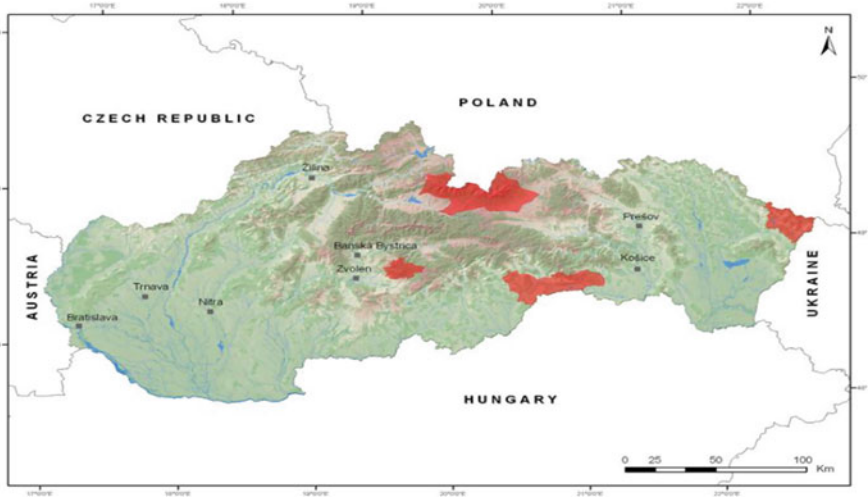

Fig. 1 Map of the Slovak biosphere reserves

transition zone of biosphere reserves, the focus should be given to environmentally friendly transport modes. Currently, there are various activities of local people and public authorities to construct bike paths, this ambition is also in line with the priority of the new programming period of the European Union, as well as the support of electromobility.

The summarization of the current situation in the Slovak biosphere reserves from the marketing places point of view presents Table 1.

4.2 Discussion

It is obvious that biosphere reserves, like other products (Schumpeter, 1989), go through different life cycles (Vaňová and Petríková 2012). Currently, it can be stated that they are returning to the growth phase. It is related to society's preferences in healthy lifestyle and environmental protection. From the strategic orientation point of view, it is necessary for biosphere reserves to focus on competitive development strategies based on innovations. The pillars of modern competitive marketing strategies are mainly versatile customer orientation, the enforcement and support of ethical, moral and environmental requirements of the society, and implementation of innovations. The goal is to promote sustainable development and ensure the growth of living standards through the creation of a sustainable competitive advantage. In this way, it is possible to gain advantages over the competition. The competitive advantage of the biosphere reserve is a character of territory (Borseková et al., 2011). Several positives result from that, but above all the proximity of a unique attractive environment, which, however, requires sensitive regulation of development and

Table 1 Strengths and weaknesses of the biosphere reserves from the marketing places point of view

Strengths	Weaknesses
PRODUCT Uniqueness of the natural heritage UNESCO label Diversity of the territory	PRODUCT
PRICE Label of regional products for local producers	PRICE Non-existence of pricing strategy or pricing modification used as a tool of marketing mix Weak compensation rules from the state for owners and users who preserve cultural traditions and natural values in these territories Non-existence of funding schema for biosphere reserves
HUMAN FACTOR and PARTNERSHIP Management of biosphere reserve in Poľana	HUMAN FACTOR and PARTNERSHIP Insufficient personal capacity Lack of strategical orientation in management of biosphere reserves Lack of participative initiatives except Poľana
PROMOTION Mix of partial promotion activities	PROMOTION Lack of educational activities to raise awareness about biosphere reserves and UNESCO label Non-strategical approach to communication caused by the lack of qualified human sources
ACCESSIBILITY Infrastructure of hiking tracks and orientation signs	ACCESSIBILITY New initiatives of local stakeholders to use environmentally friendly transport modes

environmental protection. It is important to look for ways to maintain and "sell" this competitive advantage. The priority segments that need to be targeted within this strategic focus are residents, entrepreneurs and visitors to the biosphere reserve. Another significant group is legislators and preservationists. For the management of the biosphere reserve, this approach means continuously and systematically to look for new potential benefits, to monitor constantly market development, to behave professionally, creatively, entrepreneurially, and to develop the offer based on these activities.

A sensitive approach to the development of the biosphere reserve requires financial resources. Directly to the biosphere reserves a part of the budget of the Slovak Committee for the Human and Biosphere Program is dedicated, but especially for the promo activities or study visits to foreign biosphere reserves. But the sum of funds is so small, that the real benefits are questionable.

Anyway, during last year, there is again a strong initiative from down (from the communities in biosphere reserves) to change the situation in biosphere reserves. The first step should be an open discussion with the relevant representatives at the national level (e.g. the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Affairs of the Slovak

Republic, Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic) about the strategical orientation of the biosphere reserves and their development. It should be supported by designing a suitable system of management as well as funds in a respective legal framework.

From the marketing point of view, management system should be based on the participation of citizens of the biosphere reserve and other stakeholders, or by other words on governance approach. It is necessary to look for possibilities and ways to activate people and motivate them to participate in all processes of biosphere reserve management. It is also important to innovate management processes. The emphasis must be placed on the education of the inhabitants of biosphere reserves, but also on business entities. In Slovenia, for example, educational programs aimed at preschool and school-age children have proven, that educate them in a fun way about behaviour in nature, environmental protection, fauna and flora, etc. The example how to improve the interaction of all marketing mix presents the cooperation of five biosphere reserves in northern Italy: the Po Delta, Appennino Tosco-Emiliano, the Ledro Alps and Judicaria, Sila and the Tuscan Islands. The partnership of these biosphere reserves is focused on the preservation of national nature as well as local culture, including gastronomic specialties (e. g. unique kinds of risotto) that rely on locally grown ingredients and are prepared by traditional way by local communities. To celebrate this unique ecological, social and cultural heritage, these five biosphere reserves created UPVIVIUM. This initiative awards producers, restaurant owners and food producers that keep traditional and sustainable practices alive, while offering some of the gastronomic delights for which Italy is renowned. UPVIVIUM also promotes products that are guaranteed 'Zero Km' (food produced, sold and eaten locally) and safeguards both bred and cultivated biodiversity (UNESCO, 2022b).

The second important tool is a product. Considering the strategy, it is necessary to pay attention mainly to product innovations. Innovations should be focused primarily on (a) environmental protection; (b) creating an offer of local production (local gastronomy, food, souvenirs, etc.), which could contribute to the development of business activities and the creation of new jobs; (c) preservation and use of cultural-historical heritage and natural potential in a sustainable manner. Among the new and recently applied approaches in the creation of an innovative offer is an involvement of customers in that process. The cooperation of customers and consumers in the creation of products contributes increasing their value for the customer (Lusch & Webster, 2011). It is implemented within the framework of community development, partnership, cooperation with residents, entrepreneurs or e.g. by visitors of the territory as a part of the creation of conditions for the offer packages from alternative offers. This approach is known in the literature as co-creation or co-production) (Voorberg et al., 2015).

The price of the territory should reflect its quality. In addition to the quality of the environment, the price of a biosphere reserve also includes, for example, the prices of services and products offered on the territory of biosphere reserve. Due to the quality and uniqueness of the environment, it is possible, with appropriate promotion, to offer products at a higher price. Another option is to build loyalty through VIP cards, which will provide visitors with benefits when visiting local

sights, attractions, accommodation and meals, or buying local products. On the other hand, VIP cards allow the involved business entities to present their offer to customers or create incentives for customer loyalty.

Another marketing tool is accessibility of biosphere reserves. Innovations should be focused primarily on alternative forms of transport. The solution is to build integrated routes (combination car/train/bus—cycle paths—tourist trails). Another option is using mobile applications for better orientation in the area, making movement in the area more attractive. Mobile apps help eliminate traffic jams, allow to get information about public transport connections, etc. They are also able to provide extensive information about the territory and events according to the needs of customers—from general facts to special professional questions and offers of the place. They often have other functionalities or are implemented in an entertaining form (e.g. as a game).

Best practice example how to develop a product as well as an accessibility, Austrian Biosphere reserve is a pioneer in the energy transition in a way that is largely free from conflict and will enable them to become model regions for the socially and ecologically sustainable production of renewable energy. It provides recommendations and guidelines on sustainable production of renewable energies, to support people involved in the administration of a biosphere reserve as well as lawmakers, in strict accordance with UNESCO's international criteria and Austrian relevant national guidelines. The guidelines include mainly the topics: reduction of energy consumption, space heating, sustainable mobility services (Austrian national committee Man and the Biosphere Programme, 2017).

The last tool is a marketing communication. Nowadays, both online and offline forms of communication are used in marketing communication, often in combination, when one form supports the other. It is necessary to focus on promotion, public relations, sale promotion, events, and brand building. A very important part of these tools are the channels of communication, especially communication via social media. The inspiring activity how to promote the territory of biosphere reservation and how to develop relations with inhabitants is a case of Intercontinental Biosphere Reserve of the Mediterranean. It published a book that uses oral narrative techniques that manage to capture attention and transmit, in a close and effective way, information and perceptions about the most representative places of the biosphere reserve, as well as the values of equality, solidarity, environmental awareness. It includes information on flora, fauna, cultural heritage, history, geography and natural values, making it an effective teaching tool through the children's active participation (Red Espanola de Reservas de la Biosfera, 2022). Another example is a citizen's college and volunteer program for local residents living near the biosphere reserve, which provides local residents with various educational programs such as the conservation of natural and cultural resources and the history of the Sorak region, in Korea (UNESCO, 2022b). In relation to the external public, we recommend paying more attention to the use of social networks, especially Facebook, Instagram and Tik Tok, because as our research (Rojíková et al., 2021) has shown, they have a chance to reach a large target group of potential visitors.

5 Conclusions

The development of the biosphere reserves as a part of Agenda is very current issue at international level, as well as in the Slovak Republic. However, both state officials and the general public are not aware of the need to preserve biodiversity in the territories and to support systematically this specific type of territory.

In the paper we present the brief analysis of the current state of art of marketing mix in Slovak biosphere reserves. In Slovakia, the issue of the biosphere reserve is underdeveloped. As a key problem for further development, we identify a lack of strategic orientation, insufficient personal capacity and the fact, that there does not exist any funding schema special oriented to the biosphere reserves. One of the potential solutions is an implementation of innovative managerial approaches, e.g. marketing places, supporting participative governance, promotion and education contributing also to increase of general awareness on importance of biosphere reserves and their role in sustainable development. It is reported by many successful examples of developed biosphere reserves all over the world.

Even the development in Slovak biosphere reserves fight with a lot of challenges, the initiatives from down be a first step to move the progress in desired way. But it is important to be open-minded as well as take inspiration from better ones.

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Value Co-Creation Activities Role in Patient Well-Being in Online Healthcare Communities

OHCs as The Fourth Sector of Health care

Kavian Faghihnasiri, Helena Maria Baptista Alves, and Ana Maria Soares

Abstract Healthcare service delivery has been rapidly changing over the last decades. The paradigm of passive patients and active healthcare professionals is increasingly being replaced by the active engagement of patients as primary beneficiaries of healthcare services. Moreover, public, private, and non-profit sectors of health care are converging via the emergence of the fourth sector, and some service providers are providing online forums to help fulfilling patients' unmet needs. These platforms are built to help the social inclusion of patients. On one hand, Online Healthcare Communities (OHC) are getting more popular as an engagement platform that helps patients to integrate resources with their peers and fulfill the needs that remain unmet during the interaction with their healthcare practitioners. On the other hand, scholars are getting more interested in investigating the relations between value co-creation activities and well-being (Transformative Service Research). OHCs are a value-dense environment to co-create value; moreover, they can be used to observe value co-creation activities without the researcher's interference. In this chapter, to achieve a better understanding of the subject, a PRISMA protocol was followed by conducting a systematic literature review, and 38 articles were identified. The thematic analysis revealed: benefits, drawbacks, antecedents, barriers, typologies, and main theoretical backgrounds. Moreover, two main concepts were extracted: Social Support and Transformative Service Research.

Keywords Transformative Service Research · Social Support · Value Co-Creation · Online Healthcare Community · Fourth Sector

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1 Introduction

In the healthcare context, the search for information and exchange experiences among patients has been shifting to the internet (Joiner & Lusch, 2016). According to the Pew Research Center,[1] 59% of American adults have experienced searching for online health information, and 35% of them have searched for medical resolutions through the internet for themselves or their relatives. Moreover, according to EUROSTAT,[2] one in two EU citizens look for health information online. This reality, linked to the intersection of online healthcare services and social media, led to the emergence of online healthcare communities (OHC), virtual platforms that allow members to interact and exchange health-related information (Kozinets, 2002; Peters et al., 2012). These communities provide a platform for patients and providers to share information and experiences, seek support, and socialize with peers (Zhang et al., 2018) and are seen as a significant evolution in healthcare delivery. Patients' OHCs such as PatientsLikeMe, HealthUnlocked, and ShiftMS have revolutionized chronic patients' lives by allowing sharing and getting support from other patients in the same pathology (Zhao et al., 2015). Moreover, these communities provide a platform for multiple stakeholders to understand the unmet needs of patients (Van Oerle et al., 2018). Finally, OHCs are a value-dense environment to co-create value, knowledge, and resources that can be applied to new service design, better health policies, and understanding of the underlying events of chronic patients' journey (Zhao et al., 2015).

Research focusing on patients' use of OHCs is increasing (Baptista et al., 2021; Bayen et al., 2021; Fayn et al., 2021; Frude et al., 2020; Gordon-Wilson, 2022; Loane & Webster, 2015; Stewart Loane & Webster, 2017), several studies look at the motivations, outcomes, roles, and even drawbacks of OHCs. However, despite the rapid development of OHCs and their contribution to healthcare delivery development, more research is needed to shed light on how these platforms allow patients to have a more active role: Are there any differences between value-creation practice styles and their effects on healthcare outcomes from one OHC to another or during the different levels of engagement, and the barriers to patient engagement in online communities?

Rosenbaum et al. (2022) highlighted ten research priorities for service researchers in the editorial of the Journal of Services Marketing, 2022. This editorial draws on current trends and recent service research to discuss the current state of the marketplace and to uncover areas in which research voids exist. One of the priorities is to study participating in virtual communities, networks, and worlds; the challenges posed by the pandemic mark the beginning of a new era in service research thought and practice as many previously held theories and understandings of consumers' marketplace behaviors have permanently changed due to behavioral changes that transpired during governmentally mandated lockdowns.

[1] "Health Online 2013". Pew Research Center, Washington, D.C. (2013) https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2013/01/15/health-online-2013/.

[2] "Eurostat, 2020". https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/edn-20210406-1.

Some gaps cited by other scholars motivated the research objectives and questions presented below, namely a call by Anderson et al. (2018) for more research to understand how marketers can help consumers move to a preferred healthcare future in transformative service research (TSR), and a call by Baptista et al (2021) to explore other actors and their socio-demographic characteristics (e.g., medical professionals, policymakers, and states) in the social support of OHCs.

This chapter aims to answer the following research questions:

What are the main theoretical approaches used to study OHC?
What are the main benefits and drawbacks of value co-creation on activities in OHCs throughout the different stages of a disease?
What are the antecedents/barriers of patient engagement in OHCs?
How can value cocreation activities in OHCs contribute to the patient's well-being?

The emergence of online healthcare communities and the background of the study will be discussed in the following sections. A systematic literature review will be presented leading to the proposal of a research framework. The results will be discussed as benefits, drawbacks, antecedents, barriers, typologies, and main theoretical backgrounds. Moreover, two main concepts were extracted: Social support and Transformative Service Research. Finally, the discussion of the results with an avenue for future research will be presented.

2 Background of the Study

2.1 Fourth Sector and Health Care

In most countries, three sectors private, public, and non-profit are the main component of the economy. Over the past few years, the boundaries between the public (government), private (business), and social (non-profit) sectors have been merging as many organizations have been applying social and environmental aims with business approaches. These organizations' purpose is to generate social impact by meeting society's challenges without neglecting their financial sustainability (Battilana & Lee, 2014; Hoffman et al., 2012). Lately, a fourth sector is emerging by combining market-based approaches with social and environmental causes to address society's problems. Businesses within the fourth sector are blended value organizations as they conduct social and environmental approaches at the same time that they use business methods. Contrary to most enterprises that are for-profit, this so-called nascent fourth sector is considered to be for-benefit. As the world faces greater challenges every day, Covid-19 pandemic as the most recent challenge, this emerging sector can take on a to contribute to mitigate the problems of people and the planet and is getting more attention from scholars and practitioners (Bhattacharjee & Jahanshah, 2020; Sánchez-Hernández et al., 2021). The current coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic is

also a new contextual factor demanding more public–private partnerships around the world (Evans & Olaniyi, 2020).

As mentioned by Sánchez-Hernández et al. (2021), traditional businesses are moving beyond corporate social responsibility and the fourth sector is rising in different forms in the new entrepreneurial landscape (Kumar, 2020). The fourth sector is described as a new sector of organizations at the intersection of the public, private, and social sectors. Hence, the fourth sector is a relatively new sector that consists of for-benefit organizations that combine market-based approaches of the private sector with the social and environmental aims of the public and non-profit sectors.[3] Companies in the fourth sector can be defined as the group of organizations, models, and practices whose objective is to solve the great problems of the twenty-first century, combining elements from the three traditional sectors: the public, the private, and the nongovernmental (Jiménez et al., 2011).

The above-mentioned cross-collaborations of the three sectors are also present in the healthcare sector. Pharmaceutical companies are an example of stakeholders engaging in these partnerships which go beyond corporate social responsibility. Pharmaceutical companies and NGOs are increasingly entering into partnerships to address health-related issues and raise awareness about various health conditions. These partnerships aim at better serving patients and in some cases pressing the policymaker to change policies (e.g., increase in co-payment of medication). Some Online Healthcare Communities are also funded by healthcare service providers, to help patients reduce the uncertainty of the treatments and social inclusion, most providers offer forums to patients to socialize and get support from their peers, in return the provider may use the information to better understand the unmet needs and use the knowledge co-creation to innovate new service deliveries. In the following section of this book chapter, Online Healthcare Communities, and the co-creation activities in the OHCs will be discussed.

2.2 Online Healthcare Communities

Online communities are virtual platforms that allow members to deliver referrals, share stories and information, complain about poor quality service, and validate purchases (Kozinets, 2002; Peters et al., 2012; Schau et al., 2009). Many of these communities share features of conventional communities, such as a shared sense of community, the presence of rituals, and a sense of community obligation (Brodie et al., 2013; Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001). Online communities can be managed by companies or individuals (Nambisan & Nambisan, 2009), and they may support either the development of online relationships or supplementary offline relations (Subrahmanyam et al., 2008).

[3] The Fourth Sector, (2020), https://www.fourthsector.org/what-is-the-fourth-sector.

Health services scholars recently identified patients as active members engaging personally in creating their healthcare networks, including their dyadic encounters, with private, public, and commercial resources (McColl-Kennedy et al., 2012; Sweeney et al., 2015). Within these networks, OHCs represent a parallel service system delivering value that the outdated healthcare system is not capable of (Keeling et al., 2015), they can play the role of a parallel channel with conventional health delivery methods for health information and support (Bugshan et al., 2014) as sources of personalized health guidance proficiently shared between patients (Stewart Loane et al., 2015). Zhao et al. (2015) claim chronic patients are more prone to participate in OHCs since they cannot heal in a short period. Hence, they are likely to maintain long-term relationships with their peers.

2.3 Co-Creation in Health and Transformative Service Research

Access to online health information allows patients to mitigate the information asymmetry resulting from their passive role. The view of patients as passive recipients has evolved to a more active role of a customer—healthcare customer, in which they can co-create value and integrate resources with the service provider. Value co-creation helps "consumers come together with suppliers, service providers or other consumers to generate benefits realized by the user in the consumption process". According to Joiner and Lusch's (2016) study, for a long time value in health care had a different meaning based on outdated goods-dominant (G-D) logic. Hence, they proposed a new lexicon to shift from the traditional G-D logic to the concept of Service-Dominant (S-D) logic. Joiner and Lusch (2016) proposed using "service offering and experiences" instead of "goods and services offering," "value proposition" instead of "price," and "value" instead of "quality." Lastly, they explained that moving to S-D logic in health care is vital for consumers and providers to co-create value.

Transformative service research is a relatively new research paradigm that focuses mainly on improving consumers' well-being by integrating service and consumer research. Transformative service research is primarily relevant in health care, where the provider and customer can contribute to individual and societal well-being. Sweeney et al. (2015) defined customer Effort in Value Cocreation Activities (EVCA) as "the degree of effort that customers employ to integrate resources, through a range of activities of varying levels of perceived difficulty" (Sweeney et al., 2015, p. 1). Moreover, they revealed that customers integrate resources to benefit from sources other than the focal firm. Resources may come from sources within the customer themselves (e.g., their own personal knowledge), friends, family, other customers, and other firms and the community. Finally, they highlighted the transformative potential of customer EVCA by expressing that individuals can engage in activities that have the potential to improve their quality of life. Parkinson et al. (2019) found

that consumers integrate a range of social support resources, from informational support to esteem support, which provides a range of benefits such as new ideas and self-efficacy that support the different types of values such as epistemic and personal value. The degree of co-created value differs across the consumption experience but culminates over time into transformative value; "transformative value" is a value that enhances consumers' well-being (Blocker & Barrios, 2015).

3 Systematic Literature Review Research Design

Thus far, there is no systematic literature review (SLR) mapping extant research in the area of value co-creation activities in OHCs to our best knowledge. Hence, to explore the role of online healthcare communities in value co-creation, a systematic literature review aiming at identifying, analyzing, and offering an overall view of extant research in value co-creation in OHCs was performed in Web of Science and Scopus databases. An SLR is "a specific methodology that locates existing studies, selects and evaluates contributions, analyses and synthesizes data, and reports the evidence in such a way that allows reasonably clear conclusions to be reached about what is known and what is not known" (Tranfield et al., 2003: 672).

The main scope of the bibliographic search was articles in the context of value co-creation activities and online healthcare communities. Aiming to identify and select the related papers, a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) was conducted using the following search terms: "Co-creation," "Cocreation" and "Health*" and "Online" (Table 1). We applied the Boolean "AND" operator, and since the term co-creation" is used interchangeably with "co-creation" and "cocreation,"; both combinations of keywords search were applied. We identified 171 papers. After removing the duplicates, 72 articles were retained for the topic and abstract screening (Fig. 1). Then inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied to identify relevant papers. Specifically, only papers written in English, focusing on co-creation in online communities and health-related themes, were retained. Articles with irrelevant topics, themes, and abstract and conference papers were excluded. The timeline of 2004 (introduction of S-D logic by Vargo and Lusch) to the 31st of December 2021 is reviewed. A total of 37 papers was retained to analysis.

A content analysis was performed to identify the main strands of research. Content analysis is an analysis used to determine the presence of certain words, themes, or concepts within some given qualitative data in systematic reviews.

In line with our research objectives, we applied the Boolean "AND" operator, and since the term co-creation" is used interchangeably with "co-creation" and "cocreation,"; both combinations of keywords search were applied. We identified 171 papers. After removing the duplicates, 72 articles were retained for the topic and abstract screening (Fig. 1). Then inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied to identify relevant papers. Specifically, only papers written in English, focusing on co-creation in online communities and health-related themes, were retained. Articles with irrelevant topics, themes, and abstract and conference papers were excluded.

Table 1 Research systematic literature review algorithm

#	Main activity	Explanation
1	Keywords (Topics and Abstract)	"Co-creation," "Cocreation" and "Health*" and "Online"
2	Context	Worldwide
3	Database selection	Web of Science and Scopus
4	Research Language	English
5	Scientific standard	Peer-reviewed journals
6	Time limits	2004 to 15th of December 2021

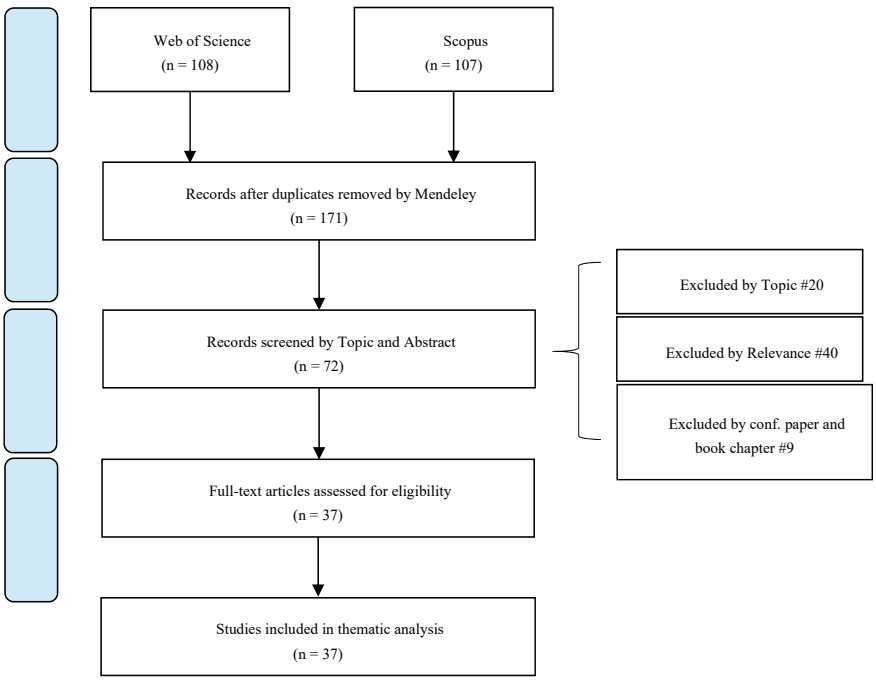

Fig. 1 PRISMA flowchart

The timeline of 2004 (introduction of S-D logic by Vargo and Lusch) to the 31st of December 2021 is reviewed.

Table 1 and Fig. 1 illustrate the keywords and PRISMA algorithm to investigate and select the related papers.

4 Results

We classified the content of 37 studies based on the theoretical background (main concepts involved) of the studies, and typology of papers, and we identified the following main themes: antecedents, barriers, and finally, benefits and drawbacks of Cocreation in OHC.

4.1 The Theoretical Background of Studies

In our analysis, two prominent approaches were identified in the context of value co-creation in OHCs: Social Support Theory and Transformative Service Research.

According to the investigation, 25 papers out of 37 were categorized under approaches of social support and transformative service research, while other papers used neither of the approaches. Among these 25 papers, 32% (8 papers) used "Transformative Service Research." In comparison, 44% (11 papers) used the "Social Support Theory" as their basis, and 24% (6 papers) used a combination of both theories as an approach for their analyses (Table 2).

