

# Combining corporate environmental sustainability and customer experience management to build an integrated model for decision-making

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – The aim of this work is to provide a theoretical model that can help companies to develop a unique approach to achieve both corporate environmental sustainability (CES) and successful customer experience management (CEM).

**Design/methodology/approach** – A two-phase study achieved the research aim. The first phase consisted of the analysis of contemporary theoretical contributions with a focus on CES and CEM. In the second phase, taking a qualitative approach, the key dimensions identified in the initial analysis were investigated to explore the dominant perceptions of practitioners and to hone the theoretical categories.

**Findings** – Five innovative pathways emerged from the study to inform decision-making while maintaining the dual objectives of CES and successful CEM. These pathways are combined to offer a strategic tool for managers and for research advances. This original integrated model also offers six novel theoretical propositions that describe how to shape corporate decisions to achieve environmental sustainability in CEM.

**Research limitations/implications** – Firms can benefit from an approach that integrates CES and CEM to develop a new mindset for an innovative and valuable decision-making process and to design more captivating experiences for customers. Nevertheless, the efficacy and generalizability of the theoretical framework and propositions require empirical testing.

**Originality/value** – This paper makes an original contribution to the environmental sustainability and marketing literature by bringing together all elements in these fields of research in a conceptual model. Moreover, this paper proposes theoretical propositions that advance knowledge of the subject and offer ideas for future research and managers.

**Keywords** Environmental sustainability, Customer experience management, Decision-making, Integrated model

**Paper type** Original article

## 1. Introduction

Both environmental sustainability and successful customer experiences are crucial for firms and a strategic approach to the pursuit of these goals is required (Moliner *et al.*, 2019; Signori *et al.*, 2019; Ta *et al.*, 2022). However, the concrete implementation of such an approach by companies is still a challenge, subject to management research. On a theoretical level, there is



a broad agreement that both are key priorities for companies (Pardo-Jaramillo *et al.*, 2020; Signori *et al.*, 2019), especially since the onset of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, which has sensitized citizens, firms and governments to the importance of preserving the environmental ecosystem and changed consumers' decisions (Anderson *et al.*, 2021). On the other hand, according to Fader (2020) and Peppers and Rogers (2016), among others, the increasingly competitive market combined with digitization imposes the need for companies to put the customer at the center of corporate decision-making and for new, better customer experiences (Cain, 2022; Santos and Gonçalves, 2021). Consequently, entrepreneurs and managers need to redefine their strategic and operational priorities, by giving greater attention to the environment and the consumer.

Within the current debate on environmental priorities and customer-centricity there is a call for research on why it is that the customer and the environment are so rarely, in practice, put at the heart of business (Signori *et al.*, 2019). This study responds to calls to integrate CEM and CES to guarantee a long-term competitive advantage (Pardo-Jaramillo *et al.*, 2020; Ceesay, 2020; Forrester, 2010).

Despite the crucial role that customers and the planet play in firm performance improvements, CEM and CES have largely been studied separately (Palmer, 2010; Schmitt, 2010; Verhoef *et al.*, 2009). Consequently, an integrated conceptualization is lacking, notably at the strategic level and this has obstructed the development of convergent measures for them, new theoretical models and new ideas for companies. Additionally, the absence of a satisfactory view of the field obstructs the proposal of appropriate hypotheses. Only recently have there been attempts to define a sustainable customer experience (SCE) (Signori *et al.*, 2019). Prior research on CES has examined the relationship between the natural environment and a firm's strategy (Berrone and Gomez-Mejia, 2009; Boutilier, 2011; Walls *et al.*, 2012) and shown the advantages derived from the implementation of environmental objectives in terms of better use of resources and capabilities but also product differentiation, as there is increasing demand for environmentally friendly goods and services (Berrone and Gomez-Mejia, 2009).

The "win – win" logic of being "green and competitive" (Porter and Van der Linde, 1995) can be implemented by integrating environmental thinking in all aspects of marketing (Moravcikova *et al.*, 2017). In other words, companies can add environmental benefits to their products and services to obtain other external benefits, such as increased sales, improved customer feedback, closeness to customers and an improved corporate image (Dangelico and Pujari, 2010; Awan *et al.*, 2020).

In this sense, green marketing has an essential role in educating people and persuading them to go green, because it influences the lifestyles and behavior and is concerned with all the activities of an organization that may influence the environment, in both the short and the long term. Such activities not only include the development of the physical characteristics of products that do not harm the natural environment, but also the related marketing processes, promotions and claims (Awan, 2011).

In the analysis of CEM at an individual level, it has been defined as the management of the customer-firm relationship along the customer journey, from need generation to post-purchase (Yim and Park, 2019; Lemon and Verhoef, 2016). Starting from this definition, Homburg *et al.* (2017) pointed out three determinants (cultural mindset, strategic directions and firm capabilities) for the customer experience to be strategically managed in two directions: *internal conditions*, such as the adoption of the customer journey, effective use of data and adoption ambidexterity by the organization; and *external conditions*, in terms of good alliances. Additionally, the same authors (Homburg *et al.*, 2017) as well as others (Ferraresi and Schmitt, 2018) have observed that a CEM orientation offers the opportunity to differentiate the product offering, increases customer loyalty and positive word of mouth, promotes cross-selling, reduces price sensitivity and stimulates the growth of a positive reputation (Klink *et al.*, 2020).

CEM and CES can be good differentiation strategies, but what becomes crucial is to understand how to integrate both objectives in a single decision-making process. Consequently, the present study strives to expand research by answering two research questions: (1) What research has been conducted on CEM and CES so far? (2) How can the findings be used to help companies achieve both CES and good CEM? Inspired by the strategic CEM framework proposed by [Homburg et al. \(2017\)](#) and logic of being “green and competitive” developed by [Porter and Van der Linde \(1995\)](#), we construct an integrated framework as an innovative response to the individual use of these constructs in previous studies.

Accordingly, by answering the two research questions, the present research boosts the understanding of how firms can achieve environmental sustainability within the design of successful customer experiences. Specifically, this paper advances the literature and practice in several ways. First, it provides comprehension of the major trends in and connections between the two concepts, which helps define the boundaries for an integrated approach. Second, it represents the first attempt to devise an integrated model for managerial decisions. Moreover, that model is validated through a case study of a small service firm operating in the food industry. Third, it presents seven theoretical propositions that advance knowledge of the subject and that offer ideas for future research. Finally, it proposes new directions for scholars and managers. In sum, the current paper brings together all elements of this field of research, and thereby facilitates the identification of connections and the consolidation of past research in the form of a conceptual model for firms that want to innovate and compete more effectively.

## 2. Theoretical fundamentals and research gap

Commitment to the natural environment has gained great importance on national agendas and is now crucial to competition and this issue is forcing many companies to change. CES is, therefore, becoming a growing trend in modern business, reflecting the reciprocal relationship between the natural environment and a firm’s strategy and operations ([Boutilier, 2011](#); [Walls et al., 2012](#)). Marketing is essential in this process since it can play a key role in the creation of a green market (e.g. [Rex and Baumann, 2007](#)), by communicating with consumers in such a way as to increase their awareness of the need for environmental sustainability and to inform them about the benefits of environmentally sustainable products and services. Environmental sustainability as a marketing tool (“green” marketing) is a broad concept that can be applied to consumer commodities, industrial goods and even services ([Polonsky, 1994](#)) and has been considered as a strategic tool to position companies in the market, differentiating products and services and creating the trust of environmental stakeholders ([Walsh and Dodds, 2017](#)). Green marketing fosters, on the one hand, cleaner production through the development of green products and, on the other hand, sustainable consumption ([Dangelico and Vocellelli, 2017](#)).

[Signori et al. \(2019\)](#) explored the link between CES and CEM. The latter, recently defined as “the cognitive, emotional, behavioural, sensorial and social responses during the entire journey” ([Lemon and Verhoef, 2016](#)), is not new ([Schmitt, 2010](#)), but it is now assuming a new importance both for scholars and for practitioners as an innovative strategic approach that allows companies to compete more effectively ([Homburg et al., 2017](#)). [Signori et al. \(2019\)](#) (p. 161) coined the term “Sustainable Customer Experience” (SCE) to denote the “*process that creates holistic value thanks to the customer’s engagement derived by sensations, feelings, cognitions, and behaviours evoked by sustainable stimuli, based on economic, social and environmental sustainability*”. This is an advance on the traditional concept of customer experience, especially the idea of “sustainable stimuli” and highlights the increasing consumer interest in “green” experiences. More recently, [Pardo-Jaramillo et al. \(2020\)](#) mapped the research on customer-centricity from a sustainability perspective and identified three

clusters of studies: those examining sustainable development, a customer-centric perspective and customer satisfaction. The authors underline the need for firms to develop a business model with a social goal.

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, customers have become more oriented to sustainability, buying local and embracing digital commerce and this has made the need for more environmentally sustainable offers even more evident (Sorrentino *et al.*, 2022). Considering that there is a wider awareness of personal and social health and greater respect for the environment and that people are more willing to buy local, organic food and experience nature, companies should consider how they might profitably exploit these opportunities using the appropriate strategic and marketing tools.

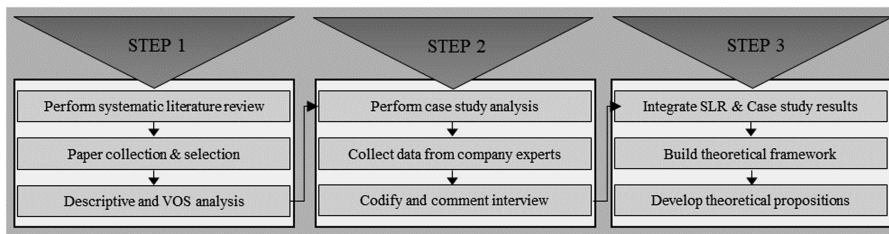
Even though a multitude of customer- and sustainability-related issues have been researched, a perspective that integrates the environmental dimension of sustainability and the effects of sustainability-oriented CEM initiatives throughout the entire customer experience is missing. Inspired by Homburg *et al.* (2017), our theoretical fundamentals suggest gaps in the literature and potential areas for further development for scholars and managers. At a theoretical level, CES and CEM have been studied mainly separately and most studies analyze the topics from a marketing perspective (Ferraresi and Schmitt, 2018; Lemon and Verhoef, 2016; Walsh and Dodds, 2017; Moravcikova *et al.*, 2017). Consequently, an integrated model that can be the basis of future research is lacking. Also, the advantages of a combination of CES and CEM in managerial practice are underestimated.

