

Editorial: Introducing a Special Issue on Sustainability, Ethics, and ESG Marketing for the New Decade

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Sustainability, ethics, and ESG marketing practices are now demanded by consumers, from environmental to governance issues, for overall societal good. According to the PwC's ESG survey, 83 percent of consumers argue that companies should be more active in their ESG practices. Approximately 90 percent of business leaders and employees agree that they should be more responsible regarding ESG issues in their core businesses (PwC Report 2021). Understanding the fact that a company's ESG initiatives are becoming a central element of corporate differentiation and consumer choice (Feldman and Vasquez-Parraga 2013; Lee, Chang, and Lee 2016; Lii and Lee 2012; Kim 2006; Kuokkanen and Sun 2020), it would be of great importance for marketers to better invest in sustainable improvements considering the environment and society, and to better communicate with consumers to enhance socially desirable outcomes (Bhattacharya, Hildebrand, and Sen 2011; Boccia, Manzo, and Covino 2019).

As such, while marketing practitioners recognize the need for sustainable marketing strategies, there needs to be more research on the impact of ESG on value creation for consumers. Therefore, this special issue aims to initiate and grow a research stream to examine the critical elements of sustainable marketing from the perspectives of ESG in Asian markets.

This special issue consists of four original research papers from those presented at the 2022 ICAMA (International Conference of Asian Marketing Associations) in Jeju, South Korea, hosted by the Korean Marketing Association. With a rigorous review process on the conference submissions, highly competitive papers were selected to present their research ideas at the conference. After the presentation, the best papers were invited for resubmission to the

special issue of AMJ (Asia Marketing Journal). Those resubmitted papers went through the AMJ's regular double-blind review process. These selected papers contribute to sustainable and ethical marketing theories and practices, especially from a perspective of Asian markets, a core theme of AMJ.

Tran (2023) examines whether traditional retail (i.e., wet markets) can play a key role in promoting sustainability in an emerging market. For this research purpose, the paper collected data from multiple sources, including in-depth interviews with small retail owners in a wet market in Vietnam and secondary data from the Vietnamese General Statistics Office, publications, and a research company. By analyzing the data, Tran (2023) figured out two important values of traditional retail regarding ESG initiatives. First, products traded in a wet market are primarily local foods, fish, and agricultural items, which require a shorter delivery time than a modern-big-sized supermarket, whose products come from a long distance. Because of this local supply chain system, a wet market helps reduce carbon emissions, generating positive outcomes for the local environment. Second, this wet market also provides many jobs to female workers in an emerging market. As those jobs require warm and interactive communication skills with local consumers, female workers are likely to be preferred in selling and delivering positions. As such, traditional retail could contribute multiple benefits to sustainability in an emerging market by adopting an environmentally friendly supply chain system and providing more jobs to female workers.

Song (2023) puts forth a research agenda for sustainable business, suggesting the essential elements of social entrepreneurship. Using longitudinal data from the 125-year-old Korean pharmaceutical company

Received 19 January 2023; accepted 19 January 2023.
Available online 7 February 2023

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<https://doi.org/10.53728/2765-6500.1602>

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Dong Wha, and its founder, Kang Min, the paper evidently shows that social entrepreneurship has multiple aspects. By enhancing these aspects, a social entrepreneur could achieve her ultimate social goals. Rooted in the theory of Dees (1998), Song (2023) also attempted to answer the question of how to measure social outcomes in more appropriate ways compared with the business profits. The findings noted that the social outcomes should be evaluated whether a social entrepreneur creates and sustains social values, what types of social values are created, and how those values contribute to the environment, society, and communities. With an emphasis on the role of a social entrepreneur in creating social values, this paper provides meaningful insights into social sector of ESG initiatives.

With advanced digital technologies, consumers are becoming more flexible regarding their residential mobility. On an extreme level, digital nomads work remotely while traveling everywhere. Hong (2023) explored whether this residential mobility influences consumers' purchase intention toward material and experiential products. Employing an experimental approach, the paper shows that higher residential mobility is likely to decrease the willingness to purchase products than lower residential mobility. The results additionally indicate that there is a cultural difference such that the impact of residential mobility in the US consumers' purchase intention tends to be mitigated. In contrast, that impact on Korean consumers' condition is likely to be heightened.

During the pandemic, social engagements through a mobile dating apps dramatically increased. Roshchupkina, Lee, and Kim (2023) adopted a perspective of women in examining the matching process of this mobile environment. Combing the fNIRS (Functional Near-infrared Spectroscopy) technique and an experimental approach, Roshchupkina, Lee, and Kim (2023) confirmed that female users tend to evaluate multiple aspects of potential partners' visual and textual information. Moreover, when the visual information is not clear, such as wearing a facial mask, a hat, or with a different pose or a wrong angle, that profile is not preferred by female users. Showing that women are actively involved in the matching process by using various visual cues to evaluate potential partners' profiles, the paper contributes to the research in a mobile dating app with a female-oriented perspective.

Closing remarks

As consumers are becoming more sensitive to whether companies contribute to socially desirable

values while pursuing their business goals, marketers need help to know how to practice a socially responsible manner in their businesses and how to communicate well with consumers.

The first two papers in this special issue shed light on the direction of ESG practices in an emerging Asian market. Primarily, it is emphasized that responsible and sustainable marketing would generate unique social values and performances, which should be measured with a sustainable perspective. The last two papers attempt to link ESG and digital transformation. Those results imply that marketers should consider that those living and social goals people value have been changed into sustainable marketing practices in an era of ESG and digital transformation.

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