5 Types of Value, Value Co-Creation Models, and Engagement Practices

Another research strand identified was the typology of value and practices. Results show the heterogeneity of value or value co-creation practice styles. Ten papers have focused on different types of value, including value co-creation models or different engagement practices, different types of consumer values, community configurations, and patient pathways.

According to the analysis, the type of value of five papers was "value cocreation model- engagement practices," two papers focused on "community configurations," and two papers studied the "types of value." Only one paper was about the "patient pathway."

In the engagement practices model, Nambisan and Nambisan (2009) proposed a framework consisting of four models of healthcare customer value co-creation: the partnership model, the open-source model, the support-group model, and the diffusion model. Moreover, Stadtelmann et al. (2019), in their netnographic study, aimed to investigate actor engagement practices and identified different roles in actor engagement (AE), using the Service-Dominant logic (S-D logic) literature and the pivotal concept of value co-creation. Three primary engagement practices were identified: information, advising, and empathy. Finally, they emphasized the importance of actor engagement's dynamic and interactive concept and presented

Table 2 Theoretical background found in the studies

Main approaches involved	Author(s)/year	Focus of the paper
Social Support	Nambisan and Nambisan (2009)	Different models of consumer value cocreation
	Loane et al. (2015)	Social support and different types of value
	Zhao et al. (2015)	Social identity as an antecedent of patient value co-creation activities
	Stewart Loane and Webster (2017)	Social capital in OHCs
	Stadtelmann et al. (2019)	Different engagement practices and social support
	Chen et al. (2020)	Informational and emotional support
	Liu et al., (2020a, 2020b)	Social support and belongingness
	Liu et al., (2020a, 2020b)	Social support and perceived community support
	Zhang and Liu (2021)	Knowledge sharing and social exchange theory
	Shirazi et al. (2021)	Social support as an antecedent
	Kamalpour et al. (2021)	Older adults' social exchange in OHCs
Transformative Service Research	Robertson et al. (2014)	Value co-destruction of self-diagnosis in OHCs
	Ostrom et al.	Service research priorities and well-being
	Osei-Frimpong et al. (2018)	Pre-encounter of health information and well-being
	Keeling et al. (2019)	Digital Unengagement as a source of vulnerability
	Perestelo-Perez et al. (2020)	Health literacy as a source of vulnerability that affects the patient's well-being
	Virlée et al. (2020)	Health literacy as a source of vulnerability that affects the patient's well-being
	Cherif et al. (2020)	Patient pathways and well-being
	Kamalpour et al. (2020)	Resilience factors
Combination of SS and TSR	Parkinson et al. (2017)	Social support and vulnerable consumers
	Parkinson et al. (2019),	Social support

(continued)

Table 2 (continued)

Main approaches involved	Author(s)/year	Focus of the paper
	Pham et al. (2019)	Quality of life outcomes of value co-creation activities
	Taiminen et al. (2020)	Compliance with the guidelines and social support can enhance the well-being
	Tram-Anh N. Pham	Does well-being differ across customer value co-creation practice styles?
	Lin and Kishore (2021)	Model of social media affordances, online social support, and health behaviors and outcomes

a clearer understanding of the customer, who acts both in provider and beneficiary roles.

Pham et al. (2020) propose a typology of customer value co-creation activities and their outcomes in healthcare encompassing four types of customer activities: mandatory (customer), mandatory (customer or organization), voluntary in-role, and voluntary extra-role activities). Moreover, Pham et al. (2020) provided a general and nuanced classification of such activities, proposing that some are mandatory, as they are compulsory for service to occur, while others are voluntary, as they are not vital for the core service to bring extra benefits to those involved. Voluntary activities can be categorized as in-role or extra-role, depending on the activities' primary beneficiaries (focal customers, service providers, or other customers). In another study, Pham et al. identified different healthcare customer value co-creation practice styles. Five customer practice styles were proposed: the highly active, other-oriented, provider-oriented, self-oriented, and passive, compliant customers. Moderate and high levels of activities are associated with better well-being outcomes and should be encouraged by service providers. Kamalpour et al. (2021) found that older adults engage with three value co-creation plus one value co-destruction practices in OHCs: communal coping practices, happiness creation practices, social capital generation practices, and disparaging practices.

OHCs allow consumers to create and experience forms of consumer value that would not otherwise be available in a traditional health delivery system. Barrett (2016) found that various kinds of value were shaped and changed over time as different participants engaged with the Online Community and its evolving technology in various ways. Finally, they revealed financial, epistemic, ethical, service, reputational, and platform as types of values created by the OHCs over time. Furthermore, Stewart Loane et al. (2015) examined social support as the mechanism of how consumers co-create and experience different types of value. Cutrona and Russell's typology of social support and Holbrook's consumer value typology were applied in OHCs for Parkinson's Disease and Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS). They

claimed the importance of Holbrook's typology extension to include intrinsic, self-oriented, and active value that is not only related to "play" but includes feelings of cohesion and connectedness with others.

Another group of studies focused on community configurations, Van Oerle et al. (2018) investigated patients' reference frames (self Vs. other) as an information processing mechanism and their effect on value creation in online communities. Their study revealed that self-referencing is typical for information gained through an individualistic, patient–doctor encounter; other referencing emerges when patients focus on the needs of their peers. Information gathered through the patient–doctor encounter and processed with a self-referencing frame accordingly enhances cure-related value, limiting care-oriented value co-creation. Other referencing does precisely the opposite: it creates a barrier to care-related value but stimulates care-related value. A patient's experience with the community largely moderates the impact of both self and other referencing on a cure- and care-related value.

In the patient pathway, the objectives of Cherif et al. (2020) study were to model the key stages underlying the patient pathway and to identify the challenging touchpoints of the interactions between patients and healthcare providers. Their study revealed that the healthcare pathways experienced by the patients consist of three stages: the discovery stage is closely associated with the emotional dimension concerning the patient and physician relationship; the examination stage is characterized by more technical and informational needs for the types of treatments; the follow-up and survivorship stage demonstrates the patients' need to assess the treatments' effectiveness and the quality of the follow-up. Moreover, three profiles of patients were identified: the newcomers, the altruists, and the autonomous. These profiles are characterized by different attitudes depending on the stage of the healthcare pathway.

5.1 Antecedents and Barriers

Another category of studies focused on antecedents and barriers to value cocreation activities in online health communities. Eleven papers among all 37 papers studied antecedents and some barriers to value co-creation activities in online health communities' while 64% of papers (7 papers) studied the antecedents and the rest (4 papers) focused on barriers to value cocreation activities in online health communities.

5.2 Antecedents

The thematic analysis of results reveals five main antecedents of patient engagement and level of engagement in OHCs: Health Literacy, Social Identity, Social Support, Belongingness, and Perceived Community Support (Table 3).

In the health literacy antecedents, Perestelo-Perez et al. (2020) and Virlée et al. (2020) both emphasized health literacy (HL) as an antecedent of patient engagement

Table 3 Shows the five main antecedents of patient engagement.

Author, Year	Antecedents
Perestelo-Perez et al. (2020), Virlée et al. (2020)	Health Literacy
Zhao et al. (2015)	Social Identity
Chen et al. (2020), Liu et al. (2020a, 2020b)	Social Support
Liu et al. (2020a, 2020b)	Perceived Community Support
Liu et al. (2020a, 2020b)	Belongingness

in OHCs. HL is well-defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as: "the cognitive and social skills which determine the motivation and ability of individuals to gain access to, understand, and use the information and ways which promote and maintain good health" (Nutbeam, 2008; Otal et al., 2012). Virlée et al. (2020) claimed that lack of health literacy is a source of vulnerability that can affect patients' well-being. Studies have shown that in financial markets, consumer literacy can affect well-being (Mende & van Doorn, 2014). However, Perestelo-Perez et al. (2020) claimed that not only digital health literacy (DHL) could predict engagement, but also DHL can eliminate the drawbacks of OHCs by helping patients to distinguish correct health information from misleading content. Perestelo-Perez defined digital health literacy using the eHealth Literacy of (Norman & Skinner, 2006, p.321) as the "ability to search, understand and evaluate information from digital media and apply that knowledge to solve health problems."

Vulnerability indicates that a user "cannot accomplish his or her goal in a consumption situation because of being powerless, out of control, and so forth" (Baker & Nelson, 2005, p. 7). In Transformative Service Research (TSR), understanding vulnerable consumers is a key priority (Anderson et al., 2013; Laurel Anderson & Ostrom, 2015; Rosenbaum & Smallwood, 2011) as vulnerability can significantly affect consumer outcomes and well-being. Virlée et al. (2020) highlighted that low levels of HL could hinder the integration of available online resources, thus less OHC benefits for vulnerable users. Perestelo-Perez et al. (2020), on the other hand, by assessing the role of massive open online courses on the improvement of DHL, found that despite the existence of moderators from different authorities to filter misleading and low-quality information, the role of patients' digital health literacy is much more significant.

In the social identity group of papers, the netnographic study of Zhao et al. (2015) revealed that social identity drives patients' value co-creation activities in OHCs; Interactions among OHC members and the cognitive resources of the OHC both contribute to the development of its social identity. Moreover, benevolence, trust, shared vision, and shared language determine how likely an OHC member is to identify with a particular OHC, which further influences their value co-creation activities in that OHC (Zhao et al., 2015). Their findings show empirically that benevolence trust, rather than integrity trust, contributes to members' value co-creation activities through its effects on social identity in OHCs.

For social support as an antecedent, social exchange theory claims that the principle of human behavior maximizes benefits and minimizes costs. Social exchange occurs because long-term relationships of interest exist instead of one-off interactions (Molm, 1997). Zhang and Liu (2021) applied social exchange theory to conduct a benefit–cost analysis to investigate how individuals form relationship commitment to OHCs. Relationship commitment influences continuous knowledge-sharing intention. Moreover, it partially mediates the relationship between social support and constant knowledge-sharing intention and fully intercedes the relationship between perceived health risks and continuous knowledge-sharing intention.

Social support level can predict the level of doctor–patient interaction in OHCs in which physicians also participate. Chen et al., (2020) revealed that doctors' informational and emotional support could affect the online relationship of doctor–patient in OHCs—by applying text mining methods—based on the theory of information integration and social support. Moreover, they verified that the role of emotional support is more significant than informational support. Finally, they verified that patient severity could also affect the online relationship between patients and their physicians. In another study, Shirazi et al. (2021) tried to identify the social and technical factors affecting healthcare users' intention to co-create value. They applied Bostrom and Heinen's social-technical theory to explore the antecedents. Their survey of some Facebook online health communities revealed that social support and its antecedents (i.e., perceived privacy risk and social media interactivity), as well as government IT infrastructures and perceived control of information as the critical antecedents of value co-creation intention. However, the role of social support was more prominent relative to other factors. According to the Organizational Support theory, members may show organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB) if they perceive support from the organization (Hollmann, 1976; Ye et al., 2015). In the context of online communities, such behaviors are considered online community citizenship behavior (OCCB) (Chiu et al., 2015). There are some studies applying the Organizational Support theory claiming that user-perceived community support may lead to knowledge sharing in online communities (Yang et al., 2017; Ye et al., 2015).

Liu et al., (2020a, 2020b) investigated how perceived community support can affect patients' interaction in OHCs and how it can predict their continuous participation. Additionally, the moderating role of perceived social exclusion between community support and user interactions is explored in their study. Liu et al., (2020a, 2020b) categorized the interactions as health-related and general topics. Moreover, their study revealed that these interactions positively affect users' perceived effective value, which will result in continued participation (intention to participate). Finally, their research proposed a framework to study the relationships among community support, user interactions, perceived co-created value, and continuous participation intention in OHCs. Both types of interpersonal interactions are supposed to contribute to refining users' relationships and their attachment to the community (Fiedler & Sarstedt, 2014; Luo et al., 2016). Liu et al. (2020a, 2020b) investigated how patients co-create value in OHCs. By applying the need-to-belong theory and social support, a model of how belongingness and social support affect the four value co-creation behaviors (i.e., information sharing, responsible, feedback, and

advocacy behaviors) was developed in OHCs (Liu et al., 2020a, 2020b). The model revealed that social support could affect patients' belongingness to OHCs; the belongingness will impact patient engagement in OHCs. Additionally, OHC members' perceived health competence positively regulates the influence of belongingness on information-sharing behavior, whereas their mental health negatively moderates the relationships of belongingness with all four value co-creation behaviors.

5.3 Barriers

The literature identifies several barriers that hinder patient engagement in OHCs. We have identified two types of barriers: digital unengagement and culturally irrelevant information (Keeling et al., 2019; Payton, 2016).

MacGregor and Wathen (2014) highlighted that the reluctance to engage with online services due to the burden perceived by users is increasing. Moreover, Damodaran and Sandhu predicted that the number of vulnerable groups (e.g., socially isolated, elderly patients, and low income) who are not engaging with online services is growing. Additionally, Dietrich et al. claimed that online services policymakers tend to focus on engaging users other than investigating the barriers to engagement. According to O'Brien and Toms's (2008) definition, Digital Unengagemenet (DU) is when customers decide actively to not engage with or disengage with a digital activity or when external factors lead them not to engage. In their study, Keeling et al. (2019) explored digital unengagement to understand barriers to patients' engagement in online health service delivery. Finally, they conceptualized DU as with four levels of drivers: subjective incompatibility (misalignment of online services with need, lifestyle, and alternative services); enactment vulnerability (personal vulnerabilities around control, comprehension, and emotional management of online services); sharing essentiality (the centrality of face-to-face co-creation opportunities plus conflicting social dependencies); and strategic skepticism (skepticism of the strategic value of online services).

OHCs should be designed in the absence of cultural assumptions and biases about minorities and cultures of participation among underrepresented groups. Culturally relevant health information is supposed to profit different users. Furthermore, OHCs are critical for health dissemination and user experience creation. Social media and online content provide mechanisms to engage specific populations while helping to reduce barriers that can often hinder participation and engagement (Payton, 2016). Payton (2016) found in the study of minorities that irrelevant health information, cultural information, and some stigmatizing diseases such as AIDS can act as a barrier to using OHCs. Their study revealed that Black females are interested in HIV prevention information that uses simple, non-technical health jargon. However, the information should be socially engaging to allow their voices to be heard, absent of cultural assumptions and biases about Black women, and embody an ownership ethos relative to social content. Finally, their contribution helps fill a void in the literature regarding creating user experiences for health-related messages, particularly

those regarding stigmatized conditions, such as HIV, while designing for cultures of participation among underrepresented groups.

5.4 Benefits

Some authors focused on the benefits of value cocreation activities in online health communities. Fourteen papers among all 37 papers studied the benefits of value cocreation activities in online health communities. Three clusters of benefits were discussed in the articles in this research stream: sustainability, transformative value and well-being, and knowledge co-creation and innovation (Table 4).

OHCs can be considered as a source of knowledge co-creation for all stakeholders. Knowledge co-creation in health care is a voluntary process involving all stakeholders such as patients, researchers, and physicians (Bagayogo et al., 2014). This knowledge can then be applied for innovative service or new product development (Madhavan & Grover, 1998). One of the benefits of online communities is that stakeholders can get insights into the tacit knowledge of users' lived experiences (patients) and then transfer them to explicit knowledge for innovative purposes. An example of using patients' knowledge co-creation can be the Nightscout community, which created an open-source do-it-yourself mobile technology system for patients with type 1 diabetes, which can be accessed, used, and modified by anyone. Hence it allows patients, caregivers, and doctors to better monitor, forecast, and manage diabetes using personalized tools (Lee et al., 2016).

Services are evolving from "one-to-one" communication and engagement processes to "many-to-many" informational touchpoints. According to the lens of Service-Dominant Logic, users within service ecosystems co-create value for innovations via sharing exceptional experiences with and insights into the innovation. Peltier et al. (2020) developed a B2C/C2C Digital Information Flow Continuum to assess the users' value co-creation for the likelihood of innovation usage (Telemedicine

Table 4 Main categories of benefits

Benefits	Frequency (%)	Author, Year
Knowledge co-creation and innovation	29	Amann and Rubinelli; Stewart Loane and Webster (2017); Peltier et al. (2020); Toncinic et al.
Sustainability	14	Faggini et al. (2018); Presti et al. (2019)
Transformative value and well-being	57	Parkinson et al. (2017); Osei-Frimpong et al. (2018); Parkinson et al. (2019); Taiminen et al. (2020); Kamalpour et al. (2020); Tram-Anh; Lin and Kishore (2021)

= TM). Moreover, they claimed this information flow impacts the perceived benefits and acceptance of service innovations. In their qualitative study, Amann and Rubinelli revealed that OHCs could lead healthcare stakeholders to knowledge co-creation. Furthermore, they emphasized community managers' views on and experiences with knowledge co-creation as a leverage to create innovative service and product design with patients' actual needs.

Künne (2016) aimed to identify and classify health 2.0 platforms (e.g., OHCs) that can serve as intermediary platforms in the innovation process. Their study emphasized the domain of the OHC and co-creation for innovation. Moreover, they classified health platforms by involvement of healthcare consumers, involvement of professional stakeholders, level of interaction attained by users, the supported stage of the innovation process, and access to the online community. Finally, they proposed practitioners seeking to benefit from co-creation of innovation consider the type of health 2.0 platforms—engage on either previously built or create a new one.

In the theme of sustainability, two vital concepts at the core of the health provider–client relationship are the empowerment of patients and the patient-centered approach to care (Rathert et al., 2013). Faggini et al. (2018) claimed that previously, the focus of the healthcare system was on operational efficiency; however, a new trend is growing with the focus on the service effectiveness-shifting from the traditional doctor–patient relationship toward a provider–client relationship (Oudshoorn et al., 2013; Palumbo, 2017). This trend has led beyond the ensuring information asymmetry that affects physician–patient relationships. In other words, information asymmetry is primarily due to patients' dependence on the providers of care (Barile et al., 2014), which hinders the mutual use of resources needed for sustainable healthcare development. Consequently, the sustainability of healthcare service systems can benefit from the actors' willingness to align their strategies and, at the same time, constantly adjust and adapt themselves and their behaviors to the contextual changes (Polese et al., 2017). A sustainable digital platform enables patients to share information, increasing patients' awareness. Presti et al. (2019) examined the online engagement of patients and social sustainability and found that the social sustainability of the digital health platform was directly influenced by online engagement, creating a positive effect on physician loyalty. In particular, the human dimension of social sustainability proved to be decisive for the re-use of the platform (Presti et al., 2019). In Conclusion, OHCs and the recent developments of ICTs and the rising implementation of digital platforms have further increased the empowerment of patients and overcoming of the information asymmetry, enhancing the interaction between health professionals, patients, and other people (e.g., families, peers, citizens, institutions, etc.).

Some other scholars cited transformative value as one of the benefits of engagement in OHCs. Transformative service research is a relatively new research paradigm that focuses mainly on improving consumers' well-being by integrating service and consumer research. Scholars' focus on the transformative values of OHCs is increasing. Many benefits have been proposed for elevating patients' well-being in OHCs, such as social support, better compliance with medical orders, reducing vulnerability, and compensating the doctor–patient negotiation asymmetry.

Vulnerable consumers often experience less satisfactory service outcomes (Bone et al., 2014). Hence, many vulnerable consumers, like patients, tend to use online services to enhance their well-being during service delivery. Parkinson et al. (2017) studied the relationship between social support and how vulnerable consumers take advantage of social support. Additionally, Parkinson et al. (2017) examined the extent to which social support, including emotional, esteem, informational, network, and tangible assistance support (Coulson, 2005; Turner-McGrievy et al., 2013), is bi-directional in nature as called for by the literature. Additionally, Parkinson et al. (2019), in their netnographic longitudinal analysis, found that users integrate a variety of social support resources, from informational support to esteem support, which results in new ideas and self-efficacy that support the different types of value such as epistemic and personal value. The degree of co-created value varies across the consumption experience but culminates over time into transformative value. Parkinson et al. (2019) applied the social support framework by Cutrona and Russell and Rosenbaum and Massiah to broaden the aspect of social support dimensions. Their findings highlight how consumers integrate social support resources at different stages of the consumption process to realize different types of benefits. Their study covers the resource integration at a single point and through the whole service experience, contributing to a better understanding of evolving value over time. Finally, they extended previous value typologies by including personal value. The inclusion of personal value (Verleye, 2015) provides a more holistic understanding of the value co-created in online transformative services.

Furthermore, in their study of online weight loss services, Taiminen et al. (2020) found that compliance with the guidelines and social support are two value co-creation activities that can impact the well-being outcomes of transformative services. Moreover, they claimed to reinforce a durable change through the co-creation of value and improvements in customers' well-being as one of the OHCs' benefits; They claimed that the positive evaluations of users' well-being could lead to continued behavioral change, which is in line with TSR literature. Maintaining the behavioral change is essential and motivating users to keep the behavior is crucial; OHCs in the context of weight loss management support the importance of perceived behavioral control, self-efficacy, and customers' sense of achievement for transformative services. Moreover, compliance further lets customers attain their weight loss goals, which benefits their subjective well-being, in line with the critical role of compliance in the health service context. In line with Taiminen et al. (2020) study, Osei-Frimpong et al. (2018) suggested that pre-encounter health information on the internet or in the OHCs can improve service engagement and compliance with medical instruction. Moreover, they clarified the outcomes by describing the pre-encounter information mechanisms by determining the interactions, improving doctor–patient orientation, and increasing their participation in a shared decision-making process. In conclusion, Kamalpour et al. (2020) identified the resilience benefits of OHCs for older adults. These benefits may lead to resilience factors, including meaningfulness, grit, self-care, external connection, health status, positive perspective on life, and independence. In other words, resilience can also be considered a transformative value of engagement in OHCs.

Tram Anh Ngoc Pham et al. (2020), based on their previous study of the typology of customer value co-creation activities (i.e., mandatory vs. voluntary and in-role vs. extra-role), aimed to examine the impacts of each on well-being and quality of life of patients. Efforts in each activity type contributed to the quality of life differently, with voluntary activities having the most significant impacts on quality of life and well-being. Consequently, results revealed that clinical resources aided mandatory activities and, personal network resources facilitated voluntary activities; psychological resources had affected customer effort across the whole range of activities.

In line with the transformative service research, Lin and Kishore (2021) aimed to investigate the role of social media on patients' self-management of chronic diseases by integrating literature from three areas—social media affordance, online social support, and health behaviors and outcomes. Results revealed three social media affordances: affordance for community co-creation, affordance for social learning, and affordance for social relationships. Moreover, informational support, emotional support, and experiential support were categorized as three social support pillars.

Specifically, they have integrated social media affordance and social support theories with the literature on self-management of chronic diseases to develop propositions on how social media affordance can enable different forms of social support on social media, which could improve patients' self-care behavior and physical and psychological health. This enhanced self-care behavior can lead to enhanced well-being of healthcare customers, which is in line with transformative service research.

5.5 Drawbacks

Out of 37 articles, two studies' main focus was on the dark side of online health services; mainly, two drawbacks were identified: The Dark Side of social media and the value co-destruction of the online self-diagnosis (Robertson et al., 2014; Smaldone et al., 2020).

It has been acknowledged that popular social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram) can have an essential role in misinformation and incorrect behaviors. OHCs such as PatientsLikeMe, DailyStrength, HealthUnlocked, etc., have revolutionized the life of chronic patients. OHCs can also face similar social problems to offline groups; these effects on online groups can be amplified due to the extensive spread of the internet (Smaldone et al., 2020). Some of these issues that patients can face in OHCs are social conformity, informational cascades, echo chambers, homophily, the role of opinion leaders, and group polarization (Hou et al., 2016). Moreover, Baccarella et al. (2018) clarified that the dark sides should be evaluated under the (Kietzmann et al., (2011) framework with the seven building blocks: sharing, conversations, identity, presence, relationships, groups, and reputation. Additionally, fake news and a negative influence on healthcare professionals'

images (Merchant & Asch, 2018) are other dark sides of OHCs. Finally, Smaldone et al. (2020) emphasized that web 2.0 can never replace the doctor–patient relationship since only healthcare professionals are experts in healing patients.

Self-diagnosis of health conditions is not a recent phenomenon; however, it has been proliferated by the growing patients' access to the internet and mobile technologies (Yan & Sengupta, 2013). Some scholars cited some benefits of online self-diagnosis, such as time and cost-saving for both patients and healthcare professionals (Finch & Gibson, 2009; Nijland et al., 2008), nonetheless, drawbacks of online self-diagnosis can range from under- and over-diagnosing symptoms to even mortality. Robertson et al. (2014) argued that the inappropriate application of online self-diagnosis could lead to value co-destruction (Echeverri & Salomonson, 2019; Plé & Cáceres, 2010). Finally, they proposed a resourced-based typology of value co-destruction, which shows that online self-diagnosis can result in value co-destruction of consumers' service process and outcome when consumer resources are deficient or misused (e.g., knowledge) or when e-health provider resources are lacking. Additionally, they clarified that consumer resources could be considered knowledge, health literacy, and the ability to assess the creditability of the content. As for e-health providers' resources, they mentioned the quality of content, ease of use, level of support, and provision by a health authority.

6 Framework Derived from the Literature

The current shift of healthcare delivery to online services, especially after the Covid-19 pandemic, can be considered a new era for OHCs. Scholars and practitioners are developing a particular interest in analyzing patients' online engagement motives and practices. Hence, the current contribution focused on a more holistic view to shed light on antecedents and barriers of patient engagement, heterogeneity of each individual practice style in online health care, and finally, drawbacks of online engagement. The framework introduced in Fig. 2 will be applied to the empirical part of thesis.

7 Conclusion

Results showed that almost 70% of papers are based on the main theoretical background of social support (8) or transformative service research (11), or a combination of both concepts (6). Although TSR is still in its infancy, it has received significant attention from scholars, especially after introducing enhancing well-being by transformative service by Ostrom in 2015 as the service research priority. In the online health community's context, studies on patient practice styles and value co-creation models are scarce; Pham et al. (2020) provided a general and nuanced classification of such activities; moreover, they analyzed the relation of each activity to the well-being outcomes. Future studies should focus on a more empirical analysis of these activities

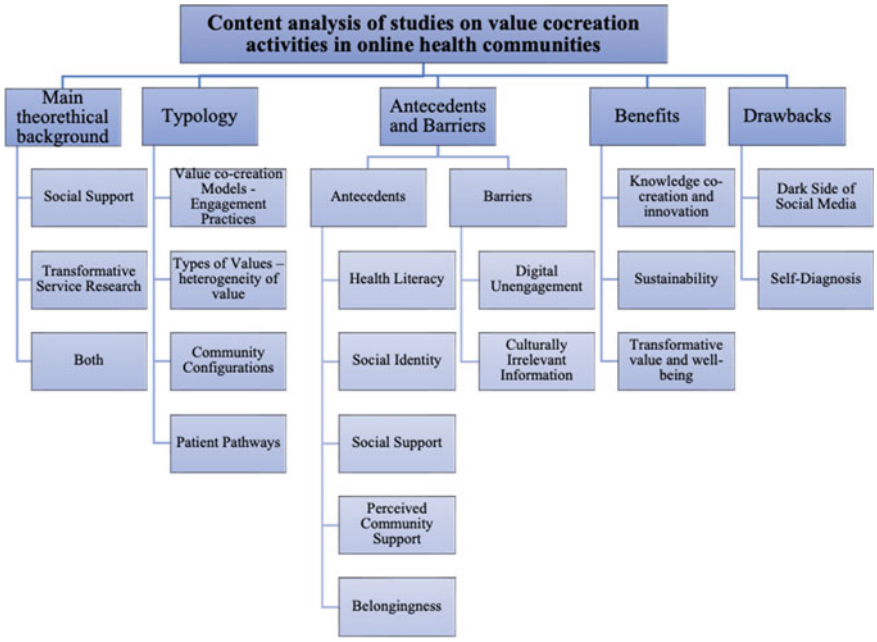

Fig. 2 The comprehensive result of the SLR (Framework)

related to transformative service research. Additionally, future studies can focus on other main concepts such as customer perceived value or value co-destruction than social support and TSR.