In this vein, our study sheds light on the opportunities that can come from merging CES and CEM by identifying the theoretical topics that emerge from previous research, testing these issues in an empirical case study and providing a model that can help companies to identify a strategic direction that can achieve environmental sustainability objectives while delivering successful experiences for the client, which represent two of the most important managerial objectives in all business sectors.

### 3. Research design and method

Due to the exploratory nature of our research questions, we implement a traditional inductive research design. An inductive approach, as opposed to a deductive approach, is not guided by a structuring framework (Eisenhardt, 1989). It does not begin with an assertion of preconceived categories into which the data fit; instead, it begins with specific observations and evaluations to identify patterns, which are then articulated into propositions. The categories emerge as the data are analyzed and, following a theory-building approach grounded in rich qualitative data, we generate theoretical propositions. Consequently, we have implemented an exploratory case study analysis to generate theory in the shape of propositions (Eisenhardt, 1989).

More specifically, we have adopted an exploratory sequential strategy (see Figure 1). With the aim of identifying the main topics that have been explored, we start with a systematic



Source(s): Our elaboration

Figure 1.  
The research process

literature review. Then, using qualitative analysis in the form of a case study, we validate the theoretical results and gain more insights into practitioners' perspectives (Del Val and Fuentes, 2003; Bolívar and Meijer, 2016; Loureiro *et al.*, 2020, 2021).

Thus, our research has two phases. In phase 1, we identify research trends and establish some latent categories from a systematic literature review to analyze the meeting points between CES and CEM. To do so, we conduct keywords research on a scholarly database and perform co-occurrence analysis with VOSviewer software to identify research trends.

In phase 2, to validate the conceptual categories that emerged from the bibliographic research in phase 1 and understand to what extent they reflect the real business world, we have developed a qualitative case study analysis with in-depth interviews of selected managers of an Italian company operating in the food delivery industry. That industry represents an interesting context in which to investigate the search for a new and alternative way to improve the customer experience, i.e. through the reduction of environmental impact and using environmental sustainability to build a good customer experience. As there is little empirical understanding of a strategy that integrates CES and CEM, this research is ideal for explorations of new phenomena.

In phase 2, we audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim and anonymized interview responses and then analyzed these data using the coding process where the data are divided into themes related to the theoretical categories. Lastly, we integrated the results of phase 1 and phase 2 to develop a conceptual framework and identify theoretical propositions that could drive the practical implementation of the combined model.

In the next two sections, we present the two phases of the research and describe the procedure and findings for each phase.

## 4. First phase of the research: topic analysis

### 4.1 Procedure

To identify and analyze the main research topics, we conduct a systematic literature review. Following the traditional approach to systematic literature review, research articles were selected according to a set of inclusion/exclusion criteria. Firstly, a search string was established that had two parts: the adoption of a set of words on the theme of environmental sustainability, after which a second set, on the theme of customer experience research, was applied. Both sets of keywords were derived from previous literature reviews on the two topics (Parmentola *et al.*, 2022; Waqas *et al.*, 2021). The search string was:

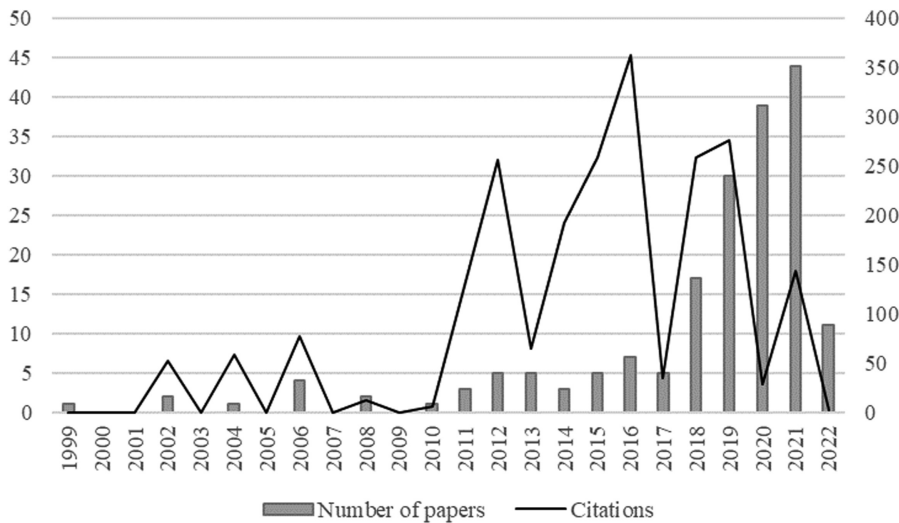
TITLE-ABS-KEY ("customer experience") OR TITLE-ABS-KEY ("customer journey") OR TITLE-ABS-KEY ("internet experience") OR TITLE-ABS-KEY ("web experience") OR TITLE-ABS-KEY ("shopping experience") AND TITLE-ABS-KEY ("circular economy") OR TITLE-ABS-KEY (sustainab\*) OR TITLE-ABS-KEY ("natural environment\*") OR TITLE-ABS-KEY (green) OR TITLE-ABS-KEY ("climate change")

For this study, we considered only peer-reviewed articles published in journals and excluded all unpublished works as well as working papers, reports, or conference proceedings, as these are considered to be less at the frontier of knowledge compared with journal articles.

We did not include time limits and the research was restricted to articles written in English. This resulted in a sample of 185 bibliographic records. These were first analyzed descriptively and then used as the input for co-occurrence analysis through Vosviewer to highlight main research trends.

### 4.2 Descriptive analysis

Here we summarize the set of papers by the year of publication, number of citations, the journal and the country of origin. This descriptive analysis provides a picture of studies of the combination of CES and CEM (see Figure 2).



**Figure 2.**  
Descriptive analysis

The first paper to consider both topics was published in 1999. That paper analyzed practical solutions to air-conditioning in grocery stores in order to improve both the shopping experience and sustainability (Anon, 1999). A clear increase in the research on the two topics started in 2017, since when a growing number of papers have been published, demonstrating the emergence of a theoretical trend.

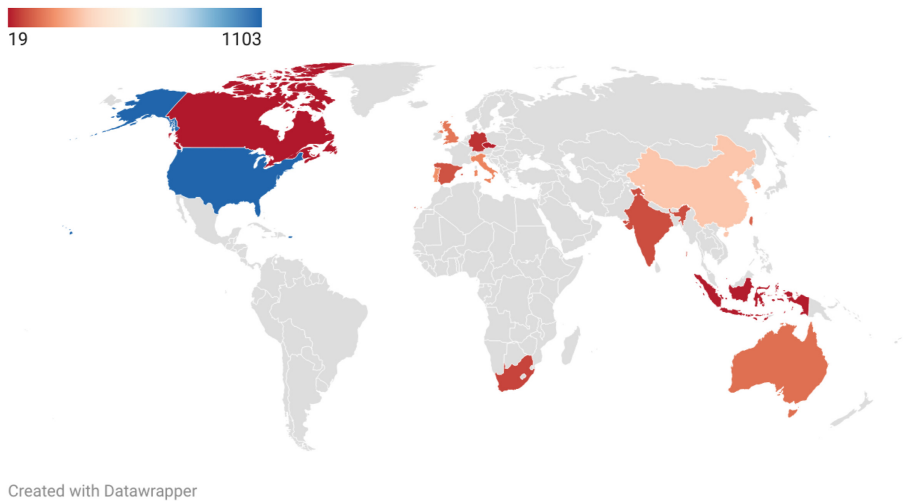
Table 1 lists the 10 journals that published the most cited papers that met the study criteria. It is noteworthy that they are all high-quality journals, as shown by their rankings (see Figure 3).

Because many of the studies were international collaborations, we analyze the geographical distribution of papers by the nationality of the corresponding author. It is evident that the United States (20.7%) and China (13.8%) are the most active countries on the

Source	Publisher	Doc	Citations	SJR	Quartiles	H-index
<i>Int. J. of Contemporary Hospitality Management</i>	Emerald	3	274	2.08	Q1	86
<i>Sustainability (Switzerland)</i>	MDPI AG	30	266	0.61	Q2	85
<i>Journal of Service Management</i>	Emerald	3	213	2.66	Q1	60
<i>Journal of Service Research</i>	SAGE Pub. Inc.	1	174	4.43	Q1	122
<i>Strategy and Leadership</i>	Emerald	2	122	0.22	Q3	45
<i>Journal of Cleaner Production</i>	Elsevier	3	104	1.94	Q1	200
<i>Technological Forecasting and Social Change</i>	Elsevier	1	95	2.223	Q1	117
<i>Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services</i>	Elsevier	2	84	1.57	Q1	89
<i>Journal of Management Information Systems</i>	M.E. Sharpe Inc.	1	78	3.07	Q1	144
<i>Int. J. of Retail and Distribution Management</i>	Emerald	4	61	0.73	Q1	78

**Source(s):** Scopus and Scimago

**Table 1.**  
Scores and ranking of  
the top 10 most cited  
journals



Country	N. of Documents	%
USA	39	20.7%
CHINA	26	13.8%
UK	15	8.0%
SOUTH KOREA	15	8.0%
INDIA	14	7.4%
ITALY	12	6.4%
TAIWAN	9	4.8%
SPAIN	8	4.3%
SOUTH AFRICA	8	4.3%
INDONESIA	8	4.3%

**Figure 3.**  
Papers' distribution  
per country (Top 10  
countries)

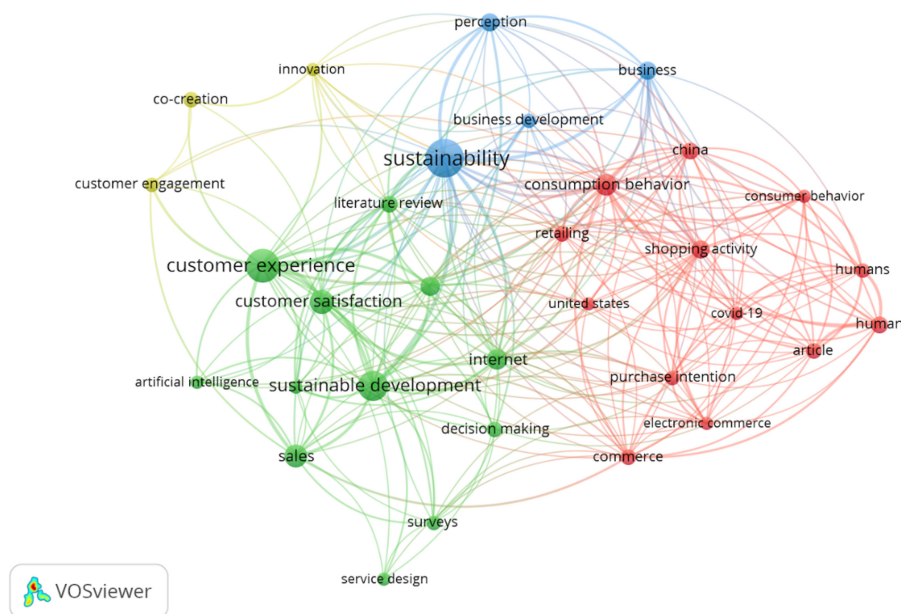
topics. In addition to research from European authors, countries like South Korea, India, Taiwan, South Africa and Indonesia also contribute to the international debate.

