

**Creating long-term societal value: a
sustainability marketing perspective**

Inaugural Lecture

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The Acting Executive Dean of the College of Human Sciences, Prof Nkosi,

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The respondent to my lecture, Dr Devika Pillay from the University of Kwazulu-Natal

Members of my family, my wife, Masakona, my daughter, Rotondwa and my son, Vhuthu,

Colleagues and friends, I greet you all this evening,

Ndi madekwana.

INTRODUCTION

I deliver this lecture when the world is moving from one crisis to another. Politically, the Russia/Ukraine conflict has worsened the socioeconomic situation globally. In addition, the world is in environmental crisis mode. Accordingly, sustainability is firmly on the global agenda. In this presentation, I will look at sustainability from a marketing perspective. Hence, my lecture is titled “Creating long-term societal value: a sustainability marketing perspective”. Globally, environmental challenges exist emanating from climate change (Kelleci & Yildiz, 2021). These environmental challenges arise as a result of unsustainable business practices that are aimed at maximising profits in the short term with high social and environmental costs (Humphrey & Genron, 2015). The impact of environmental degradation diminishes the developmental potential of future generations (Trojanowski & Kazbudzki, 2021). In her speech at this year’s general debate of the United Nations General Assembly, the Prime Minister of Barbados, Ms Mia Amor Mottley, asserted that “any attempt to deny that the climate crisis has man-made origins is an attempt to delude ourselves and to admit that we want to be accomplices in the continuing death and loss of damage that ensues for the people who are victims of it”. Similarly, in his statement on World Environment Day this year, the United Nations Secretary General, Mr Antonio Guterres (2022), stated that “more than 3 billion people are affected by degraded ecosystems. Pollution is responsible for some 9 million premature deaths each year, and more than 1 million plant and animal species risk extinction, many within decades” (Guterres, 2022). Guterres and Mottley’s assertions paint a picture of a world system that is in an environmental crisis. According to this year’s Euromonitor International report, one of the Top 10 Global Consumer Trends “is that consumers are worried about climate change” (Larkin, 2022:18). The saga regarding Shell’s seismic survey plans for the Wild Coast in South Africa is consistent with consumers’ anxiety with climate change (Dicey, 2022). The 2021 PWC Global Consumer Insights Pulse biannual survey found that 52% of consumers globally and 59% in South Africa were more eco-friendly than before. The two surveys point to a consumer market that appreciates the risks of environmental degradation, as consumers prefer marketers that are environmentally and socially responsible (Igor, 2016).

On the social equity front, South Africa’s credit rating is affected by its negative outlook

on social risk. South Africa remains largely an unequal society and the income gap between the rich and the poor is widening (Saba, 2021). The recent floods that ravaged parts of the KwaZulu-Natal and Eastern Cape provinces show that climate change problems are a reality. Clearly, environmental and social risks pose a threat to the sustainability of the world system. According to the 2022 Trends Report of the Sustainability Institute of Environmental Resources Management (ERM,) “regulatory developments and consumer pressure, resource scarcity, supply chain volatility and the looming threat of climate change are driving businesses to develop more circular business models that create and secure enterprise value at the same time being good for the planet” (Sustainability Institute of ERM Trends Report, 2022:30). This means that businesses should not create economic value at the expense of the environment. Instead, they should create economic value and preserve and sustain natural resources at the same time. Arguably, sustainability is not limited to economic prosperity and encompasses economic, social and environmental dimensions.