In what concerns the typology of value, our analysis shows heterogeneity of engagement practices (value co-creation models), values, patient pathways, and community configuration. Nambisan and Nambisan's (2009) framework of health-care customer value co-creation shed light on different community categorizations - provider-led vs. consumer-led. Moreover, Pham et al. (2020) provided a classification of value co-creation activities as mandatory versus voluntary and in-role versus extra-role, which is in line with the initial framework of Nambisan. It can be concluded that patients engage in online health communities in a diverse range of activities either led by the provider or themselves; additionally, they participate in value co-creation activities either in their favor or other peers' favor. Moderate and high levels of activities are associated with better well-being outcomes and should be encouraged by service providers. The above-mentioned practice styles were studied in another study by Pham et al. consequently, five customer practice styles were proposed: the highly active, other-oriented, provider-oriented, self-oriented, and passive, compliant customers. Such studies can be utilized by practitioners and scholars to predict outcomes of value co-creation or co-destruction practices while designing OHCs. Future studies can investigate specific disease OHCs or different types of OHCs (provider-led or patient-led). Investigation of the type of engagement in different

OHCs can help designers of these platforms to design optimal communities for better engagement and lower risk of value co-destruction. The Fourth Sector can apply the outcomes of future studies to have a better cross-coloration with policymakers and NGOs.

In what concerns the antecedents of patient engagement in OHCs, Analysis revealed five main antecedents/motives of patient engagement and level of engagement in OHCs. We categorized them as health literacy, social identity, social support, belongingness, and perceived community support. These antecedents can affect the type and levels of patient engagement. Future studies can investigate other antecedents of patient engagement and analyze the mediating variables that can affect the level of engagement of patients in OHCs. Furthermore, we extracted from the literature two types of barriers that can hinder patient engagement in OHCs: Digital Unengagement and culturally irrelevant information. More research on the barriers to engagement is needed to shed light on the barriers, which will help designers of these online communities to better engage with patients.

The last two groups of papers revealed the benefits and drawbacks of OHCs. We categorized 14 papers under four categories of benefits: knowledge co-creation and innovation, sustainability, and transformative value and well-being. Fourteen papers focused on benefits, and only two papers discussed the disadvantages of OHCs. One possible avenue for research can be to consider the drawbacks of online engagements on OHCs, such as misinformation and value co-destruction. Robertson et al. (2014) studied self-diagnosis as a disadvantage of using OHCs, and Smaldone et al. (2020) pointed to the dark side of social media as another disadvantage of OHCs. In our analysis, the advantages of OHCs have outweighed the disadvantages, but in the future, more studies may be conducted on their disadvantages.

8 Limitations

This chapter will not be exempted from limitations; the bibliographic search was performed in WoS and Scopus; due to the inter-disciplinary nature of online healthcare communities, other databases such as PubMed should be considered to enrich future studies. Moreover, more keywords could have been applied in the SLR analysis to cover more health topics, to the author's best knowledge, the keywords used mostly covered the services and management concept of the theme, however, adding the health concepts and keywords can be an avenue for future studies. The study focused on general OHCs; given the Covid-19 pandemic, many patients engaged in OHCs more than ever. The empirical parts can be reinforced by the third study of interviews with patients to understand the aspect of their online journey in a cohort of 10 years to better understand how online engagement can contribute to their well-being during the course of the disease.

Finally, more empirical research in the context of TSR and OHCs can shed light on different aspects of patient engagement and the well-being outcomes of online healthcare delivery.

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Health and Well-Being Perspectives

Healthvertising on Food Packaging and Its Impact on Consumers: A Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract This systematic literature review aims to provide an overview of the use of health claims in food packaging and its effect on consumers in the context of social marketing. The search was conducted in the Web of Science database and 62 relevant papers were selected after the protocol selection. Our analysis identified two main themes that emerged across the papers: health claims practices and consumer behavior. The results show an emphasis of health-related claims on packaging, either from a social perspective through the use of healthy communication techniques, or from a commercial perspective, with package claims leading to a health halo effect. This halo effect conveyed by health claims that trigger consumers and although not necessarily misleading or false, it can both misguide consumers via package or product characteristics such as price, shape, colors, or sustainability and prevent consumers from making healthy/healthier choices. There are many loose ends for future research, such as the use and effect of unnatural colors and biased names, or how added food ingredients (AFIs) impact calorie, taste, and health perception. Moreover, it is vital for future research to understand the combination of several healthy communication techniques in food packaging. Public policy recommendations for social good are also provided.

Keywords Social marketing · Food packaging · Health claims · Halo effect · Consumer decision · Public policy

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1 Introduction

The search for health in food and nutrients has never been stronger and according to the International Food Information Council (2020), more than half of consumers consider health to be more relevant in their purchases now than in the last decade (Chandon & Cadario, 2022). However, even though consumers pay more attention to health issues, the consumption of less healthy goods and the increasing global obesity rates suggest that food consumption habits are far from being healthy (Andrews et al., 2021; Eriksson & Machin, 2020).

There are several packaging and healthy communication techniques which may lead buyers to make healthy choices or which can guide them toward unhealthy choices, like highlighting nutrient names (Fernan et al., 2018), trendy symbols, package colors and size, highlighting the absence of bad ingredients, etc. (Chandon & Cadario, 2022; Howlett et al., 2008).

However, although health claims in food packaging labels have positive aspects for the industry and consumers, their effects may also be perverse and hinder consumer decision-making accuracy (Colson & Grebitus, 2017; Eriksson & Machin, 2020), creating a health halo effect that projects onto consumers a biased sense of healthiness of food products. Halo effect' techniques affect consumers with a dizzying array of symbols and icons related to health that although not necessarily untrue, can misguide choices (Andrews et al., 2011). Moreover, several techniques that convey a health halo effect, could also, according to several studies, be reverted to healthy communication techniques.

It is recognized that the social responsibility of companies is directed to a commercial area, and as much as a company intends to privilege consumers and their health, it will not go against the profit (Kolodinsky, 2012) and even uses techniques on the package with more focus on that than on the desire to spread well-being (Villas-Boas et al., 2020).

Diet-related diseases have been a common concern for governments in many societies resulting in high economic costs, bad consumption habits, and a food industry that uses information claims about products that should be rejected (Andrews et al., 2021; Eriksson & Machin, 2020; Orquin, 2014).

To complement earlier reviews about the highlight of health-related arguments in healthy and unhealthy products, this study reports the findings of a systematic literature review, focused on food packaging health claims which can be leveraged to identify possible gaps in the literature, to inform future research agendas and generally improve field research. Furthermore, little is known about how consumers perceive certain nutritional information provided and how health claims can be manipulated from halo effect to healthy communication techniques. These two issues represent the central motivation for the development of this article.

2 Methodology

This study established a protocol to objectively identify, select, and assess articles and as an outcome, it produces a synthesis that depicts the depth of knowledge in the field (Watson, 2015). As preparation, a plan of the steps to be taken is defined, including the search strategy for the identification of relevant studies. The following phase entailed the selection of studies and the data extraction and synthesis (Tranfield et al., 2003).

The search was conducted in a specific online journal database (*Web of Science*), and the selection process focused on academic journal papers. Sources were gathered through a comparison of peer-reviewed papers addressing subjects related to health claims in food packages. Table 1 presents the exclusion and inclusion criteria of the studies:

The keywords used for search in the database (*Web of Science—Core Collection*) were "health* AND claim* AND food* AND pack*", in the topic, resulting in an initial list of 560 papers. After applying the inclusion criteria and specific fields of interest (such as economics, business, management, and communication studies) 90 articles were retained for further analysis and the list was exported into an excel file. Subsequently, the abstract was read and a total of 28 papers were excluded, as they deviated from the main topic of interest. After the exclusion criteria, a total of 62 articles were selected for the systematic literature review.

The final list was exported and inserted in a new excel file, capturing the following sections of each paper: (i) General details (year, citations, journal); (ii) Theory, models, and methods.

Table 1 Criteria for inclusion and exclusion

Criteria	Rationale
Inclusion Criteria Peer-reviewed journals The main topic must be direct to food packaging and health claims No time frame is set Only English language Field of study: economics, business, management, and communication studies	To get a better grasp on the state of the art is it important to analyze published articles first The focus of the research is to explore the food packaging effect on consumers within the health claims' context Different approaches have contributed to the field of study that has developed significantly in recent years, and some parallels can be drawn to earlier papers
Exclusion Criteria Working papers, conference papers, workshop proceedings, books, book reviews, special issue introductions, editorials, forewords, brief commentaries, or practitioner publications All studies related where the focus is not on the food package	Focus only on published articles For a more cohesive review, several papers have a focus on communication and nutrition

Source Own elaboration

3 Findings

Our results are structured as follows: (i) Year of publication, number of studies and journals; (ii) Research methods; (iii) Theories and models.

(i) Year of publication, number of studies, journals

The year 1997 comes up with the first article and 2022 as the latest, with an interest in the topic growing each year. There is a gap between 1997 and 2003 and there are no papers from 2005. From 2010 to 2018 there was an enormous growth in published studies suggesting that the topic has gained increasing importance in the wake of rising worldwide obesity and less healthy lifestyles during an equally growing food industry.

The papers are spread over 29 journals in the fields of agricultural economics, business, economics, communication, marketing, health care, health policy, nutrition, and dietetics. The most frequent journals are the *Journal of Business Research* and the *Journal of Consumer Affairs* with 6 articles each. This suggests that research has been published in a variety of outlets, including health-related journals, signaling the cross-disciplinary nature of the topic.

Regarding the impact of research, Wansink and Chandon, (2006) is the paper with the highest number of citations (453). This paper titled "Can low-fat nutrition labels lead to obesity" underlines the role of food labels in consumption, focusing on overweight people, feelings of guilt and food doses with the aim of demonstrating that in addition to the consumer, the food industry will also benefit from adaptations and regulations in food packaging. Figure 1 presents visually the number of publications versus citations.

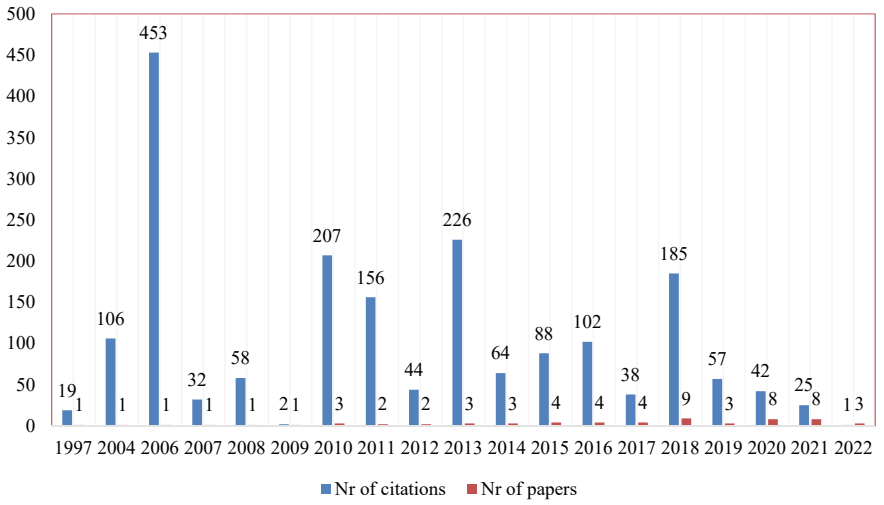

Fig. 1 Number of papers versus number of citations

i. Research methods

In what refers to the methodology of data collection, experimental design was the most frequent method (20 studies) followed by surveys (12 studies) (Table 2).

(ii) Theories and models

In what concerns, theoretical frameworks of the published papers, results show that the *expectation theory* was the most used theory (2 articles) and *the elaboration likelihood model* was the most frequent theoretical framework (6 articles) (Table 3). Yet, most studies do not rely on a specific theory or model.

(iii) Thematic analysis

Papers were grouped into topics that were combined into main themes. The most expressive line of inquiry is under the umbrella of health claims, from which two main themes emerged. The first broad theme is related to what health-related claims' promotion is and how it is being addressed in the literature. It includes the following themes: halo effect; healthy communication techniques; and packaging features.

The second and last broad theme is consumer behavior which includes healthfulness perception; trust, skepticism, and familiarity; and the price element.

3.1 Health-Related Claim-Based Communication

As soon as customers enter a store, they can be overwhelmed by information from visual elements like floor graphics, signs, or trolleys (Clement et al., 2017). The most significant in-store communication tool comes from food packaging (Zank & Smith, 2021) and the advertising of health (Burton et al., 2015; Fernan et al., 2018; Sundar et al., 2021). There is a lot of discussion about health information effectiveness, but it is its level of ethics, that has drawn the most attention from researchers (Colson & Grebitus, 2017; Medina-Molina et al., 2021).

Health-related claims literature on food packages have an extensive research scope. As an emergent body of literature, the research tends to be dominated by studies from the consumers' perspective, including attitudes, and influences of the food packaging in behavior. Yet the field research requires a more comprehensive and holistic view, informed with a corporate social marketing responsibility appreciation, a call for new policy package regulations and a deeper look at the health concept dissemination on food packages through health halo effect and healthy communication techniques over most food packages.

Table 2 Research methods

Research method	Data collection technique	Articles	References
Conceptual papers		2	Cao and Yan (2021), Minton and Cornwell (2016)
Quantitative Studies	Survey	12	André et al. (2019), Barreiro-Hurlé et al. (2010a, 2010b), Kanematsu et al. (2020), Kemp et al. (2007), Medina-Molina et al. (2021), Mitra et al. (2019), Orquin (2014), Orquin and Scholderer (2015), Ringold (2021), Sundar et al. (2021), Zank and Smith (2021)
	Focus group + survey	1	Koen et al. (2018)
	Eye tracking + survey	1	Clement et al. (2017)
	Content analysis + survey	1	Ye et al. (2020)
	Experimental design	20	Andrews et al. (2011, 2021), Burke et al. (1997), Burton et al. (2015), Chandon and Cadario (2022), Colson and Grebitus (2017), Creaven et al. (2020), Fernan et al. (2018), France and Bone (2009), Hastak et al. (2020), Howlett et al. (2008), Huang and Lu (2016), Lowe et al. (2013), Miller et al. (2011), Minton et al. (2018), Ono and Ono (2015), Rybak et al. (2021), Song and Im (2018), Villas-Boas et al. (2020), Yin and Özdinç (2018)
	Experimental design + Eye tracking	1	Dang and Nichols (2022)
	Experimental design + survey	4	Gassler et al. (2022), Newman et al. (2018), Wei et al. (2018), Zhu et al. (2019)
Qualitative studies	In-depth interviews	1	Chalamon and Nabec (2016)
	Focus group	1	Brierley and Elliott (2017)
	Photoelicitation	1	Koenigstorfer and Groeppel-Klein (2010)
	Eye tracking	3	Sørensen et al. (2012), Thomas et al. (2021), Turner et al. (2014)

(continued)

Table 2 (continued)

Research method	Data collection technique	Articles	References
	Content analysis	8	Chandon (2013), Eriksson and Machin (2020), Festila and Chrysochou (2018), Ivanova et al. (2020), Kolodinsky (2012), Lwin (2015), Wright et al. (2020), Zhu et al. (2016)
	Laboratory session	6	Cho and Baskin (2018), Hidalgo-Baz et al. (2017), Lwin et al. (2014), Schuldt (2013), Wansink and Chandon (2006), Wansink et al. (2004)

Source Own elaboration

4 Halo Effect

The Halo effect outcome arises in food packages through claims (Sundar et al., 2021), that, despite not being false, can bias consumers' perceptions when combined with other package characteristics (Burton et al., 2015; Chandon & Cadario, 2022; Dang & Nichols, 2022).

The presence of information in products in a manipulative way is associated with less accurate purchases and erroneous health perceptions (Dang & Nichols, 2022; Eriksson & Machin, 2020) and may privilege brands that use it in detriment of others with similar products (Burke et al., 1997).

Consumers make decisions quickly (Burton et al., 2015; Chalamon & Nabec, 2016) and focus their attention on the dominant ingredient like fat or sodium and use a lexicographical rule in their decision-making to evaluate the healthy aspects present in the product (Thomas et al., 2021). This may happen due to the need for guiltlessness in eating habits (Koenigstorfer & Groeppel-Klein, 2010; Sundar et al., 2021). In this way, people may seek healthy consumption (Chalamon & Nabec, 2016) but also find excuses for less healthy consumption with distractions like antioxidants in chocolate or wine (Chalamon & Nabec, 2016; Sundar et al., 2021). The level of trust established with a particular brand can also absolve the less positive judgment and may lead to an underestimation of ingested calories (Burton et al., 2015).

5 Healthy Communication Techniques

Healthy communication techniques like health claims, symbols, and useful label information that require less cognitive load on decision-making (Colson & Grebitus, 2017) might increase healthy consumption (Andrews et al., 2021; Koen et al., 2018). Some studies explored solutions like the presence of a shorter health claim on the

Table 3 Main theories and models

Theories	References	Models	References
Prospect theory	Andrews et al. (2021)	The elaboration likelihood model	Andrews et al. (2011), Kemp et al. (2007), Newman et al. (2018), Turner et al. (2014), Wei et al. (2018)
A theory-driven framework of food claims	André et al. (2019)		
Lancastrian consumer theory of utility maximization	Barreiro-Hurlé et al. (2010a, 2010b)	The heuristic-systematic model of processing	Burton et al. (2015), Newman et al. (2018)
The expectation theory	Burton et al. (2015), Dang and Nichols (2022)		
Relevance theory	Clement et al. (2017)	A psychophysical model of meal size estimation	Chandon (2013)
Signalling theory	Hidalgo-Baz et al. (2017)		
Theory of planned behaviour	Medina-Molina et al. (2021)	Category-based model of perception and information processing	Ono and Ono (2015)
Product attribute-based consumer theory	Wright et al. (2020)		
Theory of protection motivation	Miller et al. (2011)	The selective accessibility model	Sundar et al. (2021)
Activation theory	Rybak et al. (2021)		
Cueing theory	Minton and Cornwell (2016)	The structural consumer demand model	Villas-Boas et al. (2020)
Dual processing theory	France and Bone (2009)		
Fuzzy-trace theory	Minton et al. (2018)		
Categorization theory	Orquin (2014)		
Selective perception theory	Song and Im (2018)		
Product attribute-based consumer theory	Wright et al. (2020)		
Consumer search theory	Zhu et al. (2016)		

Source Own elaboration

FOP (Wansink et al., 2004) "pushing" people to the back of the package (BOP) to find objective nutritional information that might contradict expectations (Burton et al., 2015). The use of FOP with BOP is also considered a good habit (Wansink et al., 2004) had by (a few) people to complement the search for information (Andrews et al., 2011; Gassler et al., 2022; Koen et al., 2018). However, this is not a fast and easy technique for people who are less literate in nutritional factors.

Controversial thoughts induced by claims might reduce bias and lead people to seek better explanations (Sundar et al., 2021). Verbal heuristic (Zank & Smith, 2021) as well as the color (Dang & Nichols, 2022), size, and shape of packages can inform people on the quantities and calories ingested (Chandon, 2013).

6 Packaging Dimensions

This topic is divided into the following sections: product name, colors, visual claims, and nutrition information.

- ***Product name***

The product name in food package creates expectation and connection, especially when combined with an ingredient. A great example is used by Fernan et al. (2018) who illustrate with "protein bar", a cereal bar that although might not be particularly high in protein, creates a false expectation about the perceived amount of it. This false expectation increases, even more, when the product name is accompanied by an adjective like, "good source of protein" and spills over into the growing healthy perception of nutrients like fiber and iron with the use of buzzwords like "zing" ("*zing protein bar*"). Other verbal claims next to the title, like the word "energy" (Eriksson & Machin, 2020), "single serving" (Wansink & Chandon, 2006), or "homemade" (Kanematsu et al., 2020) also influence the perception of healthiness and food ingestion amount. The expression "whole" is very used in product names by the cereal business and is directly perceived as healthy (Ivanova et al., 2020; Zank & Smith, 2021).

- ***Colors***

Colors carry a symbolic meaning that influences judgment and decision-making, calorie estimation, and other healthy adjudications (Festila & Chrysochou, 2018; Schuldt, 2013). Festila and Chrysochou's (2018) research shows that colors can lead consumers to perceive the healthiness of the package. For example, natural, and light tones like green, white, and brown are often used by products associated with health; a blue package, associated with the label "light", might be perceived as healthier than a red package with a regular label (Huang & Lu, 2016) and intense colors like red or orange are associated with a strong flavor (Festila & Chrysochou, 2018).

- ***Visual claims***

A visual aspect like an image requires less cognitive effort to be noticed than text, but at the same time, it constrains the essential information to be checked (Medina-Molina et al., 2021). Most of the images used are vague, without context, and may give rise to numerous associations. For example, the use of photographs with smiling people reduces the judgment of some ingredients (Clement et al., 2017).

- ***Nutritional information***

The presence of nutritional labeling on the front of the package (FOP), per se, does not interfere with the purchase intention as much as a logo or a claim (Medina-Molina et al., 2021), even if this is associated with healthy consumption or important for the diet (Zank & Smith, 2021).

Consumers look for healthiness-clues in the package (Turner et al., 2014) but also consider quick facts like calories, total energy, and the presence or absence of certain ingredients like the alert to the presence of good (vs. the absence of bad) (Howlett et al., 2008) or the preservation of nature (vs. nutritional improvements). According to the literature, these claims can be classified as follows (André et al., 2019; Chandon & Cadario, 2022):

– Nutritional with an absence of bad/negative ingredients (e.g., "gluten-free");
– Nutritional with a presence of good/positive ingredients (e.g., "rich in fiber");
– Nature with the absence of negative ingredients (e.g., "sugar-free" or "no additives");
– Nature with the presence of positive ingredients (e.g., "wholegrain").

The absence of a negative ingredient or the presence of a good ingredient is directly associated with health benefits, especially for unhealthy food (Dang & Nichols, 2022). For instance, "Good source of calcium and vitamin D" was the most appreciated statement in Chandon and Cadario (2022) research. Product evaluation is more positive when there are claims of the presence of good ingredients or the absence of additives, sugar, or fat, even when this extends to aspects of the product that are not relevant (Song & Im, 2018). Exposure to a low-carb claim increases purchase intention and induces people to skip other nutritional information (Koenigstorfer & Groeppel-Klein, 2010), especially overweight or diagnosed diet consumers that can overlook general information and be misguided (Kemp et al., 2007).

Finally, the addition of an extra food ingredient (AFI) is a technique consisting of highlighting several ingredients in the package that are positive, but irrelevant. This method is visual and quick to read, and its use, observed in all types of foods from solids to beverages, is harmful to consumers (Zhu et al., 2019).

6.1 Consumer Behavior

There is growing global attention toward how packaging influences and is interpreted by several segments of consumers (Wansink et al., 2004; Zank & Smith, 2021). Lowe et al. (2013) identified three segments of consumers: information-hungry innovators, active label readers, and onlookers. More recently, Gassler et al. (2022) through a cluster analysis identified five segments:

– Overstrained—Try to maintain a healthy lifestyle but has low nutritional literacy, which limits the use and results in fewer healthy choices.

- Ambivalent—Do not prioritize a healthy diet, have the lowest health awareness, a focus on flavor and a low nutritional literacy.
- Detail-lovers—Are not overly health conscious, feel comfortable with the nutritional information, and want to understand it.
- Uninterested—The youngest segment, and like the ambivalent, have little health awareness or priority and have high consumption of processed food with flavor focus. Despite having nutritional literacy, that is not used.
- Label resisters—Despite understanding the information, they do not consider it relevant and try to avoid specific ingredients like fat or sugar.

7 The Healthfulness Biases

Several studies show that people might not use nutritional content because it is difficult (Howlett et al., 2008; Koen et al., 2018) as the information is considered overwhelming and intimidating (Koen et al., 2018), or because of lack of time or need (Koenigstorfer & Groeppel-Klein, 2010). There is an effort to decipher the information on the package (Koen et al., 2018; Sørensen et al., 2012), and most consumers cannot explain whether the product is adequate in terms of energy, sugar, fat, or sodium (Chalamon & Nabec, 2016; Dang & Nichols, 2022), making illiteracy one of the central reasons why consumers ignore nutrition content.

For people to make healthy choices, even with guidance, the information needs to be accurate and relevant (Howlett et al., 2008), however, other than illiteracy, there are many distractions from healthy choices, like environment-related messages, or a (visual) partnership with health-oriented non-profits (Hidalgo-Baz et al., 2017; Minton & Cornwell, 2016), green color labels (Huang & Lu, 2016; Schuldt, 2013), sustainability (Cho & Baskin, 2018; Wei et al., 2018), or organic symbols (Orquin, 2014).

The health perception is also conveyed by the appearance of the packaging, as people associate the brighter ones with foods to avoid (Ye et al., 2020), and the dullest ones with healthier foods (Howlett et al., 2008). This suggests that most consumers do not engage in complex reasoning and create their own perceptions, ideas (Chandon, 2013; Orquin, 2014; Zank & Smith, 2021) and feelings of trust, or even mistrust, evidenced by the market saturation of health endorsements (Creaven et al., 2020; Mitra et al., 2019).

8 Trust, Skepticism, and Familiarity

Consumers read the labels for a variety of reasons and dismiss its use when establishing feelings of trust and familiarity (Orquin, 2014) with brands or products (Chalamon & Nabec, 2016; France & Bone, 2009; Koen et al., 2018) and become less mindful of the product content (Creaven et al., 2020; Medina-Molina et al., 2021)

even toward scientific evidence (France & Bone, 2009). Only when purchasing a product for the first time, do people find a superior interest in nutritional information compared to regular products or well-known brands (Chalamon & Nabec, 2016; Chandon & Cadario, 2022).