#### 4.3 Co-occurrence analysis to identify research trends

In order to identify challenges and trends within the selected documents, we performed co-occurrence analysis using VOSviewer software (<http://www.vosviewer.com>) with the keywords (i.e. authors' keywords and index keywords) drawn from the bibliographic Scopus database.

The software, developed in the Java programming language, creates a co-occurrence network of keywords (adjectives and nouns) and displays it on a two-dimensional map. Two keywords are said to co-occur if they both appear in the same title/abstract or citation context. The distance between two keywords (two nodes) is approximately inversely proportional to the similarity (relatedness in co-occurrence terms) of the keywords. Hence, keywords with a higher rate of co-occurrence tend to be closer to each other. VOSviewer provides a clustering function, which assigns keywords to clusters based on their co-occurrence.

In this study, the minimum number of occurrences of a keyword was set at 5; from 1,351 keywords, 32 met this threshold. The VOSviewer network is shown in [Figure 4](#).



**Figure 4.**  
Co-occurrence analysis  
through VOSviewer

The visualization in [Figure 4](#) allows us to identify a nodular network characterized by four distinct but interrelated clusters. By default, the software provides different colors for each cluster. We also assigned a label to each cluster by considering the specific characteristics of the items contained.

The first cluster contains 13 items focused on purchasing intention, shopping and retailing. We assigned the label “consumer behavior” to this cluster. In this field of research, the authors emphasize the role of operational marketing instruments employed for sales (of either products or services). For instance, [Vehmas et al. \(2018\)](#) focus on the communication used to improve consumer attitude with respect to buying “circular” clothes. This messaging should be timed correctly by using multiple communication channels, and also by paying attention to the shopping experience. Thus, some of the keywords in the cluster are related to channels, such as electronic commerce, retailing, shopping activity, or customer behavior, thus also focusing on the human dimension of the selling process.

The second cluster (colored green) comprises 12 items that we labeled “decision-making”. These items seem to be very different from each other, as they relate to the customer dimension (customer engagement and customer experience), sustainable development and the digital technologies employed, such as artificial intelligence and the internet. However, overall, this cluster can be seen to concern the instruments used to implement CES and CEM. In this cluster, the work of [Holmlund et al. \(2020\)](#) appears a study that highlighted the role of big data analytics in unlocking customer insights for CEM. The work of [Fielden et al. \(2019\)](#), in contrast, focuses on the role of smart sustainable data-driven manufacturing to improve several business aspects, including CEM. In other words, these digital and more sustainable technologies are used as key instruments to develop marketing objectives.

The blue cluster comprises four items and is labeled “business development” because the papers in this cluster highlight the linkage between CEM and CES at the strategic level. For instance, [Mihardjo and Rukmana \(2019\)](#) suggest the role of a new business model based on customer experience and organizational agility in shaping sustainable development.

The last and smallest cluster is the yellow one, which contains three items related to the collaboration dimension. For this reason, we tag this cluster “co-creation”. Collaboration among different stakeholders is considered crucial for the creation of sustainability and long-term value because it ensures access to new skills, knowledge, markets and technologies by sharing risk and integrating complementary competencies. Collaborative interaction with the end-user is also important for the customer experience, as it allows the devising of services that meet customers’ expectations.

Table 2 summarizes the results of the co-occurrence analysis shown in Figure 4 and refers to the papers selected for topic analysis (see Appendix).

The theoretical clusters produced by the co-occurrence analysis do, though, include several items that appear too generic and heterogeneous. This demonstrates that despite the focus on both topics, the literature that integrates them is still fragmented and is often focused on the practical or instrumental role of CEM and CES individually, therefore neglecting the strategic insights. As a result, an empirical case study has been carried out to verify a potential integrated approach. Theoretical propositions are then developed that can encapsulate the main issues.

## 5. Second phase of the research: the case study analysis

### 5.1 Research approach

To answer our research questions and validate the theoretical dimension, we use the case study method (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 2009). This also enables us to assess the validity of the conceptual categories developed in the first stage of the research. Due to the exploratory nature of our study, case study analysis is an appropriate strategy as it can examine the phenomenon or object of study within its real-life context (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003). When combined with a systematic literature review, the case study analysis enables a discussion of the conceptual categories that emerged from the theoretical findings within a specific setting. In management studies, this approach is said to support theory-building (Eisenhardt, 1989; Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007; Stake, 1995). The exploratory nature of case studies can also reveal new facets of the phenomenon under analysis (e.g. Dubois and Gadde, 2014; Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007). In the present case study, by comparing the views of

**Table 2.**  
Co-occurrence analysis results

Clusters	Color	Nº Items	Cluster Label	Details Items (VOS viewer)	Papers
Cluster 1	RED	13	Consumer behavior	article; china; commerce; consumer behavior; consumption behavior; covid-19; electronic commerce; human; humans; purchase intention; retailing; shopping activity; united states.	3;6;12;13;14;16;18;22;23;26;28;30;31;39;40;52;54;57;60;61;64;65;68;73;75;81;84;89;91;93;95;99;102;106;111;124;126;128;130;131;133;138;140;146;148;154;156;161;162;163;169;172;184;185
Cluster 2	GREEN	12	Decision making	artificial intelligence; customer experience; customer satisfaction; decision making; factor analysis; internet; literature review; marketing; sales; service design; surveys; sustainable development	1;2;5;8;10;11;17;19;21;25;27;29;34;36;37;38;41;45;46;47;49;55;56;63;66;67;69;70;71;77;78;80;83;87;88;90;92;94;97;105;107;108;109;112;114;116;118;119;121;122;123;125;129;134;136;137;141;142;143;155;158;159;170;175;182;183
Cluster 3	BLUE	4	Business development	business; business development; perception; sustainability	7;9;15;20;24;35;42;44;48;51;53;58;59;62;72;74;76;82;85;86;96;98;101;104;110;115;120;127;135;139;150;151;152;157;160;164;165;168;171;173;174;176;177;178;179;180;181
Cluster 4	YELLOW	3	Co-creation	co-creation; customer engagement; innovation	4;32;33;43;50;79;100;103;113;117;132;144;145;147;149;153;166;167

managers with the elements that emerged from the theory (the literature review), it is possible to find new facets of and perspectives on the phenomenon under study (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007), because the empirical analysis becomes a “moment of truth” in which researchers’ intuitions are compared with the reality expressed in the content of the interviews (Dubois and Gadde, 2002).

The case study is on a food delivery service. Food delivery is a dynamic and constantly evolving sector, especially in the expanding Italian market. This business context was chosen because food delivery is not seen merely as a food transport service, but as an experiential process in which the customer chooses what to order and from whom and expects an on-time and satisfactory experience. Therefore, it is configured as a complex service that includes all the steps of the customer journey. Moreover, according to data from Deliverect (2022), “it’s important that a restaurant is respectful of the environment as well as [being] of the highest quality”. Thus, environmental sustainability is an additional way to enhance the customer experience, by letting diners know that the provider is committed to more than just producing and delivering takeaway food.

### 5.2 Research setting: the case of Alfonsino spa

Alfonsino is an innovative start-up launched in 2016 by three young Italian entrepreneurs in Caserta (in the Campania region, in the south of Italy). The primary mission of the company is to provide food delivery services to small cities in Italy, with populations ranging from 50,000 to 250,000, where the leading players in food delivery, such as Uber Eats, Just Eat, or Deliveroo, have little or no interest in providing the service. The company uses Facebook’s chatbox to collect and deliver orders, in addition to an app available on the major operating systems. During the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown, the company added other services to food delivery: the company currently offers delivery services for food shops, chemists, florists, wine sellers and for other local shops. Presently, the company serves over 300 Italian cities in 6 regions. It has a delivery range of 3 km, which covers many cities. There are around 950 affiliated companies that use Alfonsino delivery, 95% of which are small enterprises. There are around 30,000 orders a month, concentrated in the Campania region, where 70% of the customers are located. The company had a value of around €1 million at the end of 2019. In part thanks to the COVID lockdown restrictions, this valuation was increasing at 3% per month. The company launched two crowdfunding campaigns to obtain finance. The first, in 2018, collected about €150,000, while the second, which was closed around the end of 2020, exceeded the main objective of €350,000. Indeed, having obtained around €460,000, the company had a growth strategy of expanding its business to over 400 cities within 2022. In November 2021, the company was listed on the stock exchange.

### 5.3 Empirical research process

With the purpose of acquiring more comprehensive and concrete knowledge from practice, from April to July 2021 we conducted 15 interviews with managers and employees (representing half of the entire workforce) from the selected case study company, Alfonsino. To avoid influencing the answers and interviewees’ perceptions, the aim of the study was not explained to the respondents in too much detail. Moreover, in order to spontaneously bring out the possible integration of CES and CEM, the theoretical categories that emerged from the literature analysis were not explicitly communicated to the interviewees.