As Rudawska (2019:857) puts it, “incorporating sustainability issues into marketing strategies becomes an absolute necessity for survival and building a competitive market advantage in the long term”. Rudawska’s statement points to the importance of sustainability marketing as the basis for creating sustainable competitive advantage and a survival tool in the highly competitive marketplace. In the same vein, a study by Mohammad and Ghasem (2019:3) revealed that “industries’ environmental reputation is positively related to the sustainability strategies based on customers’ environmental concern and leads to superior financial and market performance”. This revelation means that there is no economic sustainability without environmental sustainability. Additionally, studies have revealed that increased competition forces organisations to embrace sustainability (Jaworski & Kohli, 1993). The future of markets for sustainable products and services is expected to reach 12 trillion US dollars a year by 2030 (Elkington, 2018). Business organisations play a central role in the global sustainability agenda because they are, in the main, in control of production systems and can influence consumption patterns (Bhattacharyya, Dash, Hewege, Balaji & Lim, 2022). Notably, institutional investors are increasingly paying attention to environmental, social and governance (ESG) considerations when they make investment decisions (Mhlanga, 2022) .

The growing importance of sustainability marketing calls for a scholarly debate on its

role in a business's organisational life. It is against this background that this conceptual paper offers an articulation of the role of sustainability marketing in creating long-term societal value based on a review and analysis of scholarly perspectives on the issue. The key question that I will address in this presentation is: How business organisations should create long-term societal value from a sustainability marketing perspective? I will begin by exploring the research issue at hand before conceptualising sustainable development, defining sustainability marketing, explaining the sustainability marketing mix, making recommendations and drawing conclusions.

RESEARCH PROBLEM STATEMENT

While research has been conducted on the issue of sustainability marketing, there is a paucity of research evidence on the subject of sustainability marketing (McDonagh & Prothero, 2014; Kamboj & Rahman, 2017, Gupta, 2016; Seth & Sinha, 2015; Rudawska, 2019; Kemper & Ballantine, 2019). In order to contribute to the scholarly debate on the role of sustainability marketing, this paper explores the conceptualisation of sustainability marketing and examines its role in creating long-term societal value. As I indicated previously, the key question that I will address in this presentation is: How business organisations should create long-term societal value from a sustainability marketing perspective? To analyse the research issue at hand, I have adopted following theoretical framework .

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Various marketing paradigms exist, including the “make-and-sell” paradigm, the “sense-and-respond” paradigm and the “guide-and-co-create” paradigm. The make-and-sell paradigm states that firms are established to produce and sell their offerings. With this approach a business is internally focused on cost reductions and increasing sales (Haeckel, 2010). This paradigm is aligned to classic economics theory of the firm. The sense-and-respond marketing paradigm suggests that profit maximisation is a function of customer satisfaction, which should be considered as a prerequisite for profit maximisation. This means that a business should identify (sense) and meet (respond to) the needs of society (Samuelson, 1948). This paradigm is associated with the marketing concept and is aligned to the neoclassical theory of the firm. Neoclassical economic theory is criticised for failing to reduce poverty and create a socially equitable society (Stiglitz, 2010).

The economics theory that underpins this paper is a heterodox ecological economics approach. This approach states that firms are established to create long-term societal value. In other words, business organisations are established to create economic, social and ecological value, creating such value for both customer and noncustomer stakeholders. Accordingly, the paper is guided by the guide-and-co-create marketing paradigm which suggests that organisations should guide customer and noncustomer

stakeholders in the process of creating societal value (Hurth & Whittlesea, 2017).

Additionally, this review was conducted through the lenses of the assemblage theoretical perspective, the stakeholder theory and socio-ecological systems theory. An assemblage theoretical perspective suggests that “the world is made of interacting components whose relations are always uncertain, open to change and never final” (Pierides & Woodman, 2012). The theoretical perspective points to the instability of the world system and the interdependence of its subsystems. Similarly, socio-ecological systems theory deals with the interaction between the human and natural systems (Gallopín, 2006). Stakeholder theory posits that all stakeholders are important in organisational life (Freeman, 1984). Having outlined the theoretical framework for the paper, the concept of sustainable development will be explored.