Consumers at risk of illness (like diabetes, cardiovascular, and overweight) (Koen et al., 2018), children and their caregivers, are segments that pose a great risk to the feelings of trust created and established with brands or products. This segment tends to overvalue health symbols promoted by entities (like the heart symbol) or fruit images (that call for a fruity flavor) and are attracted by infant characters, celebrities' endorsements (Colson & Grebitus, 2017) or even by the mention of vitamins (Koen et al., 2018). Furthermore, these consumers overvalue the product in the moment of purchase, but also tend to increase consumption (Brierley & Elliott, 2017; Colson & Grebitus, 2017; Miller et al., 2011), like the case of overweight people and "low fat" labels (Chandon, 2013). However, the risk exists for all types of consumers who, through trust, create consumption expectations and less healthy habits (Mitra et al., 2019; Yin & Özdinç, 2018).

On the other hand, consumer confidence has been affected by commercial discourses (labeling and advertising) creating distrust, skepticism toward food packaging (Ringold, 2021). This feeling of skepticism is higher toward advertisements in general than to the packaging label, perhaps because label regulation is perceived to be tighter (Mitra et al., 2019). Specifically, health claims make people more suspicious than nutrient claims and create a certain entropy between the two techniques when used together. For instance, most consumers trust the nutritional aspects of the packaging better than any health appeal (Ringold, 2021), like in the organic label (Koenigstorfer & Groeppel-Klein, 2010).

9 The Price Element

Budget plays an important role in the food purchase decision and its importance outweighs the health claims (Koen et al., 2018; Kolodinsky, 2012). The consumption of less healthy foods is affected by the price's increase, but remains the same if the price is maintained, and increases if the price falls. On one hand, people dismiss health claims on behalf of lower prices (Barreiro-Hurlé et al., 2010a, 2010b), on the other hand, people value healthiness and accept expensive prices in exchange of healthy food (Koen et al., 2018). Products with the cheapest price prevail and healthy products are considered when on sale (Yin & Özdinç, 2018).

Price is frequently the only consideration for food decision-making and choice, showing a greater need to educate people to not relate products with weight and appearance, but with health, and to verify the essential nutritional differences in their choice (Koen et al., 2018). Additionally, marketers should pay attention to the category-pricing strategies and adapt them to the scope of social marketing corporate responsibility (Yin & Özdinç, 2018).

10 Discussion

The health claim-based communication literature shows through several studies a healthy communication-based narrative, where people are led to make healthier choices, to the health claim overstatement, where consumers are misguided by a halo effect. From a social marketing corporate responsibility perspective, we can refer to, what we propose to label, the healthvertising phenomenon. This refers to the constant use of health-related arguments and use of heal as a selling proposition in packaging of all types of food, whether these healthy or not, and whether they are good and useful guidance, with true facts or not.

Table 4 presents the classification of studies that addressed the use of health-related claims, either as halo effect or as a healthy communication technique.

11 Research Agenda

Since there is an emergent need to continue studying the topic, this section provides a research agenda to stimulate future research and knowledge development in the field that could contribute to a deeper understanding of the health claims' positive and negative effects on consumers:

1. The health halo effect

Despite all the literature concerning the halo effect, the health claims' effect through food packaging has grown gradually over the last decade, albeit slowly (Sundar et al., 2021). Future research should examine the effect of other packaging formats or brands that excel at using unnatural concept to claim similar effects (such as nutrient highlighting, biased names, and unnatural colors). Furthermore, one should understand the impact of inferences from unnatural claims compared to natural claims (like organic claims) (Sundar et al., 2021).

2. Healthy communication techniques

The use of AFIs, such as the cinnamon stick in the ice cream package, have been shown to have a health halo effect, especially when combined with multiple signals (Zhu et al., 2016), and the presence of simultaneous and contradictory informational clues (like the presence of fat or salt) is seen as a fruitful for future investigation (Sundar et al., 2021). To use a wider range, the AFI's impact on consumption and calorie underestimation and health perception should be studied. The consumption and taste factor could be explored by sensory stimulation mechanisms and eye tracking that may help to understand how consumers perceive flavor and calories (Turner et al., 2014) and how this perception is affected by color, shape, or images. For example, in a study of cucumber fries, consumers underestimated calories because of the green color of the cucumber on the packaging and the same can happen with the claim's structures (Zhu et al., 2019) that can be related to a healthier palate, smell and with flavor (Cho & Baskin, 2018).

Table 4 Main studies and Healthvertising

		Healthvertising	
Study	Claim/features	Halo effect	Healthy communication techniques
Burton et al. (2015)	Positive (halos) and negative (horns) health-related inferences	Consumers often misinterpret health claims and generalize positive and negative attributes	Objective serving size levels guide people's perception of consumption. A health horn disconfirmation provokes a positive effect on evaluation, and a negative effect when the health halo is disconfirmed. The use of the horn decreases the purchase intention
Eriksson and Machin (2020)	Buzzwords (e.g., "sustainable", "protein", "superfoods", "organic")	Products project a "halo effect" when named by buzzwords, ingredient adjectives, and the word "energy"	n/a
Fernan et al. (2018)	Product name	A product seems healthy even in the presence of a sugar or calories warning if the package states words like "protein"	n/a
André et al. (2019)	Claims at the macro and micro level	Health claims effects are based on taste and healthiness perceptions and vary across products	Three claim types are identified to help predict the effects of hedonic eating, healthy eating, or weight loss goals on food choice
Sundar et al. (2021)	Unnatural nutritional claims (e.g., artificial ingredients, food additives, genetically modified organisms)	Access to unnatural nutritional claims leads to higher calorie estimates and biased food decisions with a negative health halo effect	Negative health inferences with an unnatural claim decrease taste perceptions and mitigate the negative halo effect on calorie estimates

(continued)

Table 4 (continued)

		Healthvertising	
Study	Claim/features	Halo effect	Healthy communication techniques
Thomas et al. (2021)	HSR	People use a decision strategy based on a dominant nutrient to choose food products, that generates health halos and leads to less healthy choices when products have negatively correlated nutrients	The presence of a simplified nutrition scoring system leads nudge people into more accurate healthiness perception and healthy choices. Also, the healthiness on products increases with the introduction of HSRs
Andrews et al. (2021)	FOP nutrition symbols	n/a	Results support the effectiveness of the Stop Sign label over the Traffic Light label. The Traffic Light label performs better on nutrition use accuracy when nutrient accuracy scores for a wider range of six nutrients considered
Dang and Nichols (2022)	Nutrition information provided in FOP	A positive nutrient added to an unhealthy package is perceived as healthy. People might perceive an unhealthy product without claims as healthy after being exposed to healthy claims	n/a
Gassler et al. (2022)	Nutri-Score label and BOP	n/a	Nutri-score reinforces the positive effect of a healthier nutrient profile on purchase likelihood while its use stigmatizes products of low nutritional quality. It also benefits the consumers who find hard to understand BOP nutrition table Mandatory nutrition labeling can empower low literacy consumers

(continued)

Table 4 (continued)

		Healthvertising	
Study	Claim/features	Halo effect	Healthy communication techniques
Chandon (2013)	Health claims	A combination of marketing, health, and nutrition claims creates "health halos" on consumer. Packaging design (cues, shapes, and sizes) biases people's perception of food quantity and increases preference for supersized packages and portions that appear smaller than they are. The absence of regulations may encourage food marketers to compete on taste rather than on health	Regulation adaptions, mindful eating promotion, and mindless nudges work better when combined Examples: policy intervention designed to regulate the effects of packaging. Encouraging consumers to think about food quantity (not just quality) Change the choice context at the points of purchase (and consumption) so that healthy becomes the easy choice

Source own elaboration

Also, it is essential to understand how, if, and when negative facts up front (FUF) nutrients influence perceptions of healthy foods compared to when no FUF label is used (Dang & Nichols, 2022). The processes underlying the different domains of halo effects might be different and should be explored. An example will be exploring consumer personality characteristics that may provide a more ambiguous, or at least less tangible, basis for a general halo effect, in different shopping contexts (Sundar et al., 2021) and combine halo and horn effects in the information provided in the shopping environment for more regularly purchased food products (Burton et al., 2015).

3. Consumers' information access

At a time when is still discussed which is the most effective nutrition labeling system in food packaging, the relevance of its impact is emerging and it is essential to determine what affects the visualization of nutritional facts (Hastak et al., 2020; Medina-Molina et al., 2021). Within this, experimental studies could demonstrate how the nutritional quality of a product could have an integrated impact on interpretation and attitudes (Cao & Yan, 2021). For example, future research should check if the use of simplified Nutri-Score systems could help, or not, to mitigate high-risk behaviors (Thomas et al., 2021). The effect and interaction between three types of information like nutrition information, nutrition claims, and logos are still not well explained (Ono & Ono, 2015) and how the skepticism affects the use of the nutrient

panel in the retail context (Mitra et al., 2019), mainly in an international context (Chandon & Cadario, 2022).

The online shopping relevance and process, mainly after the global pandemic, should be studied and compared to the retail context (Hastak et al., 2020).

Another key avenue for future research would be to examine the outcome and effectiveness of HSR in improving the healthfulness of family purchases and how the effect varies across different categories (Thomas et al., 2021).

It is still questionable how people appreciate products such as water bottles, which brings the opportunity to pursue topics such like certified packaging or sustainability transmission (Cho & Baskin, 2018).

The positioning of claims is another important aspect for future research as it is known that consumers look from top to bottom when they pick up the package, but not how this could be changed (Dang & Nichols, 2022).

The use of the BOP is carried out differently from the FOP and deserves due attention, especially its healthy transmission (Gassler et al., 2022). For instance, a clean label might guide people's attention to the BOP, and this should be explored at a cross-cultural level (Rybak et al., 2021). Cross-cultural research is essential to understand and compare the different health legations functionality, hideousness, and the benefits of their symbols and if people consider or purchase under this influence (Chandon & Cadario, 2022).

At the business level, future research could understand the strategies and how nutrition claims are managed at the cross-cultural level by comparing metrics such as profit and their main consumer segment (Cao & Yan, 2021).

12 Conclusions

The goal of this systematic literature review was to map extant knowledge on health claims in food packaging. In addition to its contribution to the state of the art of the topic, and identify gaps and directions for future research, the review contributes to providing implications for corporate practice and public policymakers. We have conducted a systematic literature review of 62 studies and identified the following two main themes: Health-related claim-based communication (halo effect; healthy communication techniques; packaging) and consumer behavior.

From the halo effect applied to the package to the healthy communication techniques, there is a declared sale of health through food package that we named healthvertising. The impact of the techniques and the information conveyed by the label is carried out with a holistic view that ranges from price discounts to nutritional claims and package characteristics. Consumers and packages were explored through different methods, conceptual models, and several theories in the literature.

Findings of this study have provided several implications. For retailers, food manufacturers, and brands, underlining consumer health and providing useful FOP nutrition information may enhance brand attitudes and market positioning (Andrews

et al., 2021). If the objective is to improve consumer health, the use of AFIs could be effective in highlighting key negative aspects of food products.

Unfortunately, most consumers are unlikely to engage in high-involvement reasoning on a regular basis, and as such, it is necessary to standardize size, calories and nutrition labeling for out-of-home consumption and impose restrictions on health and nutrition claims such as those adopted by some countries. Even so, this information may only influence the behavior of the subset of consumers who are willing to pay attention and interested in healthier eating (Chandon, 2013).

Diet-related diseases have been a common concern for governments that result in difficult economic costs to manage (Andrews et al., 2021; Eriksson & Machin, 2020; Orquin, 2014). It is expected that by 2022 the European Commission will seek to introduce more harmonized and mandatory nutritional information in the FOP, with Nutri-Score at the center of parliamentary discussion (Gassler et al., 2022). Four approaches that might make a difference are considered:

- Mandatory nutrition information should correct health halos with objective evidence about calories and nutrient content, thus presenting foods with a "low fat" claim that might not be essentially low in calories Chandon (2013).
- Regulation of health claims (Fernan et al., 2018; Mitra et al., 2019; Ringold, 2021; Wright et al., 2020);
- Encouraging "mindful" consumption and educating consumers like the introduction of nutritional knowledge in schools' education (Zank & Smith, 2021);
- Nudging people toward "mindless" healthy eating and be aware that obesity is not a moral flaw but a response to the changing environment Chandon (2013).

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Influence of Socio-cultural Pressure on Internalization of the Thin Body Ideal and the Effect of Fitness Advertising Endorsers (Thin Versus Overweight/Realistic)

António Azevedo and Ângela Azevedo

Abstract This paper discusses the influence of socio-cultural pressure on internalization of the thin body ideal and the effect of endorser's appearance (thin versus overweight) mediated by self-congruency. The intersection of body image and fitness advertising processing is a gap that remains unexplored by marketing researchers. An online questionnaire framed a within-subjects study design, with two scenarios simulating a fitness print advertisement, which assessed the following constructs: Body Mass Index; Socio-cultural Attitudes Towards Appearance Scale-4 (SATAQ-4), Body Appreciation Scale (BAS-2), perceived efficacy of physical exercise, self-congruency between the respondent and the endorsers, purchase intention, and the willingness to pay for a monthly gym membership fee. A GLM repeated measures analysis and a Structural Equation Model for each scenario supported the hypotheses claiming the influence of BAS-2 and SATAQ-4 on the outcomes of the advertising processing (perceived efficacy of the physical exercise, purchase intention, and willingness to pay for gym classes). The mediating role of consumers' self-congruency (similarity) with the endorsers was also confirmed. The paper provides several recommendations for fitness advertisers, stressing the social responsibility role in enhancing positive body appreciation and preventing the stigmatization bias against obese people.

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1 Introduction

The exposure to advertising-induced social comparison can increase body dissatisfaction and body image distress (Myre et al., 2020; Venkat & Ogden, 2002; Zheng et al. 2020), which, in turn, may drive men to focus on the development of lean, muscular, and athletic physiques (Camerino et al., 2020; Pickett & Brison, 2019) and impel women to pursue the thin beauty ideal, through the purchase of dietary products and engagement in weight loss activities, such as fitness/gym classes (Myre et al., 2020).

"Working out" is a daily element of the lives of millions of consumers, in an attempt to modify their bodies. According to Powers and Greenwell (2017, p. 524), "people who adopt branded fitness as their routine often transcend regular gym members and even 'gym rats' in their devotion, becoming proselytes engaged in a 'way of life' that warrants substantial time, social, and financial investment".

Even consumers who have positive body appreciation are still exposed to socio-cultural pressure from family, peers, and media, inducing internalization of a thin, lean, or muscular body as a social norm. Obesity is also associated with severe stigmatization by peers, since obese people are often negatively stereotyped as lazy and lacking in self-control (Blodorn et al., 2016). Accordingly, some studies have revealed that the promotion of physical activity can reduce body dissatisfaction (Añez et al., 2018).

This paper discusses the influence of socio-cultural pressure for attaining a thin body image in consumers with different body appreciation levels and how it impacts the processing and response to advertising of fitness classes.

The intersection of body image and advertising is a research topic that has been investigated by several researchers (Betz & Ramsey, 2017; Connors et al., 2021; de Lenne et al., 2021; Esmeijer, 2020; Sabiston & Chandler, 2010; Yu et al., 2011).

Furthermore, Åkestam et al. (2017) and Esmeijer (2020) among others have drawn attention to the notion of femvertising (female empowerment advertising) as a form of advertising that focuses on women empowerment by challenging traditional gender stereotypes. One form of femvertising are advertisements that question current body ideals for women and promote more realistic body ideals (Mulgrew et al., 2017) also designated as "non-idealized" models (de Lenne et al., 2021). Whereas traditional advertising targeted at women tends to use thin models who meet the body ideal, femvertising use models with different body types to represent the entire female population. In addition, obese women face a structural weight stigma linked to a health-based weight stereotype (HWS) that explains why they have been portrayed negatively in advertising of physical activities (Connors et al., 2021; Myre et al., 2020). Existing research disagrees about the effects of such realistic body ideals, because these advertisements are not always successful in generating positive effects on body image and body satisfaction (Anschutz et al., 2009; Bissell & Rask, 2010).

For example, Connors et al. (2021) demonstrated that advertisements featuring thin models and healthy (versus unhealthy) products lead to a greater product–model fit, which leads consumers to view the advertisements more favourably. However,

for advertisements featuring overweight models and unhealthy (versus healthy) products, only overweight identifiers perceive higher levels of product–model fit, leading to more favourable evaluations, perpetuating unhealthy consumption behaviour.

Fitness gyms marketers assume that thin body images in advertising will lead to more favourable brand attitudes, since they aim to demonstrate the efficacy of monitored practice of physical exercise, but thereby perpetuate the stigma of being overweight and the ideal of thinness. However, certain advertising campaigns, such as Aerie Real and Dove Real Beauty, have attempted to promote body acceptance by adopting a different approach, using more realistic endorsers, who are more representative of the average customer (Selensky & Carels, 2021). Advertisers of fitness products may also want to follow that trend and use more realistic endorsers in their advertising copy strategy.

These previous studies were therefore the source of inspiration for the design of our research question, which aims to fill a gap in the literature, since it will contribute to a better understanding of several unexplored theoretical and practical issues.

First of all, this study extends the focus of the research to the use of both man and woman models, testing different advertising layouts with two endorsers. Secondly, this study aims to examine how the discrepancy between the endorsers' body characteristics (thin endorsers/congruent to the fitness's final goals versus overweight endorsers/incongruent to the fitness's final goals) influences the effectiveness of the advertisement and consumer responses in the fitness advertising context. Thirdly, this paper also analyses the mediating effect of similarity (self-congruence) between the consumer and the endorser that is supported by several studies (Yu et al., 2011).

In the next section, this paper proposes a new conceptual model and formulates several research hypotheses that will be tested in a quantitative study assessing all antecedents and consequences of body dissatisfaction. This paper also provides new insights and recommendations to brand and retail managers about the need to adapt the strategy of the advertising copy in order to satisfy the needs and concerns of all consumer targets with different levels of body appreciation and body mass index.

2 Background, Literature and Conceptual Model

2.1 Positive Body Image Versus Body Dissatisfaction

Body dissatisfaction is common among men and women in developed and developing nations (Allen & Robson, 2020; Karazsia et al., 2017) with prevalence estimates ranging from 11 to 72% among women and 8–61% among men (Fiske et al., 2014). Moreover, young people and adolescents have more proneness to develop psychological and eating disorders (Barra et al., 2019; Striegel-Moore et al., 2009) since obesity and being overweight are often the main reasons for body dissatisfaction (Bellard et al., 2021).

People with a positive body image are more prone to accept their perceived body imperfections or deviations from cultural ideals (Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015b). Tylka and Wood-Barcalow (2015a, p. 53) defined body appreciation as "accepting, holding favorable opinions toward, and respecting the body, while also rejecting media-promoted appearance ideals as the only form of human beauty". According to Tylka and Wood-Barcalow (2015b), a positive body image is a distinct construct from a negative body image. It is multifaceted, including facets such as body appreciation, body acceptance, adaptive appearance investment, broadly conceptualizing beauty or inner positivity, it is holistic and stable. Several self-report questionnaires have been developed to assess body dissatisfaction and body image. This paper will adopt the Body Appreciation Scale-2 (BAS-2) created by Avalos et al. (2005).

Body image concerns may be impacted by several factors, such as body mass index (BMI), pubertal status, personality, and external influence from parents, peers, and the media through appearance comparison and internalization of the thin ideal (Allen & Robson, 2020; Martin & Racine, 2017). In general, women experience greater body dissatisfaction than men, while men face unique muscularity-focused body concerns (Frederick et al., 2006). The male body ideal includes two dimensions: leanness and muscularity (Ridgeway & Tylka, 2005; Sladek et al., 2014). Body dissatisfaction may be related to the development of eating disorders and body dysmorphics (Cafri et al., 2005), unhealthy practices for weight control (McCabe & Ricciardelli, 2003; Schaefer et al., 2015), impaired sexual function (Woertman & Van den Brink, 2012), low self-esteem, interpersonal difficulties, depressed mood, social anxiety (Dakanalis et al., 2015), low physical activity, substantial morbidity, stress, substance abuse, and obesity (Paxton et al., 2006). Since 2000, the DSM-IV-TR (APA, 2000) includes over-concern with weight and body shape as a criterion for the diagnosis of anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa (Toro et al., 2005).

2.2 Socio-cultural Attitude Towards Physical Appearance: Internalization of Thin/Athletic Bodies, Family, Peers, and Media/Advertising Pressures

The Tripartite Model proposed by Thompson et al. (1999) suggests that individuals are pressured to achieve ideals of culturally adopted appearance mainly by three social influences (family, friends, and media). In order to measure social-cultural influence on body dissatisfaction, Schaefer et al. (2015) developed the Socio-cultural Attitudes Towards Appearance Scale-4 (SATAQ-4) with 22 items, comprising five dimensions: internalization of thin/low body fat, internalization of muscular/athletic body, family pressure, peer pressure, and media pressure. Internalization refers to the extent to which an individual accepts the ideals of appearance and expresses the desire to achieve them (Barra et al., 2019). The social comparison theory (Festinger, 1954) argues that humans have an innate drive to compare themselves with others. If the reference for comparison is thin and attractive models then most men and

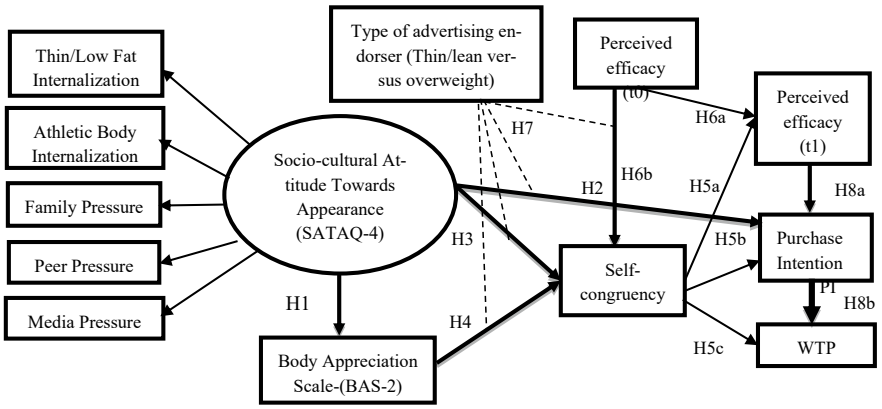

Fig. 1 Conceptual model

women will inevitably feel some body dissatisfaction (Bessenoff, 2006; Brown & Tiggemann, 2016; Tiggemann & McGill, 2004; Tiggemann & Polivy, 2010).

Swami et al. (2016) and Sundgot-Borgen et al. (2021), among others, have found a negative correlation between the socio-cultural pressure (SATAQ) dimensions and body appreciation. Therefore, this paper proposes the first research hypothesis, represented in the conceptual model in Fig. 1.

H1—Socio-cultural Attitudes Towards Appearance (measured by SATAQ-4), as a composite of five dimensions (internalization of thin/low body fat, internalization of muscular/athletic body, family pressure, peer pressure, and media pressure) (negatively) influences the self-perception of body image (measured by BAS-2).

There are also some evidences that socio-culture pressure (SATAQ) is a predictor of compulsive exercise (Harnish et al., 2019; Martin & Racine, 2017; Uhlmann et al., 2018). Therefore, this paper proposes the second hypothesis.

H2—Socio-cultural Attitudes Towards Appearance (measured by SATAQ-4), as a composite of five dimensions (internalization of thin/low body fat, internalization of muscular/athletic body, family pressure, peer pressure, and media pressure) positively influences the intention to purchase fitness classes as a way to attain the thin/lean body ideal.

2.3 Antecedents and Consequences of Fitness Advertising and the Mediating Role of Self-congruency

Huang et al. (2020) made a meta-analysis that examined the relationship between media pressure and a wide range of body image-related outcomes as well as moderators (e.g., media type, outcome type, age group, gender proportion in the sample, and study design).

The notion of self-concept is defined as the sum of one's thoughts and feelings about oneself pertaining to others and can be taken in two forms: "actual self" and "ideal self". The actual self describes how an individual perceives themselves ("me as I am"), whereas the concept of the ideal self explains how an individual wants to perceive themselves ("the perfect me") (Choi & Rifon, 2012; Onkvisit & Shaw, 1987).

An individual's self-concept is heavily driven by the state of self-congruence; the condition in which an individual's ideal self or actual self is aligned with a brand's image or personality (Sirgy, 1982; Sirgy et al., 1997). Additionally, self-concept is driven by self-esteem; the need to enhance oneself and pursue one's ideal self-image. Betz and Ramsey (2017) found that advertisements which convey body-acceptance messages are processed more favourably.

According to Connors et al. (2021), people's judgement of similarity to a specific target (e.g., a model in an advertisement) is based on their assessment of a primary feature (e.g., the model's body shape) in relation to their perception of themselves with regard to that key feature (e.g., their own body identity). For example, restrained eaters' self-evaluations after exposure to a thin model are based on their perceived similarity to the target model (Papies & Nicolaije, 2012).

The importance of the mediating role of self-congruency generated five more hypotheses.

H3—The influence of Socio-cultural Attitudes Towards Appearance (measured by SATAQ-4) on the consumer response to fitness advertising is mediated by the self-congruency (similarity) between the consumer and the advertising endorser.

H4—The influence of Body Appreciation (BAS-2) on the consumer response to fitness advertising is mediated by the self-congruency (similarity) between the consumer and the advertising endorser.

H5a, b, c—The self-congruency (similarity) between the consumer and the advertising endorser influences: (a) the perceived efficacy of fitness classes as way to get thin/lean body ideal; (b) the intention to purchase fitness classes; and (c) the willingness to pay for a monthly gym membership fee.

2.3.1 The Match-Up Hypothesis and Advertising Credibility

Successful campaigns in product endorsement are developed through a strong fit between the product and the endorser (e.g. McCormick, 2016; Till & Busler, 2000). This congruence is explained by the match-up hypothesis, in which an endorser is only effective when he is perceived to have the proper image, experience, and expertise to recommend the product or service. Ohanian (1991) articulated three primary dimensions important to a strong endorsement relationship: (a) attractiveness encompasses the physical and non-physical characteristics of the endorser, which can include the similarity and likeability of the endorser (Kim & Na, 2007); (b) expertise is the perceived knowledge of the endorser; and (c) trustworthiness is the consumer's certainty in the endorser's ability to provide reliable information (Ohanian, 1991).

Credibility is crucial in advertisements featuring endorsers, due to its influence on the believability of advertisement claims made by the endorser (Mishra et al., 2015).