The constructs were first investigated separately and then jointly in some final questions. Specifically, we designed a list of open questions divided into three sections: (1) CEM, (2) CES and (3) the joint implementation/integration of CES and CEM. The interviews were carried out face to face at Alfonsino’s headquarters and each took around an hour. They started with a couple of exploratory and engaging questions to make the interviewee feel comfortable and

avoid cognitive bias (Babin and Zikmund, 2015). All interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim and anonymized. Transcripts were analyzed using the coding process of dividing data into themes related to the theoretical categories (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Clarke *et al.*, 2015).

Specifically, researchers manually identified five broad categories (themes) as an expression of the ideas or feelings given in the text (see Table 3). For example, the following statement by one manager was coded under the theoretical category “business development”:

We would like the whole supply chain to have an environmental vocation but to date, we cannot prohibit one of our affiliated restaurateurs from working with us if the environmental vocation is not strong in him. We can only encourage him to follow the example of some of our most virtuous partners and increase this vocation in him. In the future, in our business development, we could directly supply the eco-friendly transport packs to generate less environmental impact for all our partners.

Statements	Theme	Theoretical category
We believe that our company differs from the others for the investment it makes in relations with the main stakeholders: partner restaurants, customers, drivers	Stakeholder-centric relationships	Co-creation
Each category is followed individually so that stable and lasting value relationships can be created	Long-lasting valuable relationships	Co-creation
We take care of the well-being of our riders and this can be seen both on a contractual level but also through their uniform and others facilities	Riders well-being orientation	Human-centricity
Today our customers have the possibility to order from the comfort of their homes, other product categories such as food, pharmaceuticals, baby products and much more	Customer experience based business development	Business development
Taking care of the environment is very important for us. However, there are no direct references to environmental aspects in our current value proposition	Environmental sustainability orientation	Business development
Within our company there is a strong culture oriented towards the environmental protection	Environmental sustainability orientation	Business development
The major obstacles to defining our service from a totally green perspective could be greater on the side of affiliated businesses	Obstacles to environmental sustainability	Business development
We believe that most of our consumers are attentive to environmental responsibility	Environmental-oriented customer experience	Consumer behavior
We believe it is possible to provide our customers with a green-oriented experience, in fact we are looking for eco-friendly packaging suppliers, to limit the environmental impact of our experience	Touchpoints management	Consumer behavior
In the next future, we would like to supply packs to our partner restaurateurs in order to win the battle against plastic	Environmental-oriented business ecosystem	Business development
Being a company with computerized processes, we can say that most of our customer contact points are already green oriented	Environmental-oriented customer experience	Consumer behavior
They could improve, with the introduction of completely green means of transport for delivery such as the use of electric bicycles rather than electric scooters to make deliveries	Environmental-oriented business ecosystem	Business development

**Source(s):** Our elaboration

**Table 3.**  
An example of the codification process

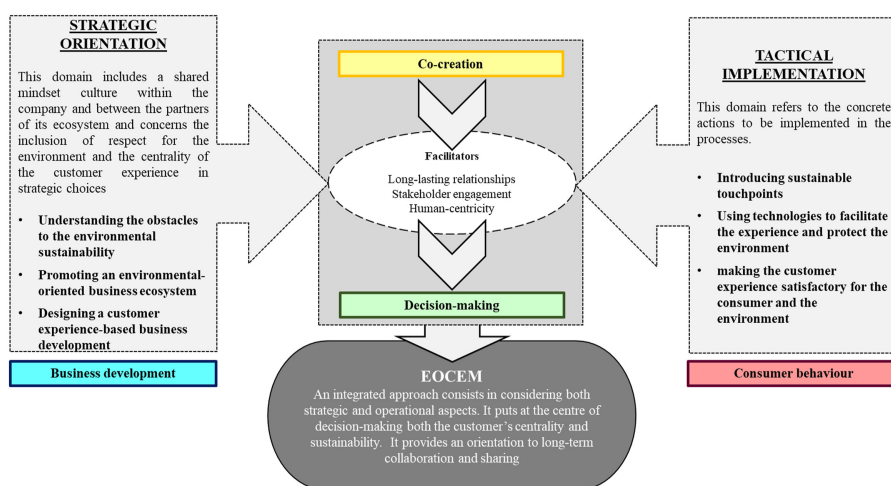
Conversely, the response “*We believe it is possible to provide our customers with an environmentally oriented shopping experience, and therefore we are looking for eco-friendly packaging suppliers for a better consumer experience*” was coded as “consumer behavior”.

The statements in the five categories of the coding largely matched the keywords appearing in the four clusters identified in phase 1 of the research (the literature analysis). However, in addition, a new category emerged in the case study, named “human centrality” and it is included in the integrated model.

### 5.4 Results

This section presents the results of the interviews carried out with Alfonsino’s managers and employees. Following the methodological approach adopted for the interviews to identify the meeting points between CES and CEM, findings are first presented individually. Subsequently, in section 4.4.2, the model derived from the coding of the elements that emerged from the interviews is presented. At the end of the section, Figure 5 illustrates a strategic approach that combines CES and CEM.

**5.4.1 CEM orientation.** Alfonsino’s food delivery service is managed through digital touchpoints and the design of a satisfactory customer experience is crucial. Right from the start, it was evident in the interviews that maximizing the customer experience for Alfonsino goes beyond the design of a technological and managerial process and involves listening to the customer. Alfonsino’s differentiation strategy is to serve cities with populations ranging from 50,000 to 250,000. In this way, the company is able to get closer to the needs of local communities and consequently can be more attentive to and better meet the needs of its customers. A set of values shared by the managers is the basis of their orientation to the customer experience. As stated by the chief executive officer (CEO), “*we believe that our company differs from the others for the investment it makes in relations with the main stakeholders: partner restaurants, customers, drivers. Each category is followed individually so that stable and lasting value relationships can be created*”. The CEO also specified the attention that is devoted to the riders: “*riders are regularly employed by the company. They have a regular contract and paid contributions; they receive a fixed amount for the covered shift plus a payment for each delivery made*”.



Source(s): Our elaboration

Figure 5.  
The integrated  
framework of EOCEM

Alfonsino's orientation to people is also evident in its relationship with customers. The shopping experience for the end user is designed to be quick and easy. The customer is followed step by step from the beginning to the end of the process. As the co-founder said: *"Our customers can order through the classic app, available free of charge for the iOS and Android operating systems, or Facebook chat, without having to enter a login, thanks to the chatbot developed in-house by our team"*. This type of access to the service is especially appreciated by the 60% of customers who still use Facebook Messenger as their preferred channel for ordering. The benefits partly derive from how the bot is designed; when the customer interacts with it, they have the feeling of talking to a real person and this contributes to making the shopping experience less impersonal. Consumers may also schedule the delivery; for example, they can place an order in the morning when they are at work and have their food delivered at a specific time in the evening. This certainly improves the customer experience, as people no longer have to worry about ordering once they are back home.

Another element that improves Alfonsino's offer is its flawless customer service, which takes care of assisting customers in real-time and solves problems regarding the use of the service. Frequent customer contact concerns things like canceled orders, changes to a delivery address or errors regarding orders; for each of these requests, customer service responds promptly in real-time.

Attention to people is increasingly important in the experience created for customers and riders play a strategic role in this area. Alfonsino carefully selects delivery workers precisely because they are the company in the eyes of the customers. As one manager said: *"We take care of the wellbeing of our riders, and this can be seen both on a contractual level, as previously anticipated, but also through their uniform; each of them receives a kit that protects them from the cold and bad weather, consisting of anti-ageing, rain-resistant sweatshirts and shirts, and ... the iconic food backpack, essential for making deliveries"*.

The same standards are also maintained in the relationship with the Business to Business (B2B) customers (partner restaurateurs). The Alfonsino experience for the restaurateur turns out to be better than that provided by competitors because every restaurateur, from the smallest to the largest, receives dedicated assistance 24 h a day from the company through one of its consultants, who follows the restaurateur in every respect concerning the customer's activity on the platform.

These consultants take on the role of coaches for restaurateurs; they are always available to help them increase their turnover. In addition to the consultant's research for each client, ad hoc commercial and marketing strategies to enhance the activities on the platform are provided, as well as the consultant being always available for every aspect of the operation of the service itself.

Additionally, as another manager stated: *"To increase the satisfaction level of our business customers, we frequently introduce promotional activities, for the benefit of restaurateurs, which make our fee affordable, compared with the commercial offers of competitors"*.

Also, during the COVID pandemic, Alfonsino supported, and continues to support, restaurateurs in serious difficulty as a result of the closures and restrictions. Moreover, Alfonsino is beginning to deliver essential goods and medicines. This makes the Alfonsino experience more complete than before, as stated by a manager: *"Today our customers can order, from the comfort of their homes, other product categories such as food, pharmaceuticals, baby products, and much more"*.

What emerges from the interviews is that Alfonsino adopts a human-oriented approach to the customer experience. Alfonsino's strategy is characterized by an approach that puts people at the center of its decisions and processes. In addition to designing and offering an efficient service for all those involved, Alfonsino pays particular attention to the well-being of each stakeholder. Indeed, the name of the brand – "Alfonsino" – is an Italian man's name, thereby suggesting to customers that a known person will be arriving at their home. In

summary, what emerges from the interviews is a strong will to be exceptional, by standing out with regard to the human side of the business. By using a human-centered design, the company aims to create useful and useable systems. This involves focusing on end customers, their needs and requirements and by applying the principles of ergonomics and usability. The company's goals are to improve efficiency and effectiveness; to increase people's well-being; to enhance customer experience, satisfaction, accessibility and sustainability and to counteract any negative effects on human health, safety and performance.

*5.4.2 Corporate environmental sustainability.* Regarding CES, the interviews were focused on understanding to what extent the natural environment affects the company's strategic orientation, as well as all the tactical activities that the company is planning on the topic.

Alfonsino has developed a business model within its strategy without including the natural environment among its stakeholders. The strategic involvement in environmental sustainability is not specifically considered, even in the secondary data sources on the company.