CONCEPTUALISING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Consistent with the assemblage theoretical perspective and socio-ecological systems theory, the world system is comprised of multiple interdependent natural (environmental) and man-made systems such as agriculture, politics, economics, education, culture and technology. The stability of the world system is a function of harmonious coexistence between the natural and the man-made systems. Sustainable development as an approach to human development seeks to minimise the negative impact of the man-made systems on the natural system (Belz & Peattie, 2012). During the 20th century, a new driver in the form of marketing emerged which “helps to determine where we invest our savings, where we go to learn, which countries we visit on vacation, which charitable causes we support and whether we take proper care of own health or support a range of social initiatives”. This assertion by Belz and Peattie (2012) suggests that marketing shapes human behaviour. The economic growth of the 20th century was fuelled by the burning of fossil fuels which brought about climate change problems. Accordingly, the 21st century is characterised by challenges such as health issues, urbanisation, resource depletion, ecosystem damage, erosion of cultural diversity, social inequity, food insecurity and climate change problems (Belz & Peattie, 2012).

In 1987, the United Nations’ World Commission on Environment and Development also known as the Brundtland Commission, after its chairperson, Dr Harlem Brundtland, the prime minister of Norway, produced a report entitled *Our Common Future*, which called

for interdependence between the natural environment and man-made systems. The report defines sustainable development as “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (Belz & Peattie, 2012:10). The Commission’s definition of sustainable development suggests that there should be a concerted effort to create long-term societal value. It suggests that business organisations should not meet their economic interests at the expense of society’s social and environmental interests. Therefore, sustainable development has economic, social and environmental dimensions (Martin & Schouten, 2012). Business organisations should create economic prosperity to bring about social equity (social value) while at the same time preserving the environment (environmental value). Hunt (2017) labels the three dimensions of sustainable development the three Ps: profits (economic value), people (social value) and planet (environmental value). This means that organisations should generate profits (economic value) in a manner that does not damage the planet (environmental value) and use the economic value to look after their employees and local communities (social value). In the same vein, Argyris and Tsaliki (2005:5) conceptualise sustainable development as “a system of affairs that secures the continuous and indefinite provision of welfare for society through the implementation of practices which satisfy human needs and, at the same time, take into consideration ethical and environmental issues which are left aside in the normal functioning of the economy”. This definition emphasises the importance of balancing economic sustainability with socio-ecological sustainability.

Through the lenses of the theoretical framework of the paper, I define sustainable development as a business-guided human development process of creating long-term societal value by advancing the economic, social and environmental sustainability of current and future generations. Consistent with the guide-and-co-create marketing paradigm, business organisations should guide both customer and noncustomer stakeholders in the process of co-creating societal value.

The adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015, with 17 sustainable development goals and their associated 169 targets, was a significant milestone in the global effort to create an economically, socially and ecologically sustainable world (Seth & Parvatiyar, 2021). The launch of the Sustainable Development Goals was preceded by key milestone events in the global journey towards a sustainable

world. These events include the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the Beijing Platform for Action and the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, 2015). The Sustainable Development Goals build on the progress made by the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals which served as a development framework from 2000 to 2015.

Moreover, the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, which is considered the biggest tragedy after the Second World War, has forced organisations to pay attention to Goal 3 of the Sustainable Development Goals which talks about good health and wellbeing (Kelleci & Yildiz, 2021, Gautam & Hens, 2020). In response to the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, the World Economic Forum has developed a framework called the Dashboard for a New Economy, which advises that dialogues and actions should be directed at issues of prosperity (income and wealth equality), planet (energy mix), people (human capital and public health and institutions) and public and private organisations (Bhattacharyya et al., 2022). Continentally, the African Union's Agenda 2063 is a sustainability framework that seeks to create "a prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development" (Agenda 2063, 2015:2). To intensify the drive towards environmental sustainability on the continent, the African Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy and Action Plan (2022–2032) was launched in 2022 (Ramaphosa, 2022). At a national level, South Africa's vision of creating an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable society is encapsulated in the National Development Plan (National Development Plan, 2012). In 2020, South Africa established the Presidential Climate Change Coordinating Commission "to coordinate and oversee the just transition towards a low-carbon, inclusive, climate change resilient economy and society" (Ramaphosa, 2020). As part of the global effort to ensure environmental sustainability, at the conference of parties (COP) 26 event, South Africa received funding commitments to the tune of 8.5 billion US dollars from developed countries to help her to transition to net zero emissions (Dicey, 2022). The COP 27 event took place earlier this month in Egypt. Clearly, the struggle for sustainability is being pursued globally, regionally and nationally. The global struggle is consistent with Sustainable Development Goal 17 which talks about the need for a global partnership to drive the sustainability agenda.