Attractive models, based on beautiful and thin models, are perceived as more favourable, effective, and trustworthy in advertising (Baker & Churchill, 1977; Kahle & Homer, 1985; Till & Busler, 2000). Advertisers in the fitness industry tend to select thin/athletic endorsers. Mishra (2017) examined six decades (1930–1990) of representations of white women in weight loss advertising in the *New York Times*. Women's portrayals evolve from glamorous and thin to curvaceous, feminine, and sexually appealing, to youthful, bold, and confident, and finally to strong and muscular. The advertisements convey the belief that through diet and exercise, women can achieve success in all aspects of their lives, from relationships to careers.

For example, Pickett and Brison (2019) found an inverse relationship between consumer body image and athlete endorser credibility, such that individuals with lower body image perceived the endorsers as being more credible. Furthermore, athlete endorser credibility was positively associated with advertisement believability, which itself was associated with purchase intentions.

Social comparison theory states that individuals are innately prone to compare themselves to others (Bessenoff, 2006; Festinger, 1954). In advertisements, the celebrities and athletes are often portrayed possessing idealized body images, resulting in an upward social comparison (Tiggemann & Polivy, 2010). Although upward social comparisons should motivate positive behaviour related to self-improvement, research indicates the result is often increased body dissatisfaction, negative moods, and reduced self-esteem (Bessenoff, 2006). On the other hand, if the individual identifies with the celebrity or athlete endorser, or sees them as being similar to themselves, the upward social comparison will yield a more positive affect (Dens et al., 2009). Accordingly, D'Alessandro and Chitty (2011) noted that endorser effectiveness varies based on the body shape of the consumer, the body shape of the endorser, and the type of product or service promoted. Hence, the success (or failure) of the endorsement is influenced by the consumer's self-evaluations of his own body image (Pickett & Brison, 2019). Several studies have demonstrated that body appreciation predicts how women respond to beauty-ideal media imagery (Andrew et al., 2016). Mulgrew and Hennes (2015) revealed that women who reported higher internalization of an athletic-ideal were more likely to respond negatively to objectifying, posed models.

The literature provides contradictory evidence of the advertising effectiveness of advertisements using highly attractive models compared to advertisements that use more realistic and "average" models in beauty or body size according to similarity–attraction theory (Byrne, 1971; Halliwell & Dittmar, 2004; Yu et al., 2011). Consumers might perceive greater similarity with models that are average in attractiveness,

When people feel judged, this can backfire. According to Derricks and Earl (2019), participants with higher BMIs, being targeted to receive information about obesity and obesity-related illness have increased perceived relevance among recipients, which is a predictor of increased irritation and self-conscious emotions. Negative emotional responses produced heterogenous, but primarily deleterious, effects on

self-efficacy and behavioural intentions to engage in healthy behaviour because recipients felt unfairly judged.

On the other hand, the assessment of the advertising effectiveness of non-idealized models encourages the further adoption of these models in real-life advertisements. The results showed that femvertising advertisements, with mixed models, are more positively evaluated regarding attitude towards the advertisement, brand attitude, purchase intention, and social endorsement compared to traditional advertisement with only thin models (Esmeijer, 2020).

In order to analyse the influence of the type of endorser's physical appearance (thin/lean models versus overweight/realistic models) and the implicit (low versus high) degree of discrepancy between the physical appearance and the expected outcome of physical exercise, some additional hypotheses were added to the model:

H6a, b—The perceived efficacy of fitness exercise as a way to reduce obesity measured before exposure to the print advertisements (t0) influences: (a) the perceived efficacy of fitness exercise after the exposure to the print advertisements (t1); (b) the level of self-congruency between the consumer and the endorsers.

H7a, b, c—The type of endorser's physical appearance (thin/lean models versus overweight/realistic models), and the implicit (low vs. high) degree of discrepancy between the physical appearance and the expected outcome of physical exercise, moderates the influence on self-congruency resulting from (a) SATAQ; (b) BAS-2; and (c) perceived efficacy of physical exercise.

H8a, b—The perceived efficacy of fitness exercise as a way to reduce obesity measured after the exposure to the print advertisements (t1) influences (H8a) the intention to purchase fitness classes which in turn influences (H8b) the willingness to pay for a monthly membership fee.

3 Methods

3.1 Measures and Stimuli

This study conducted an online questionnaire that measured the constructs of the independent variables of the model and their outcomes resulting from socio-cultural pressure and body dissatisfaction, thus aiming to validate the conceptual model of Fig. 1.

In the first part of the online questionnaire, the respondents were invited to measure the following constructs (see Table 1): (a) the influence of socio-cultural pressure was measured with 22 items (5 dimensions) of the Portuguese version of the Socio-cultural Attitudes Towards Appearance Scale-4 (SATAQ-4) developed by Barra et al. (2019) based on the original version of Schaefer et al. (2015); (b) the 10 items of the Portuguese version of the Body Appreciation Scale-2 (BAS-2) of Tylka and Wood-Barcalow (2015a) which has been validated by several studies (Junqueira et al., 2019; Lemoine et al., 2018; Meneses et al., 2019); (c) Overall body satisfaction (using 10

points Likert scale); (d) Overall perceived physical appearance evaluated by others (using 10 points Likert scale); (e) The perceived efficacy of physical exercise prior to exposure to gym advertisements (t_0), the willingness to pay for gym classes for obesity prevention purposes (WTP_{p0}), the willingness to pay for gym classes for obesity correction purposes (WTP_{c0}).

In the second part of the questionnaire, the respondents were exposed to two print advertisements of a fictitious gym/fitness club showing two anonymous consumers practicing physical exercise in a function-oriented pose (Williamson & Karazsia, 2018). The endorsers in Ad1 have a thin/lean body whereas in Ad2 the endorsers are overweight (see Fig. 2).

After exposure to Ad1 and Ad2, the respondents rated the following measurements: the perceived efficacy of physical exercise (PE_Ad1, PE_Ad2), the intention to purchase fitness classes (PI_Ad1, PI_Ad2), and the willingness to pay for a monthly gym membership fee (WTP_Ad1, WTP_Ad2).

3.2 Sample

The online questionnaire was shared on social media networks and university mailing lists, using a convenience/snow-ball sampling method. There were 134 respondents—105 females (78.4%) and 29 males (21.6%), ranging from 18 to 71 years old ($M_{age} = 26.99$; $SD_{age} = 10.433$).

The average weight of respondents was w = 64.25 kg (SD = 13.64) and the average height was h = 1.66 m (SD = 8.82). The body mass index (BMI) was calculated by the formula ($BMI = w/h^2$), so the average BMI was 19.21 (SD = 3.57) and it is positively correlated with age ($R^2 = 0.293$, $p < 0.001$). The World Health Organization defined BMI < 25 as the limited for not being overweight whereas BMI > 30 is the lower limit for obesity. The majority of respondents (94.8%) have a BMI below 25 and only two were considered obese.

The majority of the respondents live in the North of Portugal, in cities such as Braga (46.3%), Guimarães (11.2%), or Porto (6%). Regarding the education level, 30.5% of respondents have only completed high school, whereas 69.5% have an undergraduate or master's degree. In terms of monthly disposable income, 61.9% have a household income of less than 2000 euros, and 38.1% have a higher monthly income.

Only three participants claimed to have a physical handicap of more than 70%. Regarding overall satisfaction with their self-body image, 11.2% respondents stated that they have a self-perception of their body image "below the average", while 14.9% classified their body image "above the average", and the remaining 73.9% self-ascribed to the group of "average body image".

Considering the lower half of the scale (in 1–10 Likert scale), 15.7% of respondents rated a negative overall satisfaction with their body image (M = 6.95; SD = 1.774; N = 134). In addition, 25.4% think that others evaluate their physical appearance negatively (M = 6.42; SD = 1.76; N = 134). These results are aligned with

Table 1 Means and standard deviations of the items of SATAQ-4 scale and BAS-2 scale

SATAQ-4 scale items	M	SD
3. I want my body to look very thin	2.16	1.221
4. I want my body to look like it has little fat	3.72	1.141
5. I think a lot about looking thin	2.81	1.363
8. I want my body to look very lean	1.97	1.201
9. I think a lot about having very little body fat	2.93	1.394
Internalization of Thin/low body fat (Alpha = 0.851)	13.59	5.016
1. It is important for me to look athletic	3.30	1.176
2. I think a lot about looking muscular	2.51	1.267
6. I spend a lot of time doing things to look more athletic	2.31	1.265
7. I think a lot about looking athletic	2.76	1.333
10. I spend a lot of time doing things to look more muscular	1.99	1.130
Internalization of muscle/athletic body (Alpha = 0.892)	12.87	5.165
11. I feel pressure from family members to look thinner	1.64	1.146
12. I feel pressure from family members to improve my appearance	1.96	1.306
13. Family members encourage me to decrease my level of body fat	2.10	1.303
14. Family members encourage me to get in better shape	2.66	1.355
Family pressure (Alpha = 0.811)	8.36	4.092
15. My peers encourage me to get thinner	1.70	1.004
16. I feel pressure from my peers to improve my appearance	1.61	0.965
17. I feel pressure from my peers to look in better shape	1.63	1.001
18. I get pressure from my peers to decrease my level of body fat	1.49	0.882
Peers pressure (Alpha = 0.874)	6.43	3.287
19. I feel pressure from the media to look in better shape	3.39	1.430
20. I feel pressure from the media to look thinner	2.93	1.571
21. I feel pressure from the media to improve my appearance	3.48	1.439
22. I feel pressure from the media to decrease my level of body fat	3.08	1.542
Media pressure (Alpha = 0.948)	12.88	5.566
Total SATAQ-4 scale score (Alpha = 0.893)	54.13	15.389
Body appreciation scale (BAS-2) scale items	M	SD
1. I respect my body	4.06	0.763
2. I feel good about my body	3.43	0.896
3. I feel that my body has at least some good qualities	3.88	0.766
4. I take a positive attitude towards my body	3.64	0.945
5. I am attentive to my body's needs	3.69	0.903
6. I feel love for my body	3.56	0.985
7. I appreciate the different and unique characteristics of my body	3.48	0.940

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

Body appreciation scale (BAS-2) scale items	M	SD
8. My behaviour reveals my positive attitude towards my body, for example, I hold my head high and smile	3.62	1.046
9. I am comfortable in my body	3.60	0.926
10. I feel like I am beautiful even if I am different from media images of attractive people (e.g., models, actresses/actors)	3.63	0.970
Total BAS-2-scale score (Alpha = 0.936)	36.60	7.308

Fig. 2 Print advertisements used as stimuli in the experimental plan

lower limits of the ranges provided by Barra et al. (2019), Fiske et al. (2014), Karazsia et al. (2017) or Striegel-Moore et al. (2009). The Mann–Whitney tests did not reveal significant differences in these variables, contradicting the gender differences found by several authors (Frederick et al., 2006; Ridgeway & Tylka, 2005; Sladek et al., 2014).

4 Findings

Table 1 describes the statistics of the five dimensions of the Portuguese version of the Socio-cultural Attitudes Towards Appearance Scale-4 (SATAQ-4) developed by Barra et al. (2019) and the 10 items of the BAS-2 scale. All the dimensions have acceptable values of Cronbach Alphas (higher than 0.8). The total score of SATAQ-4 (M = 54.13) is below the average score (66), thus revealing that the social-cultural pressure is not strong.

Furthermore, the respondents have positive body appreciation as BAS-2 total score (M = 36.6) which is above scale midpoint (30). BMI is positively correlated with family pressure, peer pressure, and SATAQ 4 (Bellard et al., 2021), but not with BAS-2, thus contradicting Sundgot-Borgen et al. (2021).

The results of the response measurements before and after exposure to the fitness gym's print advertisements are shown in Table 2 and Fig. 3. The Wilcoxon paired

samples tests revealed some significant differences. The intention to purchase gym classes for corrective purposes aiming to reduce the obesity (PI_{c0}) is higher than the intention for preventive purposes only (PI_{p0}).

However, after exposure to Ad1 (with thin/lean models) the purchase intention decreases (pair 2), but after exposure to Ad2 (with overweight/realistic models) the purchase intention gets an even lower score (pair 3), thus confirming that the copy

Table 2 Wilcoxon paired samples tests, means and standard deviations of the response measures before (t0) and after exposure to the print advertisements (Ad1 and Ad2)

		Mean	Standard deviation	Z	p
Pair 1	Purchase intention (preventive, t0), PI_{p0}	6.29	3.112	−6.625[b]	0.000
	Purchase intention (corrective, t0), Pi_{c0}	7.81	2.726		
Pair 2	Purchase intention (corrective, t0), Pi_{c0}	7.81	2.726	−7.554[c]	0.000
	Purchase intention after Ad1, PI_Ad1	5.86	2.868		
Pair 3	Purchase intention after Ad1, PI_Ad1	5.86	2.868	−2.415[c]	0.016
	Purchase intention after Ad2, PI_Ad2	5.25	3.035		
Pair 4	Perceived efficacy of exercise (t0), PE_0	8.09	1.714	−7.159[c]	0.000
	Perceived efficacy of exercise Ad1, PE_Ad1	6.70	2.241		
Pair 5	Perceived efficacy of exercise Ad1, PE_Ad1	6.70	2.241	−0.891[c]	0.373
	Perceived efficacy of exercise Ad2, PE_Ad2	6.48	2.430		
Pair 6	Self-congruency Ad1, Sc_Ad1	4.66	2.650	−3.798[c]	0.000
	Self-congruency Ad2, Sc_Ad2	3.19	2.438		
Pair 7	Willingness to pay preventive (t0), WTP_{p0}	26.61	14.616	−5.220[b]	0.000
	Willingness to pay corrective (t0), WTP_{c0}	31.55	22.022		
Pair 8	Willingness to pay corrective (t0), WTP_{c0}	31.55	22.022	−4.719[c]	0.000
	Willingness to pay after Ad1, WTP_Ad1	26.48	13.426		
Pair 9	Willingness to pay after Ad1, WTP_Ad1	26.31	13.523	−3.275[c]	0.001
	Willingness to pay after Ad2, WTP_Ad2	24.01	13.929		

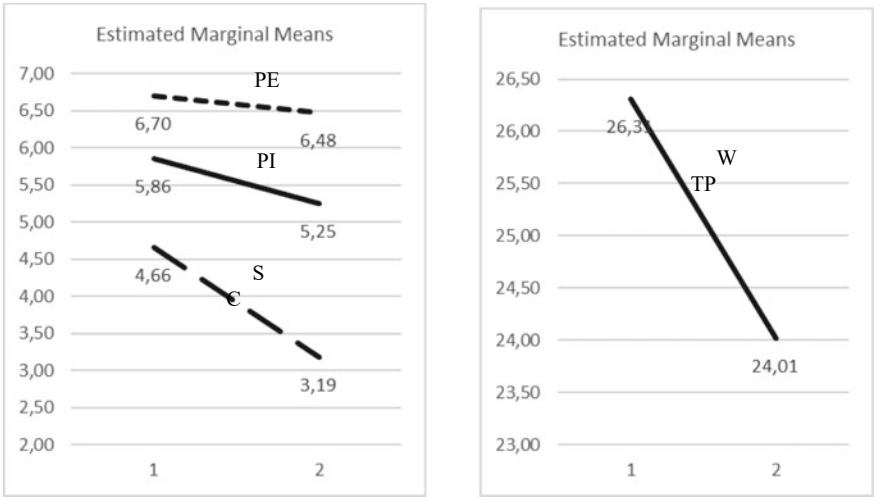

Fig. 3 Estimated marginal means for perceived efficacy (PE), purchase intention (PI), self-congruency (SC), and willingness to pay (WTP) rated for Ad1 (thin/lean endorsers) versus Ad2 (overweight/realistic endorsers)

strategy using realistic endorsers is less effective. The same pattern occurs in pair 4, whereas the mean score of the perceived efficacy of physical exercise as a means of reducing obesity is also lower than the initial value (t0). One of the main goals of fitness advertising is to persuade people to buy gym classes, aiming to achieve the thin/lean body ideal.

The sample respondents rated higher values of self-congruency (similarity) with the thin/lean endorsers of Ad1 as suggested by Dens et al. (2009) and D'Alessandro and Chitty (2011). This difference in pair 6 is a possible explanation for the significant difference (more than 2 euros) in the willingness to pay (WTP) for gym classes that emerged in pair 9 which compares the Ad1 with Ad2. Nevertheless, the Wilcoxon test for pair 5 did not show any significant difference between Ad1 and Ad2 regarding the perceived efficacy (see Table 2 the right graphic of Fig. 3).

In order to validate the hypotheses of the conceptual model of Fig. 1, this study found for each print advertisement a Structural Equation Model, using IBM AMOS 27.0.0. using the Generalized Least Squares method which converged with very good fit indices for Ad1 with thin/lean models (CMIN = 61.814; DF = 39; p = 0.011; RMR = 5.065; GFI = 0.915; AGFI = 0.857; PGFI = 0.541; RMSEA = 0.066) and for Ad2 with overweight models (CMIN = 66.049; DF = 39; p = 0.004; RMR = 3.114; GFI = 0.910; AGFI = 0.847; PGFI = 0.538; RMSEA = 0.072).

Tables 3, 4 and Figs. 4, 5 present the Generalized Least Squares estimates of regression weights. **Hypothesis H1 was supported** by the results of both SEM models because the socio-cultural pressure (SATAQ-4) influences body appreciation (BAS-2) with a negative regression weight, which means that higher socio-cultural

pressures will have a negative impact on the level of body appreciation, as claimed by several studies (Sundgot-Borgen et al., 2021; Swami et al., 2016).

However, the SEM revealed contradictory results regarding the direct influence of SATAQ-4 on the intention to purchase fitness classes as postulated in H2 and claimed by previous studies (Harnish et al., 2019; Martin & Racine, 2017; Uhlmann et al., 2018). Hence, **hypothesis H7** claiming a moderating effect of the type of endorser (thin/lean versus overweight) is supported by the results. Whereas in the response to Ad2 with overweight models, there is not any influence on the purchase intention either direct (H2) or mediated by self-congruency (**H3 is rejected in both scenarios**), in the response to Ad1 with thin/lean models there is a direct influence contradicting the findings of Mulgrew and Hennes (2015).

Furthermore, there are differences between the processing of the two advertisements regarding the influence of body appreciation on consumer response, mediated by self-congruency (hypothesis H4) as demonstrated in previous studies (Andrew

Table 3 SEM generalized least squares estimates of regression weights for Ad1 with thin/lean models

	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
BAS-2 ← SATAQ-4	−0.628	0.129	−4.858	***	H1 supported
Self_congruency_Ad1 ← SATAQ-4	0.583	0.443	1.315	0.188	H3 rejected
Self_congruency_Ad1 ← BAS-2	0.322	0.350	0.920	0.358	H4 rejected
Self_congruency_Ad1 ← Perceived_efficacy	0.357	0.128	2.799	0.005	H6b supported
Perceive_efficacy_Ad1 ← Self_congruency_Ad1	0.307	0.068	4.540	***	H5a supported
Perceive_efficacy_Ad1 ← Perceived_efficacy	0.634	0.092	6.865	***	H6a supported
PI_Ad1 ← Self_congruency_Ad1	0.490	0.094	5.210	***	H5b supported
PI_Ad1 ← SATAQ	0.614	0.294	2.088	0.037	H2 supported
PI_Ad1 ← Perceive_efficacy_Ad1	0.336	0.101	3.314	***	H8a supported
Media_Pressure ← SATAQ	1.000				
Peers_Pressure ← SATAQ	0.535	0.122	4.388	***	
Family_Pressure ← SATAQ	0.447	0.135	3.300	***	
Muscle_Athletic ← SATAQ	0.875	0.187	4.679	***	
Thin_low_fat ← SATAQ	1.132	0.202	5.595	***	
WTP_Ad1 ← Self_congruency_Ad1	1.555	0.542	2.866	0.004	H5c supported
WTP_Ad1 ← PI_Ad1	0.900	0.454	1.985	0.047	H8b supported

Legend: *** p<0.001

Table 4 SEM generalized least squares estimates of regression weights for Ad2 with overweight models

	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
BAS-2 ← SATAQ	−0.526	0.115	−4.554	***	H1 supported
Self_congruency_Ad2 ← SATAQ	−0.025	0.324	−0.076	0.939	H3 rejected
Self_congruency_Ad2 ← BAS-2	−1.159	0.281	−4.120	***	H4 supported
Self_congruency_Ad2 ← Perceived_efficacy	0.058	0.115	0.505	0.614	H6b rejected
Perceived_efficacy_Ad2 ← Self_congruency_Ad2	0.207	0.081	2.567	0.010	H5a supported
Perceived_efficacy_Ad2 ← Perceived_efficacy	0.725	0.108	6.736	***	H6a supported
PI_Ad2 ← Self_congruency_Ad2	0.465	0.106	4.369	***	H5b supported
PI_Ad2 ← SATAQ	−0.106	0.326	−0.327	0.744	H2 rejected
PI_Ad2 ← Perceived_efficacy_Ad2	0.555	0.099	5.600	***	H8a supported
Media_Pressure ← SATAQ	1.000				
Peers_Pressure ← SATAQ	0.601	0.124	4.848	***	
Family_Pressure ← SATAQ	0.527	0.135	3.902	***	
Muscle_Athletic ← SATAQ	0.751	0.165	4.565	***	
Thin_low_fat ← SATAQ	0.987	0.173	5.703	***	
WTP_Ad2 ← Self_congruency_Ad2	−1.765	0.532	−3.318	***	H5c supported
WTP_Ad2 ← PI_Ad2	2.698	0.377	7.154	***	H8b supported

Legend: *** p<0.001

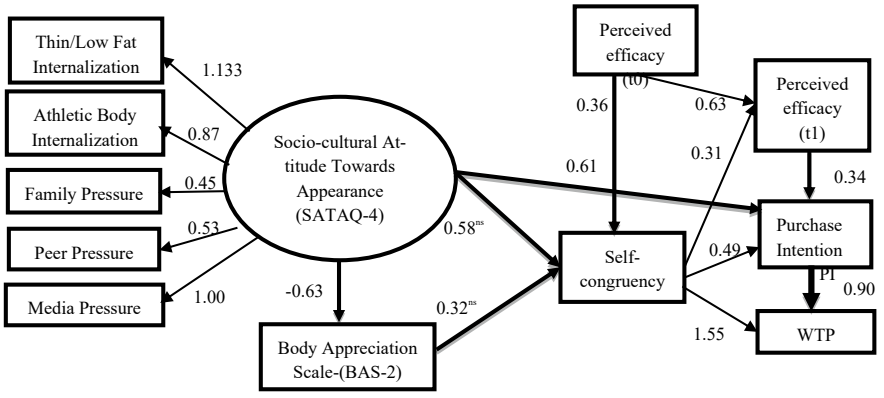

Fig. 4 SEM model results: generalized least squares estimates of regression weights for Ad1 with thin/lean models

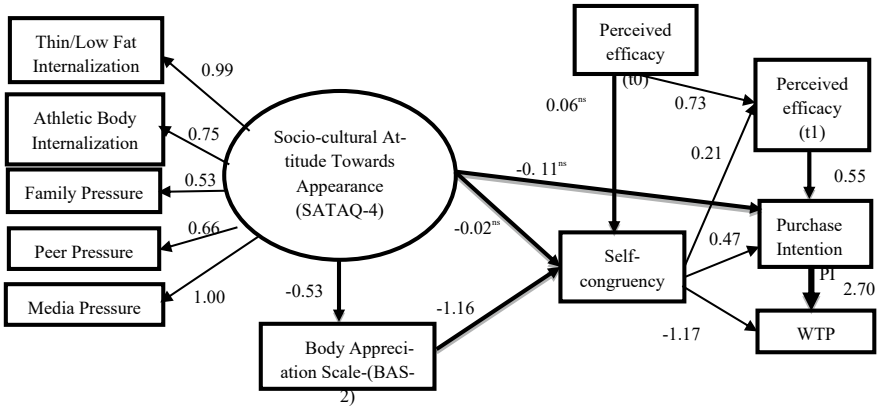

Fig. 5 SEM model results: generalized least squares estimates of regression weights for Ad2 with overweight models

et al., 2016; Pickett & Brison, 2019). Whereas in the case of Ad2, respondents with low levels will feel more identified with the overweight models showing high levels of self-congruency (H4 supported), in the case of Ad1 the identification with the thin/lean endorsers is not influenced by BAS-2 (H4 rejected).

The influence of self-congruency on perceived efficacy of physical exercise, purchase intention, and willingness to pay postulated in **H5a, H5b, and H5c are supported** by the SEM models in both scenarios. The same pattern occurs with hypothesis H6a, because the perceived efficacy measured before the exposure to advertisements positively determines the perceived efficacy measured after the advertisements and it also positively influences self-congruency (H6b) but only for thin/lean models (Ad1) who convey a higher coherence between the fitness outcome and the model physical appearance. As expected, the relationships between the perceived efficacy and purchase intention (H8a) and between the latter and the WTP **(H8b) were also supported** by the results in both scenarios.

5 Discussion and Conclusions

This paper aims to discuss the influence of socio-cultural pressure for the internalization of a thin body, body appreciation, and (in)congruency between the outcomes of physical exercise and the endorsers' physical appearance in fitness advertising. In general, the respondents of this sample rated a positive body appreciation which is aligned with the low levels of BMI and scores of socio-cultural pressures (near the normal scale's midpoint).

5.1 Implications for Research

There is a gap in the literature because the discussion of fitness advertising processing as a consequence of socio-cultural pressure stressing the internalization of a positive body image/appreciation and moderating effect of different endorsement tactics is still unexplored by marketing researchers. The relationship between socio-cultural pressure regarding physical appearance with the proneness to engage in physical exercise has been suggested by several studies (Harnish et al., 2019; Martin & Racine, 2017; Uhlmann et al., 2018) but has never been tested using the scales of SATAQ-4 and BAS-2.

The main contribution of this paper is the development and validation of a conceptual model that has postulated several causal relationships between two independent variables, in particular socio-cultural pressure (from the internalization of thin/athletic body and the social comparison induced by family, peers, and media) and body appreciation and the outcomes, such as the perceived efficacy of physical exercise, the intention to purchase and pay for fitness classes.

5.2 Managerial Implications

This paper also provides new insights and recommendations to marketing managers of gyms. Even consumers with a positive body image are exposed to socio-cultural pressure from family, peers, and media, pushing the internalization of a thin/low-fat body (specially for women) and an athletic body (especially for men). The literature has confirmed the negative effect of media exposure on body dissatisfaction which is partly mediated by social comparison processing (Bessenoff, 2006; Tiggemann & McGill, 2004; Tiggemann & Polivy, 2010). This paper has confirmed that the use of thin and attractive models (celebrities) as advertising endorsers is also an important source of media pressure that may increase body dissatisfaction levels.