As the company's CEO and co-founder said: *"Taking care of the environment is very important for us. However, there are no direct references to environmental aspects in our current value proposition"*.

Therefore, any tactical activity is currently limited to reducing its carbon footprint. However, from formal and informal discussion with staff members, a strong environmental attitude emerges among the company's workers. As a matter of fact, over the years, the company has tried to change some operational activities in an environmentally friendly way, from internal organizational practices to external commercial operations.

The company's consultants continuously encourage affiliated customers (restaurants, bars, shops and grocery shops) to use plastic-free packaging, made of recyclable materials, such as wood, bamboo or paper. The pressure exerted is due especially to the new plastic tax that was included in Italy's 2020 Budget Law. Among others, products subject to the tax include bottles, bags, polythene food containers, tetra pack containers, packaging in expanded polystyrene, rolls of pluri-ball plastic and plastic caps. In addition to the plastic tax, the provision establishes a tax credit for companies active in the plastic industry and those producing MACSI (manufactured products in plastic for single use) for containment, protection, manipulation, or delivery of goods or foodstuffs. Alfonsino's call to partner companies to bring forward their operational compliance with the new environmental rules has not been welcomed by these companies, many of which prefer to use traditional packaging, despite the possibility of gaining a tax credit.

By 2019, the company had already launched a call for a partnership for green furniture and packaging on its digital platforms. The scouting activity is still going on, but the main obstacle to such an environmentally friendly shift has been – again – B2B customers. There are two main reasons for the caution shown by commercial customers in the development of a joint initiative with Alfonsino to employ a plastic-free packaging. The first is related to the desire to own and control the packaging of their products, not just to maintain a long-term agreement with a packaging supplier, but also in terms of the use (and eventually misuse) of their brand logo. On the other hand, there does not exist among the majority of these players a clear environmental sensibility that prompts them to sustain an extra cost to develop plastic-free or environmentally friendly packaging, something that they do not consider a part of their main services/products.

Nevertheless, the company's spokesperson highlighted that some of its customers, the most environmentally sensitive ones, were already using plastic-free items even before their affiliation to the food delivery service.

After pressure from plastic manufacturers in 2021, Italy's government halved its planned tax on plastics while excluding products that contain recycled and biodegradable plastic

from the levy. Moreover, before the plastic tax formally became law, a delay was announced as part of an effort to minimize the economic damage being caused by the COVID-19 pandemic: the government intervention was intended to relieve the tax burden on companies which were already in great difficulty.

With regard to carbon dioxide emissions or general air pollution, all the interviewees agreed that the business in which Alfonsino operates is itself green, as the reduction in the use of personal means of transportation equates to a reduction in air pollution.

According to one manager, *“if each of our customers, instead of ordering food online with Alfonsino, went with their means of transport (cars and motor vehicles) to the restaurants where they want to order, this would generate on a large scale, a certainly greater environmental impact than that generated daily by our riders”*.

However, during the interview with the CEO on the growing call for a more environmentally friendly ecosystem, the desire emerged to find a way to incentivize the use of the electric bike or kick scooter for drivers' deliveries. In other words, it appears that a strong environmental orientation at the organizational cultural level already exists. Indeed, he confirmed that *“Within our company, there is a strong culture oriented towards ... environmental protection”*.

In the headquarters, all the employees – and even the furniture – reflect a positive attitude towards environmental problems: employees are used to recycling waste, prefer plastic-free furniture and are concerned about energy efficiency.

*5.4.3 CES and CEM in combination.* From the interviews it emerged that both CEM and CES are crucial for the management of the food delivery business. However, a joint approach at a strategic level seems not to have been implemented. In the separate sections of the interviews, no elements spontaneously emerged that would associate the two constructs. However, at the end of the interviews, when the respondents were asked to answer some questions on the combination of CES and CEM, the feedback was positive. Specifically, both the top management and the junior employees stated that an emphasis on the service's environmental sustainability could increase the value of the service offered. However, major obstacles remained in defining a green experience due to the affiliated B2B customers. Currently, the case study company's leaders are thinking to implement a green-oriented experience; indeed, they are looking for eco-friendly packaging suppliers for all partner restaurateurs. Moreover, as it is a company with computerized processes, most of its touchpoints are already green-oriented. Nevertheless, it could increase its environmental sustainability with the introduction of completely green means of transport for delivery, such as the use of electric bicycles rather than traditional scooters. However, as these are not provided directly by the company, it cannot force its delivery collaborators to work only and exclusively with these means.

In summary, the company has not had a structured corporate environmental plan able to drive strategic operational activities but does show a strong environmental attitude at the organizational level and a clear perception of the need to shift current operations toward more green practices, especially to act in compliance with future environmental regulations. Even if it does not select affiliated B2B customers according to their environmental credentials, the company has the ambitious aim of becoming an environmental driving force in the supply chain.

## 6. Discussion

### 6.1 The development of an integrated framework and propositions

The findings of the theoretical and empirical investigations have been presented. They allow us to determine the main fundamentals of the integrated model that combine these topics and the main challenges to developing it. Based on these findings, we can now design a

preliminary model of environmentally oriented customer experience management (EOCEM) and answer the second research question. To develop this model of EOCEM, we need to compare the dimensions derived from the literature review with those derived from the case study analysis and verify the similarities and differences.

As the results of the theoretical review were not presented to the interviewees, the empirical results were not influenced by their input, thereby reducing the frequent problem where the theory is attractive to practitioners but has less value for empirical research (Rodríguez *et al.*, 2015).

The four dimensions identified in the theoretical review, which are co-creation, business development, decision-making and consumer behavior, are mostly confirmed in the case study. In particular, most of the theoretical keywords were used by the managers in their interviews, but nevertheless, the actions aimed at the environment and the centrality of the customer experience seem to be topics that are still separate in practice. However, there is a strong desire on the part of managers to include among their corporate values sustainability in the customer experience. The obstacles that currently do not allow a concrete implementation of a joint strategic model lie in the awareness that a model of this type must be shared with all stakeholders; therefore, it is a path to be taken slowly, with the involvement of the partners.

In addition, one extra defining element was identified: *human-centricity*. This dimension refers to attention to employees and in general to all partners and refers to the concept of CEM from a strategic point of view, as employees are considered the first customers of a company (Ferraresi and Schmitt, 2018). Furthermore, especially in a company providing services, partners become vital for the realization of successful experiences for the final consumer. The fact that *human-centricity* was frequently mentioned by practitioners prompted us to add this element to the definition of an integrated EOCEM model.

In a nutshell, from the bibliometric analysis and the empirical case study emerges the potential for a new model that incorporates the attributes and characteristics of CEM and CES by integrating them to take advantage of the benefits of both (Pardo-Jaramillo *et al.*, 2020). The new model, shown in Figure 5, summarizes and integrates the findings of the two-phase analysis. This framework graphically shows the contribution that the different dimensions investigated in the study may offer to the development of EOCEM. At the basis of the construction of the model the presence of strategic orientation and tactical implementation is essential.

According to Homburg *et al.* (2017), strategic orientation refers to a shared cultural mindset within the company and between the partners in its ecosystem and concerns the inclusion of respect for the environment and the centrality of the customer experience in strategic choices. It is based on three main assumptions: understanding the obstacles to environmental sustainability, promoting shared values within the company ecosystem and designing business development that is based on the customer experience. Tactical implementation refers to the operations to be implemented in the process of delivering that customer experience. At this stage, firms should introduce environmentally respectful touchpoints (e.g. recyclable packaging and shared transportation), using technologies to facilitate the experience and protect the environment. An example could be organizing deliveries based on proximity by offering a discount to those who order in the shared delivery range, thus creating benefit for the customer and the environment.

From these statements, we derive the following theoretical propositions.

- P1. In order to implement EOCEM, it is essential that firms encapsulate both environmental sustainability and consumer orientation at the strategic level.
- P2. In order to implement EOCEM, it is essential that firms are able to develop and share values and practical operations that respect both customers and the environment.

To converge towards integration and the development of an EOCEM model, some elements are needed to guide the decision-making process. These elements appear in the model as facilitators, and they represent the concrete development of the model, i.e. human-centricity and the propensity to collaborate with and engage stakeholders, which are the inspiring new concepts to help managers and entrepreneurs to make the shift from conventional marketing to a more human-oriented way of doing business by applying the mindset, concept and process outlined by [Kotler et al. \(2021\)](#). The human-centric corporate value allows for long-lasting win-win relationships among the players in the ecosystem. There is also a growing need for collaboration in the development of eco-friendly practices. By analyzing the case study, it emerges that despite the fact that the company did not show environmental proactivity at the strategic level, the internal orientation of employees and the specific regulation that is driving toward a plastic-free world are encouraging the company to consider the natural environment. The implementation of such environmentally friendly practices by the company has been halted by the need to collaborate with different partners, such as B2B customers (restaurants and bars) or riders. Thus, we posit:

*P3a.* Human-centric relationships are crucial to implementing the EOCEM model.

*P3b.* The effective implementation of EOCEM requires collaboration among different players in the ecosystem.

The use of facilitators allows elements of environmental sustainability to converge in CEM. Therefore, a crucial role is played by the decision-making process. Additionally, in the case analysis it emerges that, in the absence of this dimension, all the expressed wishes do not translate into an effective EOCEM model. The fourth proposition arises from these assumptions.

*P4.* To implement an integrated EOCEM, long-lasting relationships, stakeholder engagement and human-centricity become fundamental facilitators.

The case study of Alfonsino helped us to highlight the main topics related to the implementation of EOCEM, as well as the main barriers that can hinder the process. Notably, the case shows how crucial it is to offer a holistic experience that includes the satisfaction and the well-being of employees. More generally, it has demonstrated an attitude towards the human side of the business, mainly with employees and partner companies. Thus, we posit:

*P5.* The efforts of the employees are essential to driving the company towards the implementation of EOCEM.

Finally, what emerges implicitly from both theoretical and empirical results is the role of technology. It plays a pivotal role in EOCEM implementation: first, it enables the acceleration and use of processes useable by both the company and the consumer; and second, it keeps track of data, allowing the company to understand and manage relationships with customers in a customized way.

*P6.* Digital technology has a pivotal role in providing the action tools required by EOCEM.