Sustainability marketing is a dimension of sustainable development. Accordingly, the definition of sustainability marketing will be explored.

WHAT IS SUSTAINABILITY MARKETING?

Traditionally, marketing is considered the antithesis of sustainability because it is aimed at promoting consumption and profitability (Lim, 2016). Sustainability marketing is a dimension of sustainable development (Trojanowski & Kazbudzki, 2021) and is a holistic long-term view of marketing (Emery, 2012). In the face of criticism relating to environmental and social problems, business organisations have no choice but to embrace the concept of sustainability marketing (Hammonds, 2001). The foundational concepts of sustainability marketing are relationship marketing, social marketing, green marketing and ethical marketing. Therefore, sustainability can be considered to be a melting pot of these concepts. Another related concept is corporate social responsibility which predates sustainable development and sustainability marketing. According to the corporate social responsibility framework, business organisations should address society's environmental and social concerns, that is, business organisations should create socio-ecological value for society (Belz & Pattie, 2012).

Sustainability marketing is a new marketing paradigm that has replaced the traditional growth-oriented paradigm which fuels consumption at all costs (Kelleci & Yildiz, 2021). In 2017, the American Marketing Association redefined the term marketing "as the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering and exchanging offerings that have value for clients, partners, and society at large". This definition suggests that business organisations should not only create customer value but that they should also create value for all sectors of society. Similarly, Hunt (2017) states that marketing should be financially, environmentally and socially oriented. Hunt's (2017) conceptualisation is consistent with Kotler and Armstrong's (2006:642) view when they state that "a principle of enlightened marketing holds that a company should make good marketing decisions by considering consumers' long run interests and society's long run interests". This statement by Kotler and Armstrong (2006) underscores the centrality and importance of marketing in the creation of long-term societal value.

Sustainability marketing according to Belz and Peattie (2012:29) can be defined as "building sustainable relationships with customers, the social environment, and the

natural environment”. This definition suggests that sustainability marketing is a process of creating long-term (sustainable) customers, and social and environmental or ecological value. Business organisations should balance their economic interests with social and environmental interests. Firms are bound to fail to survive into the future if they do not attend to society’s social and ecological needs in their pursuit of prosperity. Similarly, Fuller (1999:4) defines sustainability marketing as “the process of planning, implementing and controlling the development, pricing, promotion, and distribution of products in a manner that satisfies the following three criteria: customer needs are met, organisational goals are attained and the process is compatible with the eco-systems”. In the same breath, Armstrong and Kotler (2012:508) conceptualise sustainability marketing as “socially and environmentally responsible marketing that meets the present needs of the consumers and businesses while also preserving and enhancing the ability of the future generations to meet their needs”. An analysis and synthesis of the definitions of sustainability marketing reveal that business organisations should meet their economic goals and society’s social and ecological expectations, they should endeavour to create value for customer and noncustomer stakeholders, and they should advance their economic interests in a manner that is beneficial to people and does not harm the environment (Martin & Schouten, 2014). From the guide-and-co-create marketing perspective, I conceptualise sustainability marketing as a business-guided process of creating long-term societal value as manifested in customer, social and environmental value. What are the elements of the sustainability marketing mix?

WHAT ARE THE ELEMENTS OF THE SUSTAINABILITY MARKETING MIX?