Brands must assume their social responsibility role and mitigate the pressure for internalization of thin/athletic bodies as a socio-cultural norm. This role is more relevant in the fitness product/service categories that promise modifications in the perception of the individual body image and appreciation. Any distress or disturbance linked to body dissatisfaction may facilitate the development of psychological disorders, such as low self-esteem, interpersonal difficulties, depressed mood, social anxiety, low physical activity, substantial morbidity, stress, substance abuse, anorexia nervosa, and bulimia nervosa. Therefore, brand managers must pre-test their advertising campaigns in order to control the implicit/explicit negative stereotyping bias in the advertising content. Brands must contribute to educate public opinion, promoting the inclusion of all people and the acceptance of human body differences, and enhance self-conscious emotions in response to obesity-related negative stereotypes and behaviour (Derricks & Earl, 2019).

Brand managers should moderate their marketing aggressiveness and inform consumers of the dangers of the physical and psychological addiction to compulsive physical exercise. To sum up, brand and advertisers must acknowledge the need to adapt the strategy for the advertising copy to cope with this phenomenon of upward social comparison.

5.3 Limitations of the Study and Further Research Directions

The current research has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the results are based on self-reporting measures collected from a convenience non-representative sample in Portugal. As a result, our findings cannot be generalized to other populations. Although the anonymity of the answers was assured, respondents tend to incur response and non-response bias. Further research should also compare the response and behaviour of sub-samples with significant differences in BMI and body appreciation scores and it may include some qualitative depth analysis of the psychological effects of society stigmatization of obese people. Rather than the focus on obesity as the main cause of body dissatisfaction, research should extend the analysis to other body dissatisfaction issues, such as ageing, hair loss, or skin stretch marks/cellulite. It would be relevant to investigate how consumers deal with these problems. Are they too vulnerable in psychological terms? Why are they willing to buy all sorts of "magical" products regardless of the price?

Besides the differences in fitness advertising processing, which have been highlighted in this research, it is useful to investigate the role of other components of the marketing mix such as pricing policies and sales promotions, omnichannel advertising, store atmosphere, etc.

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Organizational Culture and Knowledge Management: An Empirical Study in Brazilian Higher Education

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Abstract The importance of knowledge management goes back decades and becomes even more relevant in times of change in organizations. Culture, in turn, both as an obstacle and as a potentiating factor in knowledge management activities, causes greater attention to be given to the management of its processes. In this context, an analysis was made with the purpose of verifying a possible relationship between organizational culture and knowledge management in a higher education institution. A theoretical model of this connection is proposed and empirically tested by means of a survey data set of 252 observations collected from administrative employees in higher education. The finding is that organizational culture is significantly, directly, and positively associated with knowledge management and significantly predicts it. As it demonstrates a significant relationship with knowledge management processes, it is advisable that managers pay due attention to the promotion of an organizational culture that is favorable to the effective flow of communication, information, and knowledge, thus favoring a better performance of individual and organizational activities. This article produces knowledge regarding an organizational culture oriented toward collaboration, trust, and learning, factors that are even more essential in educational organizational environments in atypical times and not commonly addressed in their specificities, as well as their relationship with knowledge management processes that, as a whole, are not usually explored.

Keywords Organizational culture · Knowledge management · Knowledge management processes · Higher education

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1 Introduction

The culture of an organization says a lot about the propagation of inter- and intra-organizational knowledge and is ranked as one of the most important factors to consider in the deployment and implementation of successful knowledge management (Almudallal et al., 2016; Allameh et al., 2011; Lee & Choi, 2003). It has a high degree of importance and respect in organizations in the information and knowledge age, and it becomes even more essential in difficult and atypical times such as those organizations face today in the migration from face-to-face to remote work, or even in the adoption of hybrid work.

The Organizational Culture (OC) approach in the literature is emphasized under the most varied biases. The most commonly found measures revolve around the OCAI—Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument method, which deals with clan, market, adhocracy, and hierarchy culture by Cameron and Quinn (2006), Denison's method (2000) which involves adaptability, consistency, involvement, and mission; the one developed by Cooke and Lafferty (1989), named Organization Culture Inventory—OCI, which involves three dimensions, such as passive/defensive, aggressive/defensive, and constructive; and the five dimensions of Hofstede (1980), which deals with power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism/collectivism, masculinity, and long-term orientation.

When the OC detaches itself from understandings focused on typologies or specificities related to organizational characteristics and departs for approaches more strongly concentrated on aspects of the human relationship, it presents itself and approaches perspectives, such as those of Ott (1989) and his OCTAPACE technique, characterized by Openness, Confrontation, Trust, Authenticity, Pro-activity, Autonomy, Collaboration and Experimentation; Schein's OC levels (2009), based on artifacts, beliefs, values, and assumptions; and, those adopted in this research, such as those of Lee and Choi (2003), focused on aspects of care and centered on cultural factors of collaboration, trust, and learning, which, aim to build care in organizational relationships being essential fuel for an effective Knowledge Management (KM).

In turn, KM, characterized by a systematic process of identification, creation, renewal, and application of knowledge that are strategic in the life of organizations, is dependent on a positive OC in relation to them (Luchesi, 2012). Davenport and Prusak (1998) agree with this idea when they point out OC as one of the fundamental factors for KM to generate positive results. Thus, an OC accredited as a facilitator of the implementation of KM can be a guide to encourage its implementation strategy (Sensuse et al., 2015), and the inverse can also be true. The observance of the OC role, both as an obstacle and as an enabler in KM activities, makes it more relevant in the efficient management of its processes (Allameh et al., 2011).

In this sense of intertwining, OC is seen as a determining factor for KM to really be the channel or tool that gives direction to the behaviors of the people who make up the organization. A KM that through its processes promotes the flow of information among peers, even if in a virtual way, tends to bring benefits both at individual and organizational levels. It translates into greater collaboration among peers, generation

of trust, and efficient learning, thus achieving better speed in the ability to respond to challenges and adapt to changes.

Educational organizations, like any other, face and suffer from uncertain times. In the desire to maintain the effective performance of administrative and management activities in this sector, efforts are employed in KM, after all, it is considered one of the most interesting and important management concepts, under complex, uncertain conditions and in rapidly changing environments (Obeidat et al., 2016).

Thus, it was sought to analyze the possible relationship between OC and KM in a higher education institution. Specifically, it is proposed to empirically test and investigate a theoretical model, capable of analyzing and explaining a probable relationship between the variables, OC through factors such as learning, collaboration, and trust and the processes of KM, namely, acquisition, creation, codification, sharing, and retention of knowledge, from the perspective of technical-administrative employees (managers or not) who work in higher education.

In this scenario and because gaps persist in empirical research for an understanding and analysis of OC from the aspect of care in organizational relationships, such as a focus on cultural factors aimed at collaboration, trust, and learning, this analysis is proposed and presented with the following structure: literature review, methodological strategy, conceptual model, analyses, discussion, and results.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Organizational Culture

OC, considered to be the main reason for the success or failure of KM processes (Vyas et al., 2020), is a dynamic phenomenon in any organization, created in the context of social interactions and shaped by leadership behaviors (Schein, 2009). It can be found in organizational structures and processes; in strategies, goals, philosophies; and in unconscious beliefs, perceptions, thoughts, and feelings that are assumed to be true (Machado et al., 2016).

Indeed, it is noted the existence of a framework of factors that underpin the culture in organizations: people, processes, norms, rules, cognition, perception, understanding, systems, communication, values, beliefs, memories, resources, and the organizational environment itself (Yafushi et al., 2019). These factors serve as guiding instruments in the achievement of organizational goals, objectives, and results, and thus, the culture of an organization ends up representing its own environment of beliefs and values, knowledge and practices of social interaction, and relationships among people (Chiavenato, 2009).

Some studies have found that cultural elements or factors including trust, communication, reward systems, and collaboration, among others, can influence better KM in organizations (Bayasgalan & Chantsaldulam, 2017; Seba et al., 2012). With this understanding, in this study, three factors were selected, such as collaboration, trust,

and learning, as in Lee and Choi (2003) studies, cultural factors that focus more strongly on the aspects of human relationships, in a bias of care in organizational relationships (Mohd Noor, 2017).

Collaboration

Collaboration-oriented culture concerns the extent to which employees communicate, cooperate, and help each other by sharing knowledge and experiences (Ugwu, 2018). A kind of degree of efficient support and help in organizations (Lee & Choi, 2003; Mohd Noor, 2017). A culture of collaboration refers to the promotion of better social interaction, increased quality of services, promoting positive outcomes for the organization (Goh et al., 2013).

Trust

Conceptualized as a degree of propensity to trust the intentions, behaviors, and abilities of others in relation to organizational goals (Davenport & Prusak, 1998; Lee & Choi, 2003; Mohd Noor, 2017), trust is considered a key factor for knowledge transfer (Davenport & Prusak, 1998) and an important promoter of KM processes, as it encourages people to share and manage knowledge in organizations (Sankowska, 2013; Tan & Md. Noor, 2013; Yasir et al., 2017).

Learning

Learning refers to a set of attitudes, values, and practices within an organization that supports and encourages continuous learning (Mohd Noor, 2017). It is understood as a degree of opportunity, variety, satisfaction, and encouragement to learn and develop (Lee & Choi, 2003). A learning-focused culture is an integrated system of ideologies, values, and beliefs that provide behavioral norms for KM activities (Hult, 2003).

2.2 Knowledge Management

With the growing importance of knowledge as an organizational resource and a fundamental element for the processes, organizations started to seek ways to manage, with more appreciation, their internal knowledge. In this aspect, KM appears, seeking to complement gaps and offer new opportunities for research and strategic action to improve the performance and results of organizations (Ribeiro & Izquierdo, 2017).

The literature points out that KM is a field of knowledge with several concepts, perspectives, and approaches, and, as such, subject to different definitions and interpretations. In its most recurrent forms, we find conceptualizations focused on processes and organizational strategy. Murray and Myers (1997) conceptualized KM as a set of processes that command the creation, dissemination, and use of knowledge, with the purpose of fulfilling the organizational objectives. The idea of KM as a process has been accompanied by authors such as Bukowitz and Williams (2002), Firestone and Mcelroy (2005), Oliveira et al. (2011), and Luchesi (2012).

Also, in this same vein, Nonaka and Takeuchi (2008) concept is presented as the process of continuously creating knowledge, disseminating them widely throughout the organization, and rapidly incorporating them into new products/services, technologies, and systems.

On the other hand, in KM as organizational strategy, it is registered, the vision of Steil (2007), whose focus is the knowledge as a source of value addition and competitive advantage, materialized in valuation policies of the acquisition processes, creation, storage, sharing, and use and reuse of knowledge of the organization. Also Jenab and Sarafaz (2012) characterize KM as a strategy to identify, create, represent, distribute, and enable the adoption of innovation and competencies.

Thus, having registered the above concepts, in an alliance between processes and strategy, one can refer in a general way, that KM covers a set of techniques or at least a set of processes that are used in a strategic context or in an organization's own strategy.

When it comes to KM processes, these are promoters of the flow of knowledge between individuals and groups in the organization (Gonzalez & Martins, 2017), that is, they refer to activities conducted based on people's knowledge (Mohammed, 2015) and influenced by the internal and external environment (Asma & Abdellatif, 2016).

Due to researches providing a diversity of processes (Dalkir, 2011; Evans et al., 2014), present in KM models and organized in stages that correspond to different moments of the knowledge life cycle of an organization (Pais & dos Santos, 2015), for this study, it was listed the processes of acquisition, sharing, creation, codification, and retention of knowledge, which were chosen for being part of routine activities of technical-administrative employees who work in the administration and management of higher education. In the following table, we highlight the emphasis on these five KM processes, organized based on the literature review, their descriptions/concepts, as well as the corresponding authors.

Observing Table 1, about the KM processes of this study, it is emphasized, according to Lee et al. (2005) and Choi et al. (2010) that the creation and acquisition processes, natural generators of knowledge, along with knowledge sharing, are essential to the application of knowledge, especially in order to positively impact organizational effectiveness and efficiency.

The knowledge codification process, on the other hand, has the relevance of making knowledge accessible to everyone and, in practice, making it apt and collective to organizations, thus ensuring its use (Davenport & Prusak, 1998); last but not least, knowledge retention, which translates one of the main challenges of managers in this millennium in managing and combating the high levels of absenteeism and turnover and the loss of specialized knowledge (Pereira & Almeida, 2017; Kianto et al., 2016), form the five KM processes of this study.

Table 1 Knowledge management processes

Process	Concept/description	Authors
Acquisition	Collecting information from extra-organizational sources	Rodriguez-Arias (2018), Gonzalez and Martins (2017), Kianto et al. (2016)
	Collecting information from internal sources	Teixeira et al. (2015), Rusly et al. (2012), Mehrabani and Shajari (2012)
	Capturing intra- or extra-organizational information that feeds the knowledge of individuals so that they can generate new knowledge and promote innovation in organizations	Lopez and Esteves (2013)
	An activity of developing new knowledge from new data or information	Hsu and Sabherwal (2012)
Sharing	The key to managing tacit knowledge	Rodriguez-Arias (2018)
	An activity through which information, knowledge, ideas, skills, and acquired experience are exchanged and shared among individuals, groups, and organizations	Igbinovia and Ikenwe (2017)
	Is the process by which knowledge, held by one individual, is converted into a form that can be understood, absorbed, and used by other individuals	Hong et al. (2011)
Creation	The ability to create ideas and solutions related to various aspects of organizational activities	Raudeliuniene et al. (2018)
	Is the first step that characterizes the KM process in organizations	Bigliardi et al. (2014)
	A challenge that leads organizations to generate new ideas through connections (intuitive or relationships) in processes based on explanation and dialog	Choudhary et al. (2013)
	Results from the combination of explicit and tacit knowledge	Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995)
Codification	Transposition of tacit knowledge into explicit and storage in documented form	Rodriguez-Arias et al. (2019)
	Systematizing and storing knowledge in electronic databases that can be easily accessed and used by members of the organization	Ramos and Helal (2010)
	Conversion of knowledge into an applicable, organized, accessible, structured, and understandable format	Davenport and Prusak (1998)

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

Process	Concept/description	Authors
Retention	Refers to managing human resources in order to reduce the loss of knowledge in the organization	Kianto et al. (2016)
	It comprises the activities of knowledge acquisition, storage, and retrieval	Gonzalez (2016)
	Consists in establishing and using tools that allow the adequate registration of knowledge, enabling its location, use, and generation of more knowledge	Molina and Valentim (2015)

Source own elaboration

2.3 Organizational Culture and Knowledge Management in Higher Education

The culture of an organization is a robust critical component that strongly influences the behavior of its members. It affects the way relationships are established, how decisions are made, and even how work priorities are defined (Kotter & Heskett, 2011). In this way, not differently in higher education organizations, OC has a fundamental role in KM, representing one of its main challenges (Bem et al., 2013).

A knowledge-oriented OC is a cornerstone in the educational environment and is among the most important factors of KM (Rahbar et al., 2020). Because it focuses vigorously on aspects of human relationships, such as teamwork, trust, and learning, it directs the attitudes of members and the organization as a whole, leading to behavior conducive to KM practices, which is particularly important for organizations in this sector.

Still, because higher education organizations are characterized by the production, dissemination, and application of knowledge, through the multiple activities conducted by their employees, KM is understood as a source of creation, exchange, and transfer of knowledge, in the promotion of research, education, and provision of services to society (Veer Ramjeawon & Rowley, 2017). However, according to Arasaki et al. (2017), if OC is focused only as a means of storing internal knowledge within the organization, it may become an inhibitor to knowledge creation and sharing.

In general, in the connection between OC and KM, OC works as an aggregator element par excellence, enabling, in particular, the construction of a favorable context for sharing and using knowledge (Islam et al., 2015; Yafushi et al., 2019). It is considered a facilitator element of KM in organizations and, one of the most important factors to be considered in the deployment and implementation of a successful knowledge management (Allameh et al., 2011; Almudallal et al., 2016; Lee & Choi, 2003).

The relationship between OC and KM has been addressed recently by several authors (Afshari et al., 2020; Al zoubi et al., 2020; Ashok et al., 2021; Lam et al.,

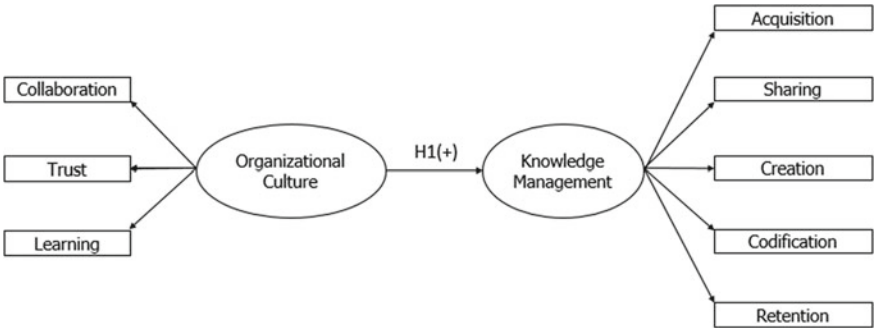

Fig. 1 Proposed conceptual model. *Source* Own elaboration based on Lee and Choi (2003), Rahbar et al. (2020)

2021; Ramirez et al., 2020; Srinivasan, 2020; Virgiyanti et al., 2019). However, due to the relevance, it is important to assess this relationship also in the context of higher education, because, although it has been previously investigated in this segment (Adeinat & Abdulfatah, 2019; Allameh et al., 2011; Graha et al., 2019; Rahbar et al., 2020; Vyas et al., 2020), the biases of cultural factors have not, as a whole, been widely explored, especially in Brazil. To this end, this study establishes the following operational research hypothesis.

H1 (+)*—Organizational culture has a significant, direct, and positive relationship in knowledge management processes in higher education.*

The conceptual model was built based on the hypothesis developed from the existing literature and is presented in Fig. 1 below.

The hypothesis of the research model represented in Fig. 1, argues the possible relationship between OC, represented by the cultural dimensions of collaboration, trust, and learning, and KM, represented through five of its processes, namely, knowledge acquisition, sharing, creation, codification, and retention, following previous research (Lee & Choi, 2003; Mohd Noor, 2017; Rahbar et al., 2020), in these relationships.

Although two decades have passed since the cultural factors approach established by Lee and Choi (2003), it is believed that they are still adequate and essential for a modern context perspective in higher education institutions, in which organizational relationships should be fostered through care as a way to facilitate that knowledge can be created and shared (Lee & Choi, 2003). Similarly, the KM processes, explored by Kianto (2008) and Obeidat et al. (2016), which are an integral part of the knowledge life cycle of diverse organizations, and elected in this study, are also shown to be elementary, as they are widely used in administrative and management activities in higher education.

3 Methodology

In this research, a hypothetical quantitative approach was carried out to examine the relationships between OC, through its cultural factors of collaboration, trust, and learning, and KM, through its processes of acquisition, sharing, creation, codification, and retention of knowledge in a higher education institution in Brazil, named Federal Institute of Education, Science, and Technology of Mato Grosso do Sul (IFMS). It is also characterized as descriptive research, since, according to Gil (2019), it describes characteristics of a certain population or phenomenon, the establishment of relationships among variables, and the definition of nature.

A study integrating scales of published scientific articles was designed in order to investigate the interactions between the variables, as proposed in the research model (Fig. 1). The participants of this study comprised the entire body of technical-administrative servers, of different levels and positions of the IFMS, such as, the eleven units of this institution being one, the rectory and ten units, located in cities of the state of Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil.

Official permission to carry out the research was obtained, both from the institution studied, and from Plataforma Brasil, which is a national and unified base for research records involving human beings in Brazil, as well as, the participation of respondents was spontaneous and, in which, they were guaranteed confidentiality of their information. Initially, it was foreseen to collect from an accessible population composed of 577 servers, in order to examine the proposed hypothesis. However, the sample number obtained was 252 valid answers effectively collected.

The questionnaire which, according to Marconi and Lakatos (2011), is a quick and inexpensive measuring instrument to obtain information, besides not requiring any personal training and guaranteeing anonymity (Gil, 2019) is composed of items to measure the scales of latent variables, as well as socio-demographic characteristics of the participants and was the instrument used for data collection.

The dimensions used to measure the established constructs were obtained from previous studies, in which, following the original proposals, each item is measured using five-point Likert scales (1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree) for OC and seven-point Likert scales (1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree) for KM. The dimensions and items used to measure the OC factors were adopted from Lee and Choi (2003), consisting of 16 questions, being: collaboration (5), trust (6), and learning (5) and the KM processes, consisting of 29 questions, which were adopted from Kianto (2008) and from Obeidat et al. (2016), being: acquisition (6), sharing (7), creation (8), codification (5), and knowledge retention (3).

As a previous activity to the application of the questionnaire to the participants, a translation-retranslation process was performed by a specialized professional and then a pre-test was conducted as a way to ensure greater theoretical validity and accuracy of the instrument (Gil, 2019), especially regarding the clarity, precision of the terms, form, dismemberment, and order of the questions.

With the final version of the pre-test, the questionnaire was applied via the Google Forms platform, generating a google docs survey. The choice of the online survey

was, among several important factors, especially those related to the economy, both in printing and postage, and especially the economy of time, both in sending, receiving, and, consequently, the quick return of the instrument and the processing of the data.

The socio-demographic characteristics evaluated in this study included gender, age group, marital status, academic qualifications, position level, time of work, and receipt of gratified functions for coordinations and directive positions. Based on the results, we obtained a mostly female sample ($N = 149$; 59%), aged between 31 and 40 years ($N = 140$; 55.56%), mostly married ($N = 124$; 49.21%), with academic qualifications corresponding to a degree of specialization ($N = 148$; 58.73%), with 5–10 years of work in the institution ($N = 114$; 45.24%) and not holding coordination ($N = 181$; 71.83%) or management ($N = 231$; 91.67%) positions.

The results are presented in Table 2.

4 Data Analysis

The software used for data analysis was SPSS—Statistical Package for the Social Science (v.26.0), in which we performed exploratory factor analysis (EFA), reliability analysis, correlation matrix, and the linear regression test.

The EFA was performed in order to evaluate the factor structure of the OC scale and the KM scale and, considering the change in the application context of the original instruments, confirm or refute the factor structure of the instrument for the Brazilian population.

Regarding the OC scale, originally formed by 3 factors and 16 items, only one item was eliminated because it presented factor loading in more than one factor. As for the other items of the scale, the results of the EFA were adequate, with communalities (>0.50) and loadings (>0.40) (Hair et al., 2018; Kline, 2013) and these explained 70.68% of the total variance. The values of Kaiser Meyer Olkin—KMO (0.93) and Bartlett's test (2564.73, $p = 0.000$) were also adequate, proving the existing correlation between the various items of the scale.

As for the KM scale, originally presented by 5 factors, which after EFA became 4 factors, losing the retention subscale. Overall, 13 items, from the initial 29, were eliminated for presenting factor loadings in more than one factor or for loading on another factor. The items that remained explained 72.37% of the total variance. The Kaiser Meyer Olkin—KMO (0.91) and Bartlett's test (2597.41, $p = 0.000$) values were adequate.

Testing the prior factorial validity of the scales was necessary since there was no record of their having been used in Brazil, only in international studies. Thus, it needed to be validated for the Brazilian population, highlighting the importance of knowing its structure in this accessible population of administrative technicians in higher education in Brazil. The results of the EFA indicated adequate factor structure, validating the psychometric quality of the international scales when used in the structure of the Brazilian population.

Table 2 Demographic characteristics ($N = 252$)

Items	Description	Frequency	(%)
Gender	Female	149	(59.00)
	Male	103	(41.00)
Age group	18–25 years	11	(4.37)
	26–31 years	42	(16.67)
	31–40 years	140	(55.56)
	41–50 years	47	(18.65)
	50+ years	12	(4.76)
Marital status	Married	124	(49.21)
	Divorced	15	(5.95)
	Separated	1	(0.40)
	Single	89	(35.32)
	Stable union	23	(9.13)
Academic qualification	Pós-doctoral	1	(0.40)
	Doctoral	8	(3.17)
	Master's degree	42	(16.67)
	Specialization	148	(58.73)
	Graduation	42	(16.67)
	High school	11	(4.37)
Position level	Level C (basic)	33	(13.10)
	Level D (medium)	107	(42.46)
	Level E (superior)	112	(44.44)
Time of work	Less than 1 year	15	(5.95)
	1–3 years	64	(25.40)
	3–5 years	55	(21.83)
	5–10 years	114	(45.24)
	10+ years	4	(1.59)
Coordinators	No	181	(71.83)
	Yes	71	(28.17)
Directive position	No	231	(91.67)
	Yes	21	(8.33)

Source own elaboration

After the EFA was performed, we went on to test its reliability as shown in Table 3, considering the internal consistency indexes, evaluated using Cronbach's alpha value and also the Composite Reliability (Marôco, 2014).

A correlational analysis was also performed among the variables under analysis, as shown in Table 4, in which the results showed that all variables are positively correlated and statistically significant.

Table 3 Factorial reliability

Scale	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability
Organizational culture		
Collaboration	0.90	0.96
Trust	0.91	0.97
Learning	0.87	0.95
Knowledge management		
Acquisition	0.84	0.93
Sharing	0.85	0.91
Creation	0.91	0.98
Codification	0.84	0.91

Source own elaboration

Table 4 Correlation matrix

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	Collaboration	–								
2	Trust	0.681**	–							
3	Learning	0.462**	0.466**	–						
4	Org. culture	0.854**	0.838**	0.799**	–					
5	Acquisition	0.480**	0.481**	0.598**	0.632**	–				
6	Sharing	0.484**	0.543**	0.505**	0.614**	0.606**	–			
7	Codification	0.428**	0.440**	0.481**	0.545**	0.571**	0.543**	–		
8	Creation	0.571**	0.576**	0.705**	0.751**	0.632**	0.508**	0.544**	–	
9	KM process	0.597**	0.629**	0.694**	0.772**	0.848**	0.810**	0.816**	0.813**	–

** $p < 0.001$

Finally, a simple linear regression analysis was performed to explain the relationship between the variables and test the study hypothesis. According to the results, displayed in Table 5 and depicted in Fig. 2 below, it was possible to see that OC significantly predicts KM processes ($B = 1.233, t = 19.190, p < 0.001$). More specifically, we found that OC explains 59.6% ($R^2 = 0.596$) of the KM processes, which allows us to confirm hypothesis ***H1***.