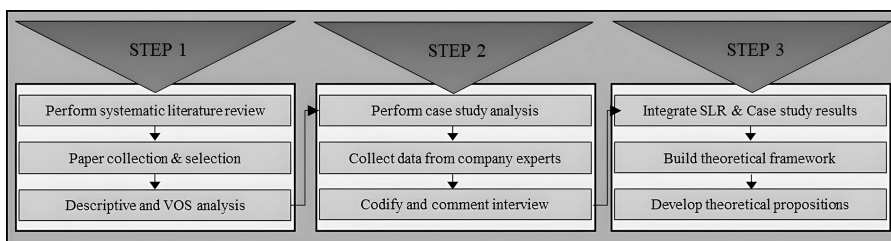
The exploratory sequential strategy adopted helped us to provide answers to our research questions. It is possible to present the results of the two phases of the study: the first phase – the co-occurrence analysis of selected papers – consists in identifying the presence of studies at the theoretical level that combine CES with CEM. This phase allowed us to identify the main theoretical topics that appeared as clusters through VOSviewer software, namely “consumer behavior”, “decision making”, “business development” and “co-creation”, which confirm and advance the exploratory study of [Pardo-Jaramillo et al. \(2020\)](#). The qualitative

analysis in the case study within the food delivery industry (phase 2 of the study) has been used to validate the theoretical issues identified in the first phase. From the in-depth interviews with the company’s managers and employees, another important category emerged, namely *human-centricity*, which drives the integration between CES and CEM in the real business world. Lastly, we integrated the results of phase 1 and phase 2 to develop a conceptual framework that explains EOCEM and to identify theoretical propositions that could drive to the practical implementation of the combined model (see Figure 6).

## 7. Implications of the study

### 7.1 Theoretical contributions

This research contributes to the sustainability, marketing and management literature in several ways. First, it reflects the perspective which considers CEM as a strategic approach that includes an experiential response orientation, a touchpoint journey orientation and an alliance orientation (Homburg *et al.*, 2017). However, it advances the inspiring CEM framework presented by Homburg *et al.* (2017) by proposing an extended version which integrates the aim of environmental sustainability in the strategic design of a CEM approach. In particular, the internal and external conditions of the original model have been expanded in the EOCEM framework as *strategic orientation* (a new cultural mindset oriented to respect for both the environment and the customer experience in the firm’s strategic choices), *tactical implementation* (by introducing sustainable touchpoints and technologies to facilitate the experience process and reduce environmental impact) and *facilitators* (by creating a long-lasting alliance with partners). It also advances recent studies on SCE (Signori *et al.*, 2019) by focusing on the understanding of how firms can practically integrate environmental protection with the successful delivery of the customer experience within their business ecosystem. Second, it adds to the recent attempt to identify the latent trends on customer-centricity and sustainable organization (Pardo-Jaramillo *et al.*, 2020) with empirical research, in which personnel at a firm were questioned about the joint achievement of environmental sustainability objectives and the centrality of the customer experience. Regarding the literature on sustainability, this study advances prior research by highlighting that to achieve the dual objective of environmental sustainability and a good customer experience, companies should implement a broader concept of sustainability and include the social dimension (Elkington, 1997), to be human-centric. In particular, it enriches the literature on green marketing, demonstrating the role of CEM as a strategic tool to position companies in the market, differentiating products and services and creating trust with environmental stakeholders. Furthermore, it adds more insight on the discussion related the “win-win” logic of using environmental attitude as a source of differentiation and competitiveness (Porter and Van der Linde, 1995).



Source(s): Our elaboration

Figure 6.  
Results of the research  
process

### 7.2 Practical implications

This study offers novel insights for managers and entrepreneurs. Both should take into consideration the opportunity derived from the integration of CEM and CES. This research shows that an integrated approach to being *people and planet-centric* is possible through the implementation of a strategic management model of EOCEM. From a strategic point of view, it represents a solution that allows the firm to develop its business and compete more effectively. Moreover, integrating environmental thinking into all aspects of marketing allows companies to increase sales, improve customer feedback and boost corporate image (KPMG, 2021; Gartner, 2019). Our results show that to implement the EOCEM model there is a need to develop a new cultural mindset within the company based on respect for the environment and the centrality of the customer in strategic choices. Second, the companies that design this approach will also have to implement coherent operational solutions. For example, through the implementation of an EOCEM model, the entire purchasing process may become green. In doing so, one surprising finding of our study is that it is necessary to establish a human-centric approach internally and externally, i.e. both in the relationship with employees and in the choice of external partners. Consequently, the decision-making process will be based on a concept of sustainability that is not environmental but also social. The factor of *human-centricity* suggests that companies should adopt a broader concept of sustainability, extending the environmental perspective to the social dimension of sustainability (Elkington, 1997).

The results of this study emphasize value creation at three levels: satisfaction of customers and employees by delivering experiences that are more “human” (*micro level*); *satisfaction of the company and stakeholder partners by building long-lasting valuable relationships (meso level)*; and a contribution to environment protection, with an indirect impact on consumers’ quality of life (*macro level*).

The outcome of this merged process offers also some societal and policy implications. More specifically, our study suggests that EOCEM offers the creation of firms’ embedded value creation, where not just customers or primary stakeholders can take the advantage of this strategy, but also, indirectly, the natural environment and the whole of society. It also suggests that digitalization and collaboration among different partners are key drivers of a more sustainable model of consumption. Thus, policymakers that want to boost the implementation of sustainable practices (i.e. the United Nation sustainable development goals (SDG) 12 Sustainable consumption and production) can effectively act on facilitating company partnerships and digitalization.

### 7.3 Concluding remarks: limitations and future directions

Making customers happy and preserving the planet are the current challenges for companies (Anderson *et al.*, 2021). What emerges is – both theoretically and practically – the propensity to face these two objectives separately or, optimally, to try to combine the two perspectives at a strategic and operational level. The present study offers the first attempt to combine CES with CEM to deliver an integrated model, thus helping companies to reshape their corporate decisions. The integrated model delineated in the study is the first to incorporate both the environmental challenges and the customer experience in decision-making. It proposes a way to understand how to approach a joint analysis, what the factors are on which to leverage a joint approach and the values on which to reshape the corporate cultural mindset. In particular, the model highlights that to achieve both objectives, it is necessary that the two perspectives are shared at both a strategic and an operational level and, in doing so, it is necessary to use some elements that can facilitate this conjunction.

The study presents has limitations, but these can be considered a good starting point for future research. The major limitation is that the analysis of a single Italian case study does not allow for the generalization of the findings. Future research could test the validity of the

model through a cross-country comparison among business sectors. Second, the exploratory analysis examines the supply-side perspective and future research could use surveys from a demand-side perspective to measure the value created for customers and stakeholder partners in terms of satisfaction and experience. Moreover, considering the emerging debate on SCE, future studies should expand the model by considering the triple-bottom-line model of sustainability. In line with the human-centric approach, more emphasis is needed to understand the impact of the social dimension of sustainability in implementing the customer experience.

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**Further reading**

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**Appendix**

Paper #	Authors	Title
1	Li F., Xu G.,	AI-driven customer relationship management for sustainable enterprise performance
2	Lee S.M., Lee D.H.,	Effects of healthcare quality management activities and sociotechnical systems on internal customer experience and organizational performance
3	Wu J., Zhang L., Lu C., Zhang L., Zhang Y., Cai Q.,	Exploring Tourists' Intentions to Purchase Homogenous Souvenirs
4	de Waal G.A., Maritz A.,	A disruptive model for delivering higher education programs within the context of entrepreneurship education
5	Chen Y.-A., Chen C.L.,	Case study of sustainable service design in the hospitality industry
6	Tena-Monferrer S., Fandos-Roig J.C., Sánchez-García J., Callarisa-Fiol L.J.,	Shopping motivation in consumer loyalty formation process: the case of Spanish retail
7	Hengboriboon L., Sayut T., Srisathan W.A., Naruetharadhol P.,	Strengthening a company- customer relationship from sustainable practices: A case study of petrotrade in Laos
8	Eskiler E., Safak F.,	Effect of Customer Experience Quality on Loyalty in Fitness Services
9	Gao Y., Ren T., Zhao X., Li W.,	Sustainable Energy Management in Intelligent Transportation
10	Kim Y.-J., Kim H.-S.,	The Impact of Hotel Customer Experience on Customer Satisfaction through Online Reviews
11	Ta A.H., Aarikka-Stenroos L., Litovu L.,	Customer Experience in Circular Economy: Experiential Dimensions among Consumers of Reused and Recycled Clothes
12	Alsmairat A.K.M.,	Transformative supply chain drivers during covid-19: A customer perspective [Transformacyjne czynniki napędzające łańcuch dostaw podczas covid-19: Perspektywa klienta]
13	Silva D.G., Cachinho H.,	Places of phygital shopping experiences? The new supply frontier of business improvement districts in the digital age

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List of paper selected for topic analysis

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Paper #	Authors	Title
14	Soetan T.O., Mogaji E., Nguyen N.P.,	Financial services experience and consumption in Nigeria
15	Chevtchouk Y., Veloutsou C., Paton R.A.,	The experience – economy revisited: an interdisciplinary perspective and research agenda
16	Jeong M., Kubickova M.,	Do the brand and packaging matter? The case of hotel bathroom amenities
17	Zhang X., Kim H.-S.,	Customer experience and satisfaction of disneyland hotel through big data analysis of online customer reviews
18	Rahardja U., Hongsuchon T., Hariguna T., Ruangkanjanases A.,	Understanding impact sustainable intention of s-commerce activities: The role of customer experiences, perceived value, and mediation of relationship quality
19	Meissner R., Rahn A., Wicke K.,	Developing prescriptive maintenance strategies in the aviation industry based on a discrete-event simulation framework for post-prognostics decision-making
20	Mjahed Hammami S., Abdulrahman Al Moosa H.,	Place attachment in land use changes: A phenomenological investigation in residents' lived experiences with a renewable energy project deployment
21	Carter E.P., Welcomer S.,	Designing and distinguishing meaningful artisan food experiences
22	Xie G., Huang L., Apostolidis C., Huang Z., Cai W., Li G.,	Assessing consumer preference for overpackaging solutions in e-commerce
23	Nguyen D.M., Chiu Y.-T.H., Le H.D.,	Determinants of continuance intention towards banks' chatbot services in Vietnam: A necessity for sustainable development
24	Nichifor E., Lixăndroi R.C., Sumedrea S., Chițu I.B., Brătucu G.,	How can smes become more sustainable? Modeling the m-commerce consumer behavior with contingent free shipping and customer journey's touchpoints optimization
25	Brochado A., Brito C., Bouchet A., Oliveira F.,	Dimensions of football stadium and museum tour experiences: The case of Europe's most valuable brands
26	Arbeeney A.,	Sonic branding: The value of intentional audio in the new normal
27	Golja T., Paulišić M.,	Managing-technology enhanced tourist experience: The case of scattered hotels in istria [Upravljanje tehnološki usmjerenim turističkim iskustvom: Slučaj raspršenih hotela u istri]
28	Mkansi M., Nsakanda A.L.,	Leveraging the physical network of stores in e-grocery order fulfillment for sustainable competitive advantage
29	Chen S.-C., Shang S.S.C.,	Sustaining user experience in a smart system in the retail industry
30	Dube K., Nhamo G., Chikodzi D.,	COVID-19 pandemic and prospects for recovery of the global aviation industry
31	Saha S.K., Duarte P., Silva S.C., Zhuang G.,	Supporting sustainability by promoting online purchase through enhancement of online convenience
32	Ullah A., Zhang Q., Ahmed M.,	The impact of smart connectivity features on customer engagement in electric vehicles
33	Rudy, Prabowo H., Furinto A., Hamsal M.,	The influence of digital technology, customer experience, and customer engagement on E-commerce customer loyalty
34	Gerea C., Gonzalez-Lopez F., Herskovic V.,	Omnichannel customer experience and management: An integrative review and research agenda
35	Karagiannis D., Andrinou M.,	The role of sustainable restaurant practices in city branding: The case of Athens

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Paper #	Authors	Title
36	Urdea A.-M., Constantin C.P., Purcaru I.-M.,	Implementing experiential marketing in the digital age for a more sustainable customer relationship
37	Bhardwaj A., Mangat V., Vig R., HAlder S., Conti M.,	Distributed denial of service attacks in cloud: State-of-the-art of scientific and commercial solutions
38	Pecorari P.M., Lima C.R.C.,	Correlation of customer experience with the acceptance of product service systems and circular economy
39	Meyer N., Frieler B., Kluge M.A., Svette S., Shrader A., Vanderwoude A.,	Food next door: From food literacy to citizenship on a college campus
40	Ahn J.,	Exploring perceived innovation in building customers' patronizing behavior in the food delivery service context
41	Väänänen I., Kiiskinen K., Peltonen K.,	The framework of the Päijät-Häme Sport, Experiences, and Well-being Road Map 2030
42	Cross K., Steed J., Jiang Y.,	Harris tweed: A glocal case study
43	Begecarslan M.,	The people side of successful business transformations
44	Kotler P., Pfoertsch W., Sponholz U.,	H2H MARKETING: PUTTING TRUST AND BRAND IN STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT FOCUS
45	Ietto B., Pascucci F., Gregori G.L.,	Defining customer experiential knowledge and its dimensions: a conceptualization starting from a netnographic study of specialty coffee blogs
46	Sheoran S., Vij S.,	A Consumer-Centric Paradigm Shift in Business Environment with the Evolution of the internet of Things: A Literature Review
47	Nair K., Anagreh S., Sunil A., Gupta R.,	Ai-Enabled Chatbot to Drive Marketing Automation for Financial Services
48	Kovacs I.,	Perceptions and attitudes of generation z consumers towards sustainable clothing: Managerial implications based on a summative content analysis [Percepcja i postawy konsumentów pokolenia z wobec zrównoważonej odzieży: Implikacje menedżerskie w oparciu o summatyczną analizę treści]
49	Alkaabi K.A.,	Customers' purchasing behavior toward home-based SME products: evidence from UAE community
50	Xue J., Li G., Li N.,	Does green and sustainable engagement benefit online platforms in supply chains? The role of green and public concern
51	Barre V., Ramos D.O., Medovich C., Lovera G., Hoch M.,	Building a sustainable high-performance customer experience and product performance (CxPP): the JJV experience
52	Cheng G., Cherian J., Sial M.S., Mentel G., Wan P., Alvarez-Otero S., Saleem U.,	The relationship between csr communication on social media, purchase intention, and e-wom in the banking sector of an emerging economy
53	Zhao X., Yongchareon S., Cho N.-W.,	Enabling situational awareness of business processes
54	Wibowo A., Chen S.-C., Wiangin U., Ma Y., Ruangkanjanases A.,	Customer behavior as an outcome of social media marketing: The role of social media marketing activity and customer experience
55	Burhanudin B., Ronny R., Sihotang E.T.,	Consumer guilt and green banking services
56	Gainsbury S.M., Black N., Blaszczyński A., Callaghan S., Clancey G., Starcevic V., Tymula A.,	Reducing Internet Gambling Harms Using Behavioral Science: A Stakeholder Framework
57	Cai R., Chi C.G.-Q.,	A recipe for food promotion: effects of color brightness on food evaluations and behavioral intentions
58	Mahusni M.N.A., Ghafar M.A.,	Employing Contextual-Omni Concept Towards A Sustainable Malaysian Fashion Retail Design

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Paper #	Authors	Title
59	Chen Y.-C., Lin H.-C.,	Exploring effective sensory experience in the environmental design of sustainable cafés
60	Sánchez-Teba E.M., García-Mestanza J., Rodríguez-Fernández M.,	The application of the inbound marketing strategy on costa del sol planning and tourism board. Lessons for post-covid-19 revival
61	Alaimo L.S., Fiore M., Galati A.,	How the COVID-19 pandemic is changing online food shopping human behaviour in Italy
62	Jocewski M.,	Blurring the Lines between Physical and Digital Spaces: Business Model Innovation in Retailing
63	Méndez-Aparicio M.D., Jiménez-Zarco A., Izquierdo-Yusta A., Blazquez-Resino J.J.,	Customer Experience and Satisfaction in Private Insurance Web Areas
64	Leone L.A., Fleischhacker S., Anderson-Steeves B., Harper K., Winkler M., Racine E., Baquero B., Gittelsohn J.,	Healthy food retail during the COVID-19 pandemic: Challenges and future directions
65	Qi X., Yu H., Ploeger A.,	Exploring influential factors including COVID-19 on green food purchase intentions and the intention–behavior gap: A qualitative study among consumers in a Chinese context
66	Pei X.-L., Guo J.-N., Wu T.-J., Zhou W.-X., Yeh S.-P.,	Does the effect of customer experience on customer satisfaction create a sustainable competitive advantage? A comparative study of different shopping situations
67	Lin M., Li F.-Y., Ji Z.,	How to innovate the service design of leisure farms: The innovation of sustainable business models
68	Sorakunnas E.,	Dimensions and drivers of national park experiences: A longitudinal study of independent visitors
69	Matsuoka K.,	Exploring the interface between management accounting and marketing: a literature review of customer accounting
70	Fernández Moniz P., Almeida J.S., Pino A.T., Suárez Rivero J.P.,	A GIS-based solution for urban water management
71	Holmlund M., Van Vaerenbergh Y., Ciuchita R., Raval A., Sarantopoulos P., Ordenes F.V., Zaki M.,	Customer experience management in the age of big data analytics: A strategic framework
72	Lee J., Kim D.,	Development of innovative business of telecommunication operator: Case of KT-MEG
73	Clube R.K.M., Tennant M.,	Exploring garment rental as a sustainable business model in the fashion industry: Does contamination impact the consumption experience?
74	Yin P.,	Exploration on the Promotion Mode of Featured Hotels in Coastal Cities in the New Media Period
75	Roseta P., Sousa B.B., Roseta L.,	Determiners in the consumer’s purchase decision process in ecotourism contexts: A Portuguese case study
76	de Vries G., Rietkerk M., Kooger R.,	The Hassle Factor as a Psychological Barrier to a Green Home
77	Bhattacharya A., Srivastava M.,	A Framework of Online Customer Experience: An Indian Perspective: An Indian Perspective
78	Rondini A., Bertoni M., Pezzotta G.,	At the origins of Product Service Systems: Supporting the concept assessment with the Engineering Value Assessment method
79	Tandon N., Singh P., Tandon D., Batra J.K.,	Eureka of effective leadership skill in the digital era of disruption