Table 5 Result of the simple linear regression analysis of the influence of organizational culture on knowledge management processes

	Scale	*B*	*B*	*t*	*p*	R^2
1	Constant	0.527	–	2.627	0.009	0.596
	Organizational culture	1.233	0.772	19.190	0.000	

Source own elaboration

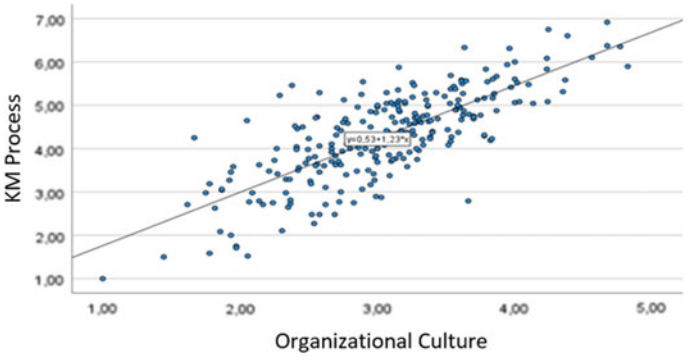

Fig. 2 Graphical result of the simple linear regression analysis

5 Results and Discussion

The conditions in which educational organizations work and develop are characterized by infinite limitations that extend from the requirements of attendance, increasingly effective, to the delivery of demands to society that denote a better efficiency of values and efforts applied. In this aspect, and considering that the literature repeatedly emphasizes an inseparable relationship between OC and KM (Davenport & Prusak, 1998), the awareness of an OC favorable to KM processes proves to be a great ally in facing an environment in great change, be it at times of leadership or even of unexpected factors.

Undoubtedly, measuring OC in higher education institutions, in its relationship with KM, is an important tool for achieving goals and facing different obstacles. It is seen that the primacy of effort and engagement produces better teamwork, trust-related issues, and continuous learning. The basis for improved internal collaboration, knowledge capture, and sharing produces a better understanding of organizational type and KM processes and has the potential to lead to advances in customer relationships and competitive intelligence benefits (Adeinat & Abdulfatah, 2019).

This study finds that the three cultural factors selected as sub-variables of OC (collaboration, trust, and learning) by performing a positive, direct, and significant correlation with KM, prove to be important catalysts of knowledge acquisition, creation, sharing, and codification in higher education in Brazil.

The results of the present study reveal that the higher the perception that technical-administrative servers have about OC, the better will be the way they process knowledge in general. In view of the findings, it was possible to confirm the research hypothesis ***H1***, as in previous investigations by Lee and Choi (2003), Khakhian et al. (2012), Mohd Noor (2017), Bayasgalan and Chantsaldulam (2017), Rahbar et al. (2020), which points out that OC is an extremely favorable point of creation and implementation of a successful KM strategy in the organization.

The findings also suggest that a culture that supports KM is a key factor so that the organization can appropriate the value of its knowledge base, especially by having

as allies cultural factors of collaboration, trust, and learning in the organizational environment. According to Braquehais et al. (2017), the act of evaluating the OC previously, as well as its dimensions, is a very important factor for the success of the KM initiatives in the organization to be implemented.

Thus, with results that confirm the proposed relationship and, also, supporting the same idea of Rahbar et al. (2020), that a knowledge-oriented OC is fundamental to the organizational environment and is among the most important factors of KM, it is believed that the implementation of KM processes tends to provide a better achievement of objectives and goals, which, in turn, will influence the organizational results.

The study is also subject to some limitations. First, this study is anchored in higher education and the cultural differences that exist between segments, regions, countries, and even organizational behavior in different contexts cannot be generalized. To overcome this limitation, the constructs could be investigated in other cultures and countries and even be extended.

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Higher Education Perspectives

Students' Satisfaction with Education Service in Public Versus Private Higher Education Institutions in Transitional Economies

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Abstract The transitional process to market economy in Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries has caused several challenges in the higher education sector. Besides traditional public sector higher education institutions (HEIs), the dynamic growth of private ones can be observed in the last two decades, particularly in the area of business education. As competition increases, the more important it becomes to adopt a market-oriented approach, which is built around customer satisfaction. This study aims to contribute to broadening theoretical and managerial knowledge and identify the specific challenges that public and private HEIs are facing in transitional economies, as well as to identify key factors for HEIs development strategies and policies to attract and retain students as satisfied customers. The research included a sample of 1981 students from Croatia and Slovenia. Descriptive statistics, factor analysis, correlation analysis, ANOVA, and regression analysis were used to identify the important differences in students' satisfaction with the education service they receive in public versus private HEIs. The research results indicate a significantly higher level of satisfaction of students of private HEIs. This is true for all the aspects of education service, except for students' social life provided by the university.

Keywords Higher education · Transitional economics · Private versus public HEIs · Students' satisfaction

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1 Introduction

Transitional process to market economy in Central and Eastern European countries (CEE) has caused several challenges in the higher education sector. Besides traditional public sector higher education institutions (HEIs) the dynamic growth of private ones can be observed in the last two decades, particularly in the area of business education. The competition is becoming more fierce as recent studies show the decreasing impact of price (cost) of education in HEI choice (Brkanlić et al., 2020). Moreover, joining the Bologna system has caused the emergence of international competition that has never before existed in CEE countries. Additionally, considering the long-term negative demographic trends, it becomes clear that HEIs in these countries need to develop market-oriented approach (Štimac & Leko Šimić, 2012) in order to efficiently respond to the new challenges.

Market orientation is a concept that emphasizes putting customers at the center of a business's operations and delivering value to customers (Ozkaya et al., 2015). Consumer satisfaction is therefore a primary focus of marketing orientation. It is generally defined as the overall assessment of the total acquisition and consumption experience of a product or service (Anderson et al., 1994). Having in mind the challenges that traditional public sector HEIs are facing, this study aims to provide a deeper insight into different dimensions of students' satisfaction in public and private HEIs in Croatia and Slovenia, as typical transitional countries in Central and Eastern Europe. Although there is still an ongoing debate on perception of students as customers in higher education (Guilbault, 2017), in the light of identified challenges this study accepts this approach in order to contribute to broadening theoretical and managerial knowledge and identify the specific challenges that public and private HEIs are facing in transitional economies as well as to identify key factors for HEIs development strategies and policies to attract and retain students as satisfied customers.

The paper is organized in the following way: after introduction, the authors present theoretical background and literature review and thereafter research methodology and design. The next section follow the study findings and discussion, and the last part is the conclusion.

2 Theoretical Background and Literature Overview

The concept of customer satisfaction was first introduced by Cardozo (1965), who stated that it could be used as a predictor of repurchasing behavior, thus emphasizing its role in retaining existing customers. Oliver (1981) defined customer satisfaction as the extent to which customers expected product benefits are realized, or the consistency between expected and actual results. Several studies have confirmed the positive relationship between market orientation and customers' satisfaction (Lings &

Greenley, 2009; Novixoxo et al., 2018; O'Cass & Ngo, 2011; Schalk, 2008; Webb et al., 2000 and others).

The customers' satisfaction is crucial to the success in the service sector, including education. It can be illustrated by several continuous surveys that are being conducted in the USA and the UK: National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) in USA and in the UK the National Student Satisfaction Survey and Student Satisfaction Approach (Guilbault, 2017). Sallis (2012) emphasized the difference between the service and product quality and its relation to customer satisfaction: "services are rendered in the presence of both the provider and receiver, and the interaction between the two not only determines the quality of the services but also provides the main means of judging whether customers are satisfied with it". Therefore, it is essential to understand what creates and increases the customer satisfaction.

There are several studies focusing on satisfaction in the area of higher education. Altarifi et al. (2016) study found a substantial effect of market orientation on customer satisfaction perceived by management in private schools in Jordan. Similarly, Mudzakkir, Sarwoko, and Nurdiana study (2017) confirmed that marketing orientation directly affected the organizational performance of private universities.

Student satisfaction, which is the short-term attitude emanating from an evaluation of a student's educational experience, results when actual performance meets or exceeds the student's expectations (Elliott & Healy, 2001), i.e. when a certain outcome meets their expectations. It is often seen as an evaluation of students' educational experience, services, and facilities (Weerasinghe et al., 2017) although different studies mention a wide variety of dimensions of students' satisfaction. In their study, above mentioned Elliott and Healy (2001) found that student-centeredness, campus climate, and instructional effectiveness have a strong impact on how satisfied a student is overall. As Giese and Cote (2000) point out, satisfaction refers to a certain focus (expectations, product/service, or consumption experience) and takes place at a certain time (after consumption, after a choice has been made, or as an accumulative experience). It is therefore important that higher education institutions focus on understanding what students expect and how they perceive the educational services offered. Only in this case, they are able to tailor their services in a way that stimulates a positive effect on student perception and satisfaction with the quality of education service. Students evaluate quality by comparing their perception of service with what they expect to receive (Parasuraman et al., 1988). They participate in the educational process with their different and unique expectations that higher education institutions should consider when measuring quality. Appleton-Knapp and Krentler (2006) identified two groups of influences on student satisfaction in higher education as personal and institutional factors. Personal factors cover age, gender, employment, preferred learning style, and student's GPA and institutional factors cover quality of instructions, promptness of the instructor's feedback, clarity of expectation, and teaching style. Wilkins and Balakrishnan (2013) found the quality of lecturers, quality of physical facilities, and effective use of technology to be key determinant factors of

student satisfaction. In addition to that, teaching ability, flexible curriculum, university status and prestige, independence, caring of faculty, student growth and development, student-centeredness, campus climate, institutional effectiveness, and social conditions have been identified as major determinants of student satisfaction in higher education (Douglas et al., 2006; Palacio et al., 2002).

It has been shown that applying only the performance minus expectations paradigm has a positive effect on students' perception of service quality and that satisfaction thus directly affects students' positive assessment of an HEI (Abdullah, 2005, 2006). Student satisfaction is a process that is continuously built and developed during the study period. It helps higher education institutions to attract new and retain existing students (satisfied students can continue their education at the same institution) and has a positive effect on student motivation, active learning, etc. Ultimately, all information on student satisfaction is of great benefit to higher education institutions because it can be used for the purposes of later improvements.

Regarding differences between student's satisfaction between public and private higher education only limited research is, to our best knowledge, available. One of the most recent ones found is conducted by Martirosyan (2015). It confirmed that students from private higher education institutions reported a significantly higher satisfaction level than their peers at public ones in Armenia, which is also a transitional economy. A study by Naidu and Derani (2016) revealed several differences in the perception of public versus private HEIs in Malaysia—quality of faculty, research reputation, international presence, government accredited program, and capable lecturers significantly differ between the two, and all of them directly or indirectly influence students' satisfaction.

3 Research

3.1 Methodology and Design

The aim of the research was to compare the differences between students' satisfaction between public and private HEIs. The research was conducted in a total of fourteen HEIs from the area of business education in Croatia and Slovenia. The area of business education was chosen since it is the one with the highest competition between public and private HEIs, and Croatia and Slovenia were chosen as to be quite similar and comparable, and at the same typical transitional economies of Central and Eastern Europe. The study instrument was a highly structured questionnaire. Data collection was anonymous and conducted during classes using the paper and pencil method.[1]

The research instrument is a questionnaire with 27 variables measuring different aspects of students' satisfaction while the second part of the questionnaire refers to socio-demographic data (gender, status, year of study, study success, class attendance

[1] Only for DOBA Faculty of Maribor, a separate online questionnaire was constructed using Google form because DOBA's study program is an online study.

level of fulfillment of study obligations, and involvement in extracurricular activities). A part of the questionnaire was adopted from a previous study on education service quality in Croatia (Štimac & Leko Šimić, 2012).

The design of the questionnaire took into consideration the objectives to be achieved by the research; the respondents (students) were clear and familiar with the objectives of the research (measuring their satisfaction with the obtained education service). The questions were highly structured with the possibility of multiple choices. Obtained data were processed and analyzed with Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics, factor analysis, correlation method, comparative method, and variance analysis (ANOVA) were used in data analysis and processing.

3.2 Sample Description

The research was conducted on a sample of 1981 university students enrolled in undergraduate and graduate study programs of business education. A total of 981 students from public HEIs and 1,000 students from private HEIs participated in the research. The description of the sample in terms of observed socio-demographic data is presented in Table 1.

4 Research Results and Discussion

The differences between students' satisfaction with education services in public and private HEIs are presented in Table 2, where the average score of each observed variable between public and private HEIs can be seen. A total of 26 variables were rated higher in private HEIs, while only one variable (quality of social life at HEI) was rated higher in public HEIs. The variable "Opportunities to make and develop friendships/contacts at the faculty" was rated the same in both cases. It can be concluded that students from private HEIs are more satisfied with most aspects of education service, compared to students from public HEIs. In public HEIs, the major strengths identified are related to the academic staff and the opportunities to make and develop friendships/contacts with the faculty, while the weaknesses are related to the organization of the studies, the class schedule, and the acquired knowledge and skills alignment with the labor market requirements. On the other hand, the main strengths in private HEIs are also related to the academic staff and the study program as a source of personal development, while the weaknesses are related to the social life, the class schedule, and the quality of the different extracurricular activities offered by the faculty.

Although there are not many studies on the differences between public and private HEIs with respect to students' satisfaction, one of them (Martirosyan, 2015) found type of institution effect on students' satisfaction significantly in which students

Table 1 Sample description

		Public		Private	
		N	%	N	%
Gender	Male	299	30.48	398	39.8
	Female	682	69.52	602	60.2
Student status	Full time	849	86.54	669	66.9
	Part-time	132	13.46	331	33.1
Year of study	1[2]	1	0.1	5	0.5
	2	232	23.65	340	34
	3	254	25.89	352	35.2
	4	262	26.71	181	18.1
	5	232	23.65	122	12.2
Study success (average grade)	2.0–3.0	186	18.96	55	5.5
	3.1–4.0	680	69.32	629	62.9
	Over 4.0	115	11.72	316	31.6
Class attendance	Less than 25%	39	3.98	14	1.4
	25–50%	115	11.72	25	2.5
	50–75%	346	35.27	233	23.3
	Over 75%	481	49.03	728	72.8
Fulfillment of faculty obligations	Never	6	0.61	5	0.5
	Rarely	12	1.22	16	1.6
	Sometimes	137	13.97	98	9.8
	Often	469	47.81	415	41.5
	Always	357	36.39	466	46.6
	Yes	392	40	393	39.3
Involvement in extracurricular activities	No	589	60	607	60.7

Source Authors' research

from private institutions reported a significantly higher satisfaction level than their peers at public institutions. A study in Bangladesh (Hossain et al., 2019) found that students' satisfaction with university infrastructure and course curriculum was significantly higher in the case of private HEIs, while satisfaction with teachers' expertise was higher in public ones. Naidu and Derani (2016) comparison of private and public HEI in Malaysia reveals that students put different emphasis on elements of service quality in public versus private HEI. Quality of faculty and lecturers' capability are significantly more important elements of satisfaction for students in

[2] The first year of the study was not taken into account in the data analysis due to the small sample and relatively poor experience.

Table 2 Comparison of the average level of satisfaction between public and private HEIs

	Public	Private
Service provided by academic staff	3.55	**3.99**
Service provided by non-academic staff	3.22	**3.82**
Organization of studies	3.20	**3.76**
Organization of social events at the faculty	3.34	**3.37**
Modern lecture halls, various aids, computer equipment, available literature, etc.	3.41	**3.71**
Acquired knowledge and skills that are aligned with the labor market	3.15	**3.84**
Study program as a source of personal development	3.65	**4.06**
Knowledge and competencies of academic staff	3.76	**4.10**
Knowledge and competencies of non-academic staff	3.36	**3.81**
Opportunities to make and develop friendships/contacts at the faculty	3.88	3.88
Social need for acquired knowledge and skills	3.64	**3.94**
Class schedule adapted to students' needs	3.00	**3.58**
Working hours of the faculty adapted to students' needs	3.28	**3.69**
Academic staff availability and politeness	3.60	**4.12**
Non-academic staff availability and politeness	3.22	**3.90**
Academic staff encouragement and motivation for learning and extracurricular activities	3.43	**3.83**
Institutional reputation in local environment	3.34	**3.64**
Acquired knowledge and skills that enable solving different problems and challenges	3.48	**3.86**
Quality of study program	3.45	**3.95**
Quality of social life at HEI	**3.63**	3.61
Delivered education service correspondence to expectations	3.38	**3.83**
Academic staff reputation	3.50	**3.89**
Timely information regarding the study, changes, etc.	3.37	**3.79**
Academic staff communication skills	3.74	**4.05**
Non-academic staff communication skills	3.28	**3.88**
Study group size	3.28	**3.64**
Extracurricular activities offered by HEI (professional practice, project work, volunteering, student competitions)	3.21	**3.43**
TOTAL	3.42	**3.81**

Source Authors' research

private HEIs, whereas research reputation, international presence, and government-accredited programs are more important to students in public HEIs. However, overall service quality and academic staff quality are evaluated better in public HEI.

Previous research comparing public and private HEIs in Croatia shows that in public higher education institutions, most of the investment in education service is

put into material aspects, while"soft" aspects of the education service quality is to a large extent ignored, in contrast to private higher education institutions (Leko Šimić et al., 2019). However, this study shows that students evaluate their satisfaction with this aspect also better in private HEIs.

Given the large number of variables observed (27), it was necessary to apply factor analysis to compress the number of all factors for analysis. Before applying the factor analysis, a reliability analysis was performed, where the overall coefficient of Cronbach's alpha is 0.950, confirming the excellent reliability and stability of the measurement instrument.[3] The variable "Knowledge and competencies of academic staff" is excluded from the factor analysis due to its instability, so a total of 26 variables were considered in the factor analysis. The sample size is 1980 respondents (99.9% of the whole sample size). Since the sample size must be five times larger than the number of factors in the analysis, this requirement is also met. Factor loading structure is shown in Table 3.

The Principal Component Analysis and Varimax rotation method with Kaiser Normalization were used. Data suitability was calculated using KMO (Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin) measure of sampling adequacy and its value is 0.956 which is quite high and indicates that factor analysis is suitable. Bartlett's test for sphericity is significant ($\chi 2 = 31{,}353.818$; df352; sig. = 0.00), indicating a strong correlation between variables and factors and their suitability for exploratory factor analysis. The exploratory factor analysis extracted five factors consisting of altogether 26 variables:

FACTOR 1—Acquired knowledge and quality of programs
FACTOR 2—Non-academic staff
FACTOR 3—Organization of studies
FACTOR 4—Academic staff
FACTOR 5—Students' social life

All Cronbach alpha coefficients are shown in Table 4.

The Cronbach's alpha coefficient ranges from 0.687 to 0.904. Only the students' social life variable has questionable consistency. The other variables have acceptable and good consistency, which confirms good reliability and stability of the measurement instrument (George & Mallery, 2003; 231).

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) indicates that there is a statistically significant difference between the first four factors in public and private HEIs contexts. All these factors are rated better by private HEI than by public HEI students. Only in the last factor (students' social life) there is no statistically significant difference, which can be seen in Table 5.

Various studies have found that teaching quality is about the most important source of student satisfaction (Green et al., 2015; Sears et al., 2017; Sutherland et al., 2018 and many others). Here we see a significant difference between the perception of education program quality between the students in private and public HEIs, where it is

[3] George and Mallery (2003) provide the following rule of thumb: _ > 0.9—Excellent, _ > 0.8—Good, _ > 0.7—Acceptable, _ > 0.6—Questionable, _ > 0.5—Poor, and _ < 0.5—Unacceptable.

Table 3 Factor loading structure

Variables ($n = 26$)	Factors					Communalities
	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	
Satisfaction with acquired knowledge and skills that are aligned with the labor market requirements	0.785					0.753
Satisfaction with the study program as a source of personal development	0.732					0.642
Satisfaction with the perceived social need for acquired knowledge and skills	0.678					0.599
Satisfaction with academic staff encouragement and motivation for students in teaching and extracurricular activities	0.434					0.535
Satisfaction with an institutional reputation in the local environment	0.478					0.470
Satisfaction with acquired knowledge and skills ability to solve different problems and challenges	0.752					0.713
Satisfaction with quality of study program	0.683					0.712
Satisfaction with delivered education service correspondence to expectations	0.674					0.682
Satisfaction with extracurricular activities offered by the faculty (professional practice, project work, volunteering, student competitions)	0.376					0.425

(continued)

Table 3 (continued)

Variables ($n = 26$)	Factors					Communalities
	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	
Satisfaction with the quality of service provided by non-academic staff		0.792				0.758
Satisfaction with organization of studies		0.514				0.645
Satisfaction with knowledge and competencies of non-academic staff		0.758				0.757
Satisfaction with non-academic staff availability and politeness		0.751				0.758
Satisfaction with non-academic staff communication skills		0.727				0.763
Satisfaction with lecture halls, various aids, computer equipment, available literature, etc.			0.425			0.544
Satisfaction with class schedule			0.781			0.707
Satisfaction with the working hours of the faculty			0.782			0.735

(continued)

Table 3 (continued)

Variables ($n = 26$)	Factors					Communalities
	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	
Satisfaction with information sharing (changes in the schedule, cancelation of lectures, exams, etc.)			0.473			0.541
Satisfaction with quality of teaching regarding group size			0.415			0.506
Satisfaction with quality of service provided by academic staff				0.448		0.558
Satisfaction with academic staff availability and politeness				0.548		0.669
Satisfaction with academic staff reputation				0.563		0.650
Satisfaction with academic staff communication skills				0.652		0.689
Satisfaction with social events at the faculty					0.541	0.619
Satisfaction with opportunities to make and develop friendships/contacts at the faculty					0.752	0.643
Satisfaction with quality of faculty social life					0.789	0.753

(continued)

Table 3 (continued)

Variables ($n = 26$)	Factors					Communalities
	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	
Eigenvalue	4.241	6.287	2.528	12.996	6.980	33.031
Explained variance by a factor (%)	16.311	16.487	9.724	49.862	7.1616	100
Number of variables in factor	9	5	5	4	3	

Source Authors' research

Table 4 Cronbach alpha coefficients of all factors

	Acquired knowledge, quality of programs	Nonacademic staff	Organization of studies	Academic staff	Students' social life	Total
Cronbach alpha coefficients	0.904	0.898	0.791	0.841	0.687	0.950

Source Authors' research

Table 5 ANOVA between factors and public and private HEIs

	F	Sig.	Mean (public vs. private)
Acquired and knowledge program quality	186.738	0.000	3.42 versus 3.84
Non-academic staff	235.484	0.000	3.25 versus 3.83
Organization of studies	175.123	0.000	3.27 versus 3.75
Academic staff	167.733	0.000	3.6 versus 4.01
Social life	0.016	0.899	3.61 versus 3.62

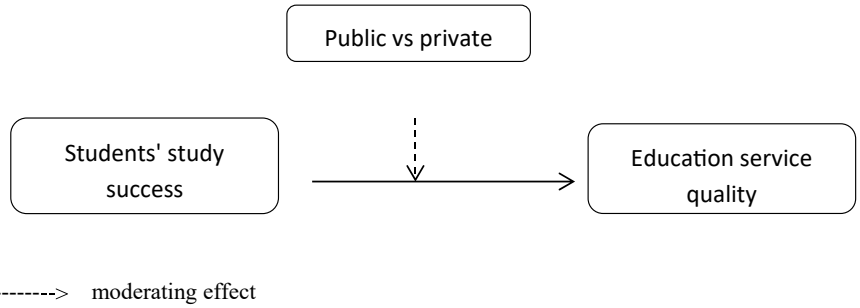
Source Authors' research

represented with factors "Acquired knowledge and program quality", and "Academic staff". The authors find very interesting the fact of higher students' satisfaction with academic staff, since in private HEIs majority of them lacks academic background and educational skills. The satisfaction in this area in private HEIs might be due to the significantly smaller study groups existing in private HEIs, which enables a more personal approach by academic staff. Students might perceive it as more satisfactory. Class size has been identified as an important factor of students' satisfaction in several studies (Douglas et al., 2006; Tandilashvili, 2019; Yusoff et al., 2015).

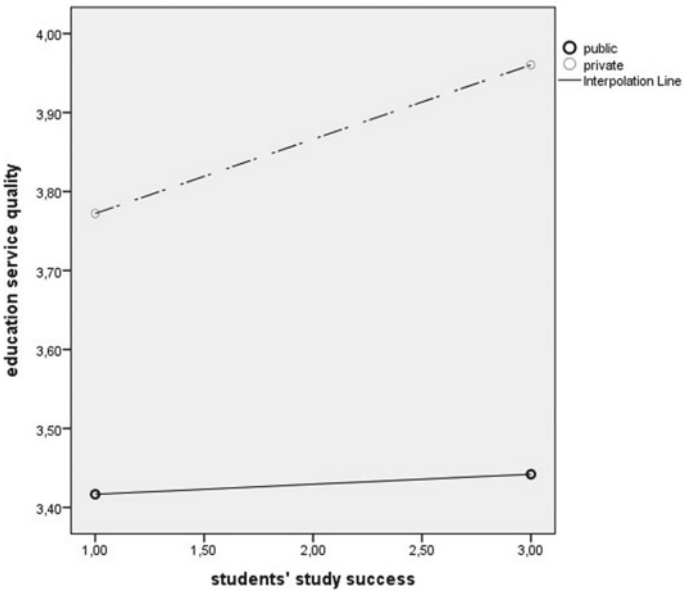
The next question is whether there is a statistically significant correlation between students' study success and their satisfaction with the education service. Some previous studies have confirmed the positive correlation between academic performance (grades) and students' satisfaction (Lo, 2010; Rode et al., 2005). Regarding this, in the context of transitional countries, private higher education needs to be analyzed. The majority of private HEIs in transitional economics developed as a result of increased demand (Levy, 2016) which could not be absorbed by public HEIs due to shrinking quotas for enrollment into social and humanistic fields of education. The quotas for enrollment into public HEIs are based on secondary education study success, resulting in the fact that a number of those who did not manage to enroll into public HEIs due to lower study success, opted for private HEIs as a second option. Our results show a certain paradox—students' study success in private HEIs is significantly higher than in public ones—31.6% of private HEI respondents have average grades over 4.0 while there are only 11.72% respondents with the same study success in public HEIs, which is opposite from their "starting points". The analysis shows a statistically significant correlation between study success and private or public HEI

($r = 0.150$, $p = 0.000$). Therefore, a simple regression analysis was applied and the following results were obtained: $F(1,1979) = 45.590$, $p = 0.000$, $R^2 = 0.023$, $\beta = 0.150$. Moderation regression analysis was performed based on these results. We used the PROCESS analysis to see a moderating effect (Hayes, 2013). It is generally agreed that PROCESS analysis is preferable to the conventional causal steps approach when two competitive effects coexist between the independent and dependent variables (Zhao et al., 2010). In this research, there is a positive statistically significant correlation between students' study success and their satisfaction with education service quality. Based on the above, the question arises whether there is a variable that can be a moderator between the relationships. Since the subject of the study is the difference between students' satisfaction in public and private HEIs, the same variable was considered as a moderator variable, i.e. we want to see would the variable public versus private HEIs changes (moderates) the relationship between students' study success and their satisfaction with education service quality. The model and results of the moderator regression analysis are presented below (Graphs 1 and 2; Table 6).

Both the table and graph show that the variable "public versus private HEIs" is a statistically significant moderator on the relationship between students' study success and their satisfaction with education services (**p<0.01). Since only a statistically significant conditional indirect effect occurs at private HEIs, it can be said that better study success, i.e. higher average grades at private HEIs leads to students' better perception of education service. The conditional indirect effect is not statistically significant for public HEIs. At the same time, as it was emphasized by Jahić (2014), private HEIs in Croatia are still faced with widespread mistrust over poor academic quality, poor conditions for study, and serving as "degree mills" producing academic credentials without uploading rigorous academic standards. It remains for further research how and why study success as a specific element influences students' satisfaction with education services as well as the risks this fact includes.



Graph 1 Conceptual model



Graph 2 Plot for the interaction between students' study success and their satisfaction with education service. *Source* Authors' research

Table 6 Moderated regression analysis and conditional indirect effect of students' study success and their satisfaction with education service quality in public versus private HEIs as moderator ($N = 1981$)

	Satisfaction with education service			
	β	se	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	3.1297	0.0955	2.9424	3.3170
(a) Students' study success	−0.0687	0.0639	−0.1934	0.0560
(b) Public versus private HEIs	0.2742	0.0595	0.1575	0.3910
Interaction: (a) × (b)	0.0814	0.0368	0.0091	0.1536
	$F(3,1977) = 75.7606$; $p = 0.000$, $R^2 = 0.1031$			
Conditional effect	Public = 0.0127; private = 0.0941**			

Source Authors' research

5 Conclusions

This study provides a deeper insight into students' satisfaction with education services in public versus private HEs in transitional economies. The research included 1980 students from all public and private HEIs in Croatia and Slovenia in the area of economics and business studies. The study clearly shows that students' satisfaction is a multidimensional concept and is affected by numerous factors. Research results

indicate a significantly higher level of satisfaction among students of private HEIs. It is true for all the aspects of education service except for students' social life provided by the university, where no significant difference was found. The most interesting finding is related to the study success that strongly impacts student's satisfaction at private, but not public HEIs.

Consequently, this study provides some important managerial implications for both private and public HEIs. The average level of satisfaction: 3.42 for public and 3.81 for private HEIs gives space and opportunities for significant improvements in both cases. Critical elements for improvement in private HEIs are the provision of extracurricular activities and students' social life improvement, class schedule and working hours and institutional reputation. Public HEIs seem to be less market-oriented and flexible in adaptation to dynamic changes in the environment.

The most important issues that require additional efforts are non-academic staff performance in all aspects (availability, politeness, communication, …) and adaptation of knowledge and skills to better match labor marker requirements. Finally, for both types of institutions, it is important to jointly work on quality standardization. The quality standards should be equal in both cases.

6 Limitations and Further Research

This study has certain limitations that can be a direction for further research. One refers to the methodological approach: we did not use the standard measurement of satisfaction as a discrepancy between expectations and performance but rather asked the respondents to evaluate directly their level of satisfaction. Such an approach risks the objectivity since respondents might consider the "best answer" option. Therefore, it might be useful to apply the classic approach to satisfaction analysis and compare the results. Secondly, this study did not identify demographic factors by which student satisfaction was influenced (gender, age, field of study, economic status, etc.) which some studies found to be important. It is definitely an additional perspective to study. Finally, this study was done in the transitional economies of Croatia and Slovenia, which both have limited experience and only a short tradition of private higher education. It would be therefore challenging to replicate the stud in countries that already have a history of private higher education and compare the results.

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Understanding the Role of University Social Responsibility in Destination Marketing

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Abstract This research aims to discuss the role of university social responsibility. A collaborative effort was done by professors and students during the pandemic crisis to counter the pandemic's detrimental effects on the travel and tourism industry in twelve tourist Egyptian cities via social media campaigns. A quantitative research method was used to assess this project by collecting data from both students and page followers. The findings show that the university's role during the pandemic cannot be neglected in using a proactive marketing campaign to promote tourism sites. Further study is needed on the implications of university social responsibility (USR) in revitalising destination marketing. In addition, a considerable learning effect of employing USR in student education leads to a new direction for marketing academics.

Keywords Social media · Destination marketing · University social responsibility

1 Introduction

Global financial, societal, political, and industrial changes have impacted the educational industry over the past few decades. They emphasise the importance of economic problems in shaping the university's identity (Vasilescu et al., 2010). Universities are typically recognised as being in charge of both teaching and research (Martí-Noguera et al., 2017). Nonetheless, a third mission, in which universities are involved in society, has been added to universities' primary tasks (Howard & Sharma, 2006). A recent research study done by Schnurbus and Edvardsson (2022) showed that most previous research has concentrated on the economic elements of the third

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mission but has ignored social components and indirect activities such as engagement in policymaking and social activities. In addition, in the humanities and social sciences, little study has been performed on this third mission.

In contrast, several research on the social duties of public organisations have been done (Dumay et al., 2010; Navarro-Galera et al., 2014). Knowledge creation in university is sometimes regarded as elitist, which means that certain groups of people are affected by the effective power of knowledge production without ever being able to exert their influence on it (Goldbach et al., 2022). Universities, in this regard, show a more significant social role and are essential in promoting social responsibility awareness among their students, faculty, and other members. Unfortunately, the social duties of universities are poorly recognised in underdeveloped nations (Gomez, 2014; Nejati et al., 2011; Schnurbus & Edvardsson, 2022).

Based on the above, it is critical to analyse the university's role in contemporary society in a developing country. As a result, this research aims to comprehend the role of universities in achieving social responsibility through one type of action that universities can carry out that helps society and students. In general, the research tries to address the question of how universities can have a social role in contemporary society, particularly in destination marketing. Specifically, we address the following questions: can universities develop their social responsibility by adopting learning projects? Particularly, this chapter explores the case of a project of designing a social media campaign through Instagram to promote Egyptian destinations. This study focuses on adopting a new learning strategy that engages students and academics' marketing in understanding the USR through marketing the tourism industry during the pandemic crisis in Egypt. The gross domestic product (GDP) contribution from the travel and tourism sector fell from $32 billion (8.8%) in 2019 to $14.4 billion (3.8%) in 2020 in Egypt. This drop has spurred marketing experts and tourism executives to consider handling a crisis in which tourist customers perceive the world differently. Universities have also experienced this call.

We start by presenting the relevant literature review, followed by the research methodology. Finally, the study concludes with the most relevant findings and recommendations expected to increase tourism after the pandemic and emphasises the importance of applying USR.

2 Literature Review

2.1 The Social Responsibility of Universities

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a corporation's commitment to act socially and ethically and contribute to economic success by bettering the employees, their families, the local community, and society (WBCSD, 2000, p. 8). CSR is summed up in three central beliefs: firms are social organisations, so they are aided in using their influence responsibly; they are responsible for the consequences of their involvement

in society (Wood, 1991); and individual managers are well-thought-out as ethical representatives who must exercise caution when making decisions (Balabanis et al., 1998; Wood, 1991). Stronger CSR efforts may be the result of improved financial situations, and good CSR management may also lead to increased corporate governance procedures in the future (Velte, 2022). CSR is generating a lot of interest among managers, and society is putting more emphasis on it (Martos-Pedrero et al., 2023).

Today's socio-economic concerns require higher education institutions' essential societal role (UNESCO, 1998). In light of this, it is imperative to re-evaluate the role and purpose of USR (Guni, 2017). Due to its public nature and inherent societal responsibilities, USR is a subject worth considering (Hernandez-Mora et al., 2023). It is about establishing a sense of shared social responsibility in students and academic staff by encouraging them to deliver services to their community or to promote the environmental commitment to sustainable development at the local and global levels (Vasilescu et al., 2010). It should be noted that social responsibility ideals are not new to universities, which have long tried to serve society by teaching new generations of individuals and engaging them in community service which can be connected to the primary purpose of public institutions to meet social demands (Vázquez et al., 2016). Abdel-Hameid and Badri (2018) strongly encourage the importance of universities, particularly students and faculty members, in pushing CSR efforts in surrounding communities.

Rahman et al. (2019) conducted a study on Malaysian universities to discover that the third mission of CSR in universities is more influential for less established universities and that these universities gain more from CSR. In contrast, according to the literature, CSR has affected university operations to some level. In the United States, for example, a university partnership known as Campus Compact is dedicated to providing students with useful skills through community service activities (Colby et al., 2000). The general assumption is that universities' operating licences, or legitimacy, need them to fulfil or surpass stakeholder expectations in order to move beyond hegemony and pursue constructive change. It contends that colleges play a positive role in society's endeavour to increase CSR standards to improve social impact via constructive transformation, both inside and outside (Health & Waymer, 2021).

In Italy, the guideline for the third mission focusing on heritage assets owned by universities such as historical buildings and museums has been designed to evaluate the university's third mission and social impact as it symbolises the country's culture and history. Thus, universities bear the obligation of preserving these assets and their values for both current and future societies by providing proper reporting and disclosure to stakeholders (Aversano et al., 2020).

According to Vallaeys (2014), there are four types of university impacts: organisational effects that affect the university's community and environment; educational outcomes that concern educating people and shaping ethics and values; cognitive impacts that concern building and producing knowledge, consolidating the relationship between the social and technological environment of learning and the society; and social implications that concern is affecting the university's community.

In what refers to CSR drivers, Balaraman and Venkatasalem (2022) have identified political changes, culture, socioeconomic requirements, and crisis response. Based on this, the effect of the epidemic is considered a big challenge to society that the university's community must address it as it had a severe effect on the global tourism economy.

Several researchers have looked into the relationship between CSR and marketing characteristics. For example, Rodrigues et al. (2020) evaluated visitors' perceptions of CSR activities, as well as their impact on CSR image development and brand love. Furthermore, CSR has had a substantial impact on marketing concerns and consumer behaviour, indicating that organisations should carefully consider implementing CSR practices or continue to develop such activities for those that currently do (Quezado et al., 2022). Existing research has indicated that marketing abilities are favourably related to the success of any organisation (Sadiku-Dushi et al., 2019).

2.2 Destination Marketing

Marketing tourism destinations might be challenging, especially if one does not understand how tourists and customers view a tourist location (Stepchenkova & Morrison, 2006). In practice, however, CSR includes volunteer activities that enhance social welfare (Rupp et al., 2018). Social media is one of the most popular and commonly utilised methods of communication (Brinkman et al., 2020). As a consequence, it was important to research the majority of recent travellers' Instagram reviews of Egypt. Visitors' reviews and comments may harm a destination's reputation (Sparks & Browning, 2011). Social media opens new routes for influencing and serving travellers and branding destinations (Pantelidis, 2010; Schmallegger & Carson, 2008; Sousa et al., 2023). Instagram posts and stories, for example, are usually viewed as a low-cost marketing activity compared to traditional advertising. The mutual contribution of lecturers and students is a significant responsibility when dealing with social media in education. In fact, many experts believe that social media can bring fresh voices and viewpoints to the classroom, enhancing students' interest and knowledge (James, 2023; Minocha, 2009; Smith, 2010).

An examination of the impact of social media on consumer decision-making and tourism operations and management has been catalogued in peer-reviewed journals (Li & Wang 2011; Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). Instagram has become a popular photo-based platform for brand awareness since 2010 (Ye et al., 2018) and cultural tourism promotion (Lazaridou et al., 2017). Hashtags have also "become a crucial component of social media communications" (Rauschnabel et al., 2019, p. 473). "A hashtag is a form of metadata that labels the post topic so that others can discover it" (Zappavigna, 2014, p. 139). In 2021, some of the most popular hashtags in Egypt were #Egyptianparade #egyptparad #MyEgypt #ExperienceEgypt #destinationEgypt #visitegypt #egypttravel #egyptdiscovery #TheSphinxAvenue #LuxorEgypt #ThePharaohsGoldenParade #AncientEgypt #Egypt #Mummies.

According to experts and practitioners, marketers must relate cultural attractions to a compelling narrative while employing communication technologies, such as social media, to convey material and generate interactions to grab a big audience's attention and interest (Egberts & Bosma, 2014). On the other hand, customers' comments and opinions may highlight areas for improvement and support suppliers in protecting their brands and images. Many studies have concluded that blogging enhances search engine rankings, visitors to a company's website, and online sales to firms or locations (Schmollgruber, 2007; Wyld, 2008). Although the role of social media at various stages of travel planning has been thoroughly researched in earlier studies, the relative influence of each type of social media on travel purchasing decisions has not been addressed in existing research (Leung et al., 2013).

With the increasing popularity of social media among travellers, tourist and hospitality businesses can no longer rely entirely on traditional marketing methods (Leung et al., 2013). Researchers studied tourism challenges and variations, emphasising how to be proactive and build measures for a destination to maximise the possibility for continuity and preserve the safety and security of visitors and workers in the case of a crisis (Robertson et al., 2006). In Tourism risk management, planning and execution are important to limit the adverse effects of crises and disasters on tourism (Robertson et al., 2006).

3 Methodology

An Egyptian higher education institution launched a proactive marketing campaign to promote Egyptian tourism sites during the pandemic. Students were asked to develop marketing graduation projects to promote and revitalise Egyptian tourist sites and cities via social media platforms.

According to Schott and Sutherland (2008), effective tourist education is a socially centred, active co-construction of contextualised information using multimedia teaching approaches that promote active learning. According to Liburd et al. (2011), social media could be critical in encouraging dynamic, collaborative, interdisciplinary, and international learning experiences since they provide web-based tools that allow students to engage actively with information.

A committee of academic professors of the HEI and members of Egypt's ministry of tourism and antiquities assessed these projects. After concluding the project, two studies were carried out: a survey of students completed aiming at assessing their experience and a survey of social media followers.

3.1 Design of a Social Media Campaign Through Instagram

Students learned from the lectures that travellers like posts with helpful content about tourism sites, historical locations, and music videos. This feedback was used

to create the Instagram content strategy, which included the overall message, content categories, tone, and visual style. We used unifying hashtags for all content #destinationEgypt #AMP for Advanced Marketing Project, followed by the most significant hashtags, to lead our strategy. The students were then supervised weekly to ensure that their efforts were successful.

Students were responsible for making Instagram posts or Stories and engaging followers through online activities such as the "answer a poll" activity in an Instagram story, which primarily featured some historical questions about Egypt. We set up an Instagram Business account through Facebook to track the visibility and engagement of the material. This method enables real-time access to analytics. We also scheduled and published Instagram posts using the Hootsuite social media management service, which provides information on the total amount of followers and engagements with individual posts over time.

We created a social media management and research plan that outlined our outreach strategy and content, as well as a social media comment policy that outlined how we would deal with unwanted comments or messages. The majority of the postings and content were written in English. The Campaigns are as follows: Egyptianatlantis (the lost city of Heracleion), Breathesinai (Sinai), and visit. West (Bahariya Oasis), this. Is.Cairo (Cairo), gannet_siwa (Siwa), reexploringraselbar (Ras El Bar), uncoverredsea (Red Sea), heritage_alexandria (Alexandria), ras_mohamed_(Ras Mohamed), hamatta_egypt (Marsa Alam), pa_yom365 (Fayoum), alalameinzoom (Al Alamein), white_paradise2021(white desert), and egypt_locals (Giza).

3.2 Project Assessment

Two studies were carried out to assess the project. The first study used a questionnaire in the English language distributed to students, as the students belonged to the English programme. The questionnaire was distributed to 100 students after they had completed the course. The first study employed a seven-question questionnaire from the students' outcome survey (Fieger, 2012) and was adjusted to meet the research objectives. It evaluates the project's impact on students' learning outcomes in completing an entire destination marketing campaign using social media platforms in their class and their sense of social responsibility towards their community after completing the project.

The second study aimed to evaluate and analyse respondents' opinions in order to satisfy the study's objectives. The survey was based on an English questionnaire to fit all nationalities and was sent to 800 followers who followed at least one profile from fourteen Instagram profiles for thirteen spots managed by students working under the supervision of marketing academics from April 2020 to December 2021. The surveys included multiple-choice, closed, and open questions. The second study used a three-section questionnaire that was distributed to followers. The first component includes demographic data such as age, gender, and nationality. The second section covers the number of times they visited Egypt and the reason for their visit (for foreigners);

if they did not visit Egypt, whether they would like to visit Egypt as their next destination. Furthermore, the question of the reasons for not having visited Egypt before. Finally, Buluk and Esitti's (2015) scale was adapted for the social media engagement measurement.

4 Data Analysis and Results

The questionnaires were distributed from December 2021 to January 2022. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22 was used to analyse the sample responses.

4.1 Validity and Reliability

Cronbach's alpha is used in this section to examine the reliability of the scales. The first questionnaire's Cronbach alpha score was 0.942, while the second questionnaire's was 0.933, showing significant reliability.

Study One

The first study found that a high percentage of students agreed or strongly agreed on most of the scales that reflect the project's learning outcomes for the students in improving their problem-solving skills, teamwork, planning a marketing campaign, and their ability to learn and achieve their goals in which prove that this learning process has a significant impact on the students learning outcomes. Then, the remaining scale that reflects the students thinking about their social responsibility towards their community had a high percentage of strongly agree followed by agreeing, which demonstrates that applying a learning process that considers the university's social responsibility impacts society positively by influencing the students thinking about their commitment towards their community (Table 1).

Study Two

Sample Characteristics for the second study

A total of 680 answers were obtained. Firstly, the sample characteristics need to be elaborated to know if the campaigns reached the target segment, which was planned to include Egyptians and foreigners. There were 58% females and 42% males among the participants. The majority (65%) were between the ages of 19 and 28 years old, indicating that the majority of respondents who participated more on Instagram destination pages were between the ages of 19 and 28 years old; consequently, this age category may be used to make broad conclusions from this study. Egypt has 350 participants, followed by 330 participants from several nationalities, including the United Kingdom, Germany, Malaysia, Italy, Spain, and China (Table 2).

Table 1 Students' learning outcomes frequencies

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Do not know	Agree	Strongly agree
1	My project developed my problem-solving skills	1	2	0	90	7
2	My project helped me develop my ability to work as a team member	0	0	0	4	96
3	My project improved my skills in written communication	3	2	20	30	45
4	My project helped me to develop the ability to plan my marketing campaign	2	1	7	15	75
5	As a result of my project, I feel more confident about tackling unfamiliar problems	4	6	14	55	21
6	My project has made me more confident about my ability to learn	0	1	3	6	90
7	As a result of my project, I am more optimistic about achieving my goals	0	0	2	30	68
8	My project has helped me think about my social responsibility towards my community	0	0	0	40	60

Table 2 Descriptive statistics for demographic variables

Variable		N	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	394	58
	Male	286	42
Age	<19	25	5
	19–28	325	65
	29–38	75	15
	39–48	50	10
	>49	25	5
Nationality	Egyptian	350	51.5
	British	100	14.7
	German	90	13.2
	Malaysian	80	11.7
	Italian	25	3.6
	Spanish	22	3.2
	Chinese	10	1.4
	Others	3	0.44
Total		680	100

According to the findings, only 108 of the 330 foreigners visited Egypt at least once, and half of the foreigner respondents (51%) visited Egypt monthly or annually. Their trip to Egypt is primarily for cultural tourism, with occasional leisure tourism and visits to relatives and friends. Finally, the vast majority of respondents (95.7%) stated a desire to visit Egypt on their future trips (Table 3).

According to the customer's behaviours and social media engagement before visiting a destination, the results show that participants always utilise social media to make travel decisions before visiting a place. This confirms that Instagram, a social media tool, positively impacts the tourism industry. It can be seen from the results that despite the diversity of the sample in age, gender, and even nationalities, consumers always rely on social media as a search platform before visiting the place; they also consider it a reliable information source see Table 4 in Appendix.

5 Discussion

The current research study shows the effect of using the USR in helping the community to overcome the crisis effect and the data analysis proof that there is a huge need in the university system for CSR education for emerging professionals, which will mould them into responsible employees and citizens (Balaraman & Venkatasalem,

Table 3 Visiting Egypt frequencies values for foreigners

1		Never	Only once	Twice	More	Frequently	Total
	How many times did you visit Egypt? (for foreigners only)	222	50	19	18	21	330
2		Cultural tourism	Recreational tourism	Visiting family and relatives	Work	Other	
	What was the purpose of the visit (for foreigners only if you visited)	53	15	21	15	4	108
3		Absolutely yes	Yes	I do not know	No	Absolutely no	
	If you did not visit Egypt, would you want to visit Egypt as your next destination? (for foreigners only)	160	45	4	8	5	222
4		Economic issues	Health and safety issues	Political issues	Personal issues	Other	
	Why did you not visit it till now? (for foreigners only)	30	160	2	20	10	222

2022). Similar to Tortora (2019) who agrees that including CSR education in university systems and engaging student communities in sustainability efforts in collaboration with the commercial sector will have a good social and environmental impact.

The study showed that using this educational technique helped the students in improving their problem-solving skills, teamwork, planning a marketing campaign, and their ability to learn and achieve their goals which proves that this learning process has a significant impact on the student's learning outcomes. Similar to the empirical study on the effectiveness of CSR education among Spanish students, done by Ruiz-Palomino et al. (2019) who discovered that CSR education enhanced the students'

ethical decision-making capacity and that female students exhibited more positive results due to the impact of CSR training. Also, Heath and Waymer (2021) proposed the exclusive roles of CSR engagement involving universities, namely raising the moral standards of the university system, partnering with internal and external stakeholders of society to create a positive impact, nurturing teaching, research, and community service to stimulate social change, and raising moral standards.

In addition, the current study has focused on the marketing potential of social media in terms of reviving tourist spots, and in fact, the study shows a great effect on the page followers which is equivalent to previous studies that prove social media enhances brand awareness, consumer interaction, and customer loyalty (Chan & Guillet, 2011; Huang, 2011; Pantelidis, 2010). Businesses can no longer ignore social media's growing popularity or its role in tourist travel planning; hence scholars and practitioners must continue investigating social media's origins and implications on passengers' travel planning processes. The use of social media to improve Egypt's tourism sector has had a substantial impact, suggesting that social media has a significant impact on passengers and travel suppliers (Parra-López et al., 2011; Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). Faced with severe competition in the tourist and hospitality industries, merging traditional marketing channels with social media may assist extend online presence to a larger audience (Cho & Huh, 2010; Huang et al. 2011).

Moreover, developing and implementing a tourist risk management strategy starting from the university management that adequately addresses possible tourism risks is becoming an essential component of destination management and a social obligation for any organisation with the resources to help. These tourism risk management strategies should be linked to community disaster management plans and include activities that tourism personnel and administrations can take to support the efforts of community disaster management organisations. According to the research, students are critical stakeholders in the university's role in social responsibility. Their ethical training and investigation of working under an ethical code are two of the top issues for acquiring the university's role in social responsibility, and the findings suggest that USR be incorporated into the university's mission. Similar to Goldbach et al. (2022) who showed that interactive teaching and the resulting or underlying changes for universities can help to increase universities' social responsibility in the sense of reciprocal enrichment of research and society.

6 Conclusion

Despite its lengthy history, the concept of corporate social responsibility is poorly understood in the context of universities. Because of the growing economic, environmental, and social concerns, as well as the role of the educational sector, it is vital to conduct a wide variety of research, the findings of which will enable universities to implement responsible and diverse initiatives. This research discussed a critical topic that needed investigation. From the research, it can be seen that universities have a significant impact on contemporary society. The results showed that when

universities apply new learning methods using social media platforms, it can impact their students in several ways. As a result of the research, it was found that Instagram as a social media platform is very effective in promoting tourist places and that tourists rely on it to get information about the places they are planning to visit. This research has illustrated the benefits and challenges that these opening techniques may give for socially responsible running institutions based on preliminary findings and actual interactive teaching experiences. It may be argued that all participants, to varied degrees, understand the importance of social duty.

6.1 Theoretical Implications

This study theorised social media's growing importance and attention in tourism and hospitality. Furthermore, this research study contributes to the field by providing an overview of findings and discussion on social media in tourism and hospitality literature. Even though social media in tourism and hospitality has been extensively researched and debated, social media research is still in its infancy. As a result, this study also benefits academia and industry by identifying research gaps in existing studies and offering a roadmap for future research. The study's findings and arguments will be helpful to corporate practitioners and academics interested in using social media, a new internet tool.

The study discovered that using the USR significantly impacted students' effective learning outcomes, consistent with previous research that discovered that careful moderation of academic activities is required to increase students' enthusiasm for using social media in tourism learning. These studies demonstrated that integrating social media into tourism education requires the participation and cooperation of academics and students working together to establish a knowledge base. The authors recommended that students benefit from a dynamic and participatory environment by cultivating a culture of innovation, mutual respect, and open knowledge generation (Liburd et al., 2011).

6.2 Managerial Implications

Regarding implications for practitioners, our findings indicate a need for more ways to position USR and promote tourist destinations through social media platforms. Establishing a partnership protocol between the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities and universities is critical to improve student learning outcomes and realise the advantages of their contributions to society. Finally, colleges and universities should examine destination marketing as a possible activity for undergraduate curriculum development.

6.3 Limitations and Direction for Future Research

According to the research, social media is an essential strategic tool in destination marketing. However, several limitations to this study must be pointed. The study's inability to track down travellers who expressed interest in visiting Egypt as their next destination is a significant disadvantage. Future research could include evaluating on-site feedback from tourists as well as the influence of the social media campaign on their trip planning. Another area for future research is the evolution and growth of social media in travel and hospitality. Other methodologies can be conducted in order to provide a comprehensive picture of social media applications in the field of destination marketing.

Appendix

See Table 4.

Table 4 Customer behaviors social media engagement before visiting a destination frequencies values

	Statements	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
1	I do research about the destination on social media before visiting there	3	7	10	60	600
2	I believe I will get reliable information on social media about the destination I plan to visit	3	4	3	20	650
3	The information on social media about the destination where I am planning to go, I trust that information if it is written by one of the other visitors	1	4	24	250	400
4	The information on social media about the destination where I am planning to go, I trust that information if it is written by one of the destination managers	2	5	67	438	168
5	Advice on social media about the destination I am planning to go to, I trust that advice if it is written by people I know before	1	2	11	127	539
6	The advice on social media about the destination where I am planning to go I find vital if it is written by someone famous on social media (someone with many followers and friends)	5	4	44	68	559

(continued)

Table 4 (continued)

	Statements	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Always
7	I prefer to go to the destinations where I like and follow on the social media	4	11	19	28	618
8	That a company/brand gets in touch with me on social media positively impacts my purchase decision	24	29	48	379	200
9	Social media sites suit consumers who want to communicate with company/brand/destination managers	8	15	13	118	529
10	I participate in campaigns for destinations organised by social media. (For example; price discounts)	6	12	98	56	488

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