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Paper #	Authors	Title
80	Rakotondrajoa P., Rakotomamonjy T., Baptiste R.J., Demers L., Kileo P., Anholt M., Aghajanian J., Bassett K., Jaller M., Pahwa A.,	Achieving self-sustainability of service delivery in an eye care program in Madagascar using time-driven activity based costing
81		Evaluating the environmental impacts of online shopping: A behavioral and transportation approach
82	El Hilali W., El Manouar A., Janati Idrissi M.A.,	Reaching sustainability during a digital transformation: a PLS approach
83	Li X., Cao J., Liu Z., Luo X.,	Sustainable business model based on digital twin platform network: The inspiration from haier's case study in China
84	He Y., Xu Q., Wu P.,	Omnichannel retail operations with refurbished consumer returns
85	Kihima B.O., Ariya G.,	Incentivization of Coastal Tourism Product Through Heritagization As a Value-Addition Strategy For Kenya's Coastal Destinations
86	Wang M.,	Assessing logistics capability for the Australian courier firms
87	Chang V., Liddle J., Xu Q.A., Liu B.S.,	A new product development of the iOS-based ordering systems for smart cities
88	Stead S., Odekerken-Schröder G., Mahr D.,	Unraveling customer experiences in a new servicescape: an ethnographic schema elicitation technique (ESET)
89	Kapusy K., Lógó E.,	The extended shopping experience of used clothes in Hungary
90	Rozmi A.N.A., Nohuddin P.N.E., Hadi A.R.A., Bakar M.I.A., Nordin A.I.,	Factors affecting SME owners in adopting ICT in business using thematic analysis
91	Fernandes N., Barfknecht C.,	Keep customers coming back: Enhancing value and satisfaction in a mobile shopping application context
92	Belabbes I., Oubrich M., Fiano F., Orlando B., Vrontis D.,	Conceptualization of customer experience: The case of mobile telecoms services in Morocco
93	Chakraborty T., Mishra N., Tripathi M., Saha S.,	Success of storytelling in brand building: Looking through the lens of neuroscience
94	Chan E.S.W., Okumus F., Chan W.,	What hinders hotels' adoption of environmental technologies: A quantitative study
95	Rosenbaum M.S., Ramírez G.C., Matos N.,	A neuroscientific perspective of consumer responses to retail greenery
96	Ban H.-J., Choi H., Choi E.-K., Lee S., Kim H.-S.,	Investigating key attributes in experience and satisfaction of hotel customer using online review data
97	Nayak B., Bhattacharyya S.S., Krishnamoorthy B.,	Application of digital technologies in health insurance for social good of bottom of pyramid customers in India
98	Prost S., Vlachokyriakos V., Midgley J., Heron G., Meziant K., Crivellaro C.,	Infrastructuring food democracy: The formation of a local food hub in the context of socio-economic deprivation
99	Choi D., Chung C.Y., Young J.,	Sustainable online shopping logistics for customer satisfaction and repeat purchasing behavior: Evidence from China
100	Gh Popescu C.R.,	Corporate social responsibility, corporate governance and business performance: Limits and challenges imposed by the implementation of directive 2013/34/EU in Romania
101	Moliner M.A., Monferrer D., Estrada M., Rodríguez R.M.,	Environmental sustainability and the hospitality customer experience: A study in tourist accommodation
102	Schoolman E.D.,	Doing Right and Feeling Good: Ethical Food and the Shopping Experience

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Paper #	Authors	Title
103	Mihardjo L.W.W., Sasmoko, Alamsjah F., Rukmana R.A.N.,	Transforming into sustainable innovation-driven digital co-creation: The role of experience, community and agility
104	Oh D., Yoo M.M., Lee Y.,	A holistic view of the service experience at coffee franchises: A cross-cultural study
105	Ban H.-J., Kim H.-S.,	Understanding customer experience and satisfaction through airline passengers' online review
106	Mastronardi L., Romagnoli L., Mazzocchi G., Giaccio V., Marino D.,	Understanding consumer's motivations and behavior in alternative food networks
107	Zhang F., Li S., Yu Z.,	The super user selection for building a sustainable online social network marketing community
108	Savastano M., Bellini F., D'Ascenzo F., De Marco M.,	Technology adoption for the integration of online–offline purchasing: Omnichannel strategies in the retail environment
109	de Wilde M., Spaargaren G.,	Designing trust: how strategic intermediaries choreograph homeowners' low-carbon retrofit experience
110	van Giesen R., Leenheer J.,	Towards more interactive and sustainable food retailing: An empirical case study of the supermarket of the future
111	Vo N.T., Chovancová M., Tri H.T.,	A major boost to the website performance of up-scale hotels in Vietnam
112	Schallehn H., Seuring S., Strähle J., Freise M.,	Customer experience creation for after-use products: A product–service systems-based review
113	Shukla M.K., Pattnaik P.N.,	Managing Customer Relations in a Modern Business Environment: Towards an Ecosystem-Based Sustainable CRM Model
114	Chkoniya V., Madsen A.O., Coelho T.,	The impact of information and communication technologies in fish consumption in Portugal: Building a support for the coming generations
115	Paras M.K., Hedegård L., Curteza A., Pal R., Chen Y., Wang L.,	The study of 3Rs - Reuse, Repair, and Redesign at Swedish recycling mall [Studiul celor 3R - Reutilizare, Reparare si Reproiectare în centrele de recitare din Suedia]
116	Fielden A., Michalkova L., Vrbka J., Lyakina M.,	Smart sustainable data-driven manufacturing: Cyber-physical production systems and Internet of things sensing networks
117	Mihardjo L.W.W., Sasmoko, Rukmana R.A.N.,	Customer experience and organizational agility driven business model innovation to shape sustainable development [Doświadczenie klienta i sprawność organizacyjna model w dziedzinie biznesu, kształtujący zrównoważony rozwój]
118	Carta S., DE KOCK P.,	Reifying luxury, gold to golden: How the showroom became a digital showreel, from object (gold) to experience (golden) – experiencing luxury by abstracting the object
119	Mihardjo L.W.W., Sasmoko, Alamsjah F., Elidjen,	Impact of green IS, service innovation and customer experience in influencing customer satisfaction and environmental performance
120	Mbenenge M.F., Thomas P.,	Sustainability practices of Transkei guesthouses
121	Mihardjo L.W.W., Sasmoko, Alamsjah F., Elidjen,	The influence of digital customer experience and electronic word of mouth on brand image and supply chain sustainable performance
122	Slovak C.,	Customer-centric experiences through data

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Paper #	Authors	Title
123	Vinzenz F.,	The added value of rating pictograms for sustainable hotels in classified ads
124	Bhattacharya A., Srivastava M, Verma S.,	Customer Experience in Online Shopping: A Structural Modeling Approach
125	Gayathri R., Vasudevan S.K.,	Internet of things based smart health monitoring of industrial standard motors
126	Ijaz M.F., Rhee J.,	Constituents and consequences of online shopping in sustainable e-business: An experimental study of online shopping malls
127	Zhang B., Fu Z., Huang J., Wang J., Xu S., Zhang L.,	Consumers' perceptions, purchase intention, and willingness to pay a premium price for safe vegetables: A case study of Beijing, China
128	Pandey S., Chawla D.,	Evolving segments of online clothing buyers: an emerging market study
129	Feng L., Sun B., Wang K., Tsai S.-B.,	An empirical study on the design of digital content products from a big data perspective
130	Vehmas K., Raudaskoski A., Heikkilä P., Harlin A., Mensonen A.,	Consumer attitudes and communication in circular fashion
131	Hung C.-J.,	A study on the correlation among brand image, perceived risk, and purchase intention in food and beverage industry
132	Ullah A., Aimin W., Ahmed M.,	Smart automation, customer experience and customer engagement in electric vehicles
133	Arensberg M.B.,	Population aging: Opportunity for business expansion, an invitational paper presented at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) International Workshop on Adaptation to Population Aging Issues, July 17, 2017, Ha Noi, Vietnam
134	Koivisto E., Mattila P.,	International fashion trade shows as platforms for experiential branding
135	Cinderby S., Bagwell S.,	Exploring the co-benefits of urban green infrastructure improvements for businesses and workers' well-being
136	Melacini M., Tappia E.,	A critical comparison of alternative distribution configurations in omni-channel retailing in terms of cost and greenhouse gas emissions
137	Margarisová K., Vokáčová L., Kuralová K., Hlavsa T.,	Regional branding: Customer's experience with the certified products
138	Mehmood S., Rashid Y., Zaheer S.,	Negative word of mouth and online shopping: Examining the role of psychological contract violation, trust and satisfaction
139	Nam S., Ha C., Lee H.C.,	Redesigning in-flight service with service blueprint based on text analysis
140	Olšanová K., Cook G., Zlatic M.,	Influence Of Luxury companies' corporate social responsibility activities on consumer purchase intention: Development of a theoretical framework
141	Nel J., Williams A., Steyn R., Hind C.,	Customer experiences and expectations of sit-down restaurants: An auto-ethnographic perspective on restaurant failure
142	Zhou W., Zheng Z., Xie W.,	A control-chart-based queueing approach for service facility maintenance with energy-delay tradeoff
143	Yoon S.-J., Lee H.-J.,	Does Customer Experience Management Pay Off? Evidence from Local versus Global Hotel Brands in South Korea

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Paper #	Authors	Title
144	Yi L.-G.,	Rate-sensitive CoMP beamforming plus sensible snooze for energy-QoE tradeoff in cognitive small cell networks
145	Litvin S.W., Rosene J.T.,	Revisiting Main Street: Balancing Chain and Local Retail in a Historic City's Downtown
146	Arief, Djojo B.W., Purnomo H.,	How e-Commerce web quality and customer experiences can take the online purchase intention up? Case study: E-commerce of general insurance product
147	Salama A.M., Wiedmann F.,	Perceiving urban liveability in an emerging migrant city
148	Sun P., Cárdenas D.A., Harrill R.,	Chinese Customers' Evaluation of Travel Website Quality: A Decision-Tree Analysis
149	Chathoth P.K., Ungson G.R.,	Co-creation and higher order customer engagement in hospitality and tourism services: A critical review
150	Harrington R.J., Chan E.S.W.,	Promoting service excellence for tourist destinations
151	Engeset M.G., Hull J.S., Velvin J., Hwang J., Seo S.,	A critical review of research on customer experience management: Theoretical, methodological and cultural perspectives
152	Vasudevan M.K., Prakash G.,	Linking grave to cradle: The next big reverse logistics business
153	Moreno-Munoz A., Bellido-Outeirino F.J., Siano P., Gomez-Nieto M.A.,	Mobile social media for smart grids customer engagement: Emerging trends and challenges
154	Lee K., Lee B., Oh W.,	Thumbs up, sales up? The contingent effect of facebook likes on sales performance in social commerce
155	Chen S.-C., Lin C.-P.,	The impact of customer experience and perceived value on sustainable social relationship in blogs: An empirical study
156	Lee M.-Y., Jackson V., Miller-Spillman K.A., Ferrell E.,	Female consumers' intention to be involved in fair-trade product consumption in the U.S.: The role of previous experience, product features, and perceived benefits
157	Chen R.J.C.,	From sustainability to customer loyalty: A case of full service hotels' guests
158	Leal Filho W., Mannke F., Manolas E., Al-Amin A.Q.,	The effectiveness of climate change communication and information dissemination via the Internet: Experiences from the online climate conference series
159	Correia P.A.P., Medina I.G., Romo Z.F.G., Contreras-Espinosa R.S.,	The importance of Facebook as an online social networking tool for companies
160	Bowen D.E., Schneider B.,	A Service Climate Synthesis and Future Research Agenda
161	Jha S., Singh B.,	Consumer behaviour and moderating effect of frequency of visit in relation to atmospheric cues: An experimental study
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