As indicated previously, marketing should not be limited to traditional economic analysis (profit maximisation). Instead it should include environmental and social contexts. In other words, marketing should not only create economic value but should create socio-ecological value as well. Thus, marketing should create value for all in society, both customer and noncustomer stakeholders (Kumar, Rahman & Kazmi, 2016). Business organisations should deploy sustainability marketing as a tool for creating long-term societal value.

The sustainability marketing mix comprises four Cs, namely, customer solutions,

customer costs, communication, and convenience. This mix has evolved from the five Ps (product, price, place and promotion) of the marketing mix which was more seller-oriented (Belz & Peattie, 2009).

Customer solutions (creating customer value)

Products and services that business organisations offer should provide solutions to both customer problems and socio-ecological problems. This means that businesses should create customer, social and environmental value. Therefore, societal value has economic, social and environmental dimensions. It means societal value manifests itself in customer, social and environmental value. Businesses create long-term societal value when they serve the interests of the present generation without compromising the interests of future generations (Tukker, 2004; Belz & Peattie, 2012). They should create customer value while at the same time creating socio-ecological value; they should create economic sustainability while at the same time creating social sustainability (social value) and environmental sustainability (environmental value). Both production systems and consumption patterns should be environmentally friendly (Pomering, 2017) and the production of goods and services should follow a zero pollution and zero waste approach (Seth & Parvatiya, 2021). It means business organisations should opt for cleaner production to reduce emissions and waste (Belz & Peattie, 2012). Products as solutions should be safe and healthy (Kandachar & Halme, 2008), as well as water and energy efficient and recyclable (Belz & Peattie, 2012).

As Porter and Kramer (2011) state, organisations should create shared value for society. Porter and Kramer's view suggests that organisations should have a harmonious relationship with all sectors of society by creating value for all. The enterprise value creation process should benefit the entire society. In line with the guide-and-co-create marketing paradigm, stakeholders should be co-creators of products and services (customer value) and should influence marketers' decisions relating to cost, convenience and communication (Belz & Peattie, 2009). This means that they should have inputs into the process of creating customer value, which should be based on customer needs. Customer value creation should be preceded by a value exploration process to identify customers' needs. Socio-environmental value creation should be based on society's expectations. Stakeholders should have a say in how socio-ecological problems are addressed as a precursor to the societal value creation process.

On a positive note, some organisations have embraced the concept of sustainability . As an example, organisations such as the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) are driving the sustainability agenda by introducing certification systems. The system promotes socially and environmentally friendly production which protects both fauna and flora (Bicknell, Slade & Struebig, 2018). A company called SoleRebels in Ethiopia is in the business of creating customer value in the form of hand-crafted footwear. Its products include sandals, slippers, shoes and boots for men, women and children. Its shoes have a natural fit because they are hand-cut. The products are made of recycled raw materials, using indigenous plant species and the hides of cattle as raw materials, as well as the rubber of used car tyres.

Retailers like H&M have embraced eco-consumerism by manufacturing organic and recyclable garments, while retailers such as Dischem, Woolworths, Pick n Pay and Checkers sell dishwashing liquids and tablets that are environmentally friendly (Bega, 2021). Organisations like Proveg South Africa promotes the consumption of plant-based foods and is part of a worldwide movement in which people are choosing to eat less meat for environmental, health and ethical reasons (Bega, 2021). Other examples of sustainable products are electric motor cars, light emitting diode (LED) lights, and eco-friendly housing material. In addition, companies like Tesla in the motor manufacturing sector are leading the way in sustainability and innovation (Wiston, 2012). It can be concluded that in order to create long-term societal value, business organisations should not provide customer solutions at high social and environmental costs. It can argued that customer value that is devoid of socio-environmental value is not sustainable.

Creating social value

For marketers to be competitive, they should be socially responsible. In other words, they should create social value by looking after the interests of their employees and local communities (Auyong-Oliveira & Sousa, 2022). By creating social value, businesses will position themselves to survive into the future, as social value creation is a source of sustainable competitive advantage. Companies such as PCL Foods are creating social value for local communities. This company has partnered with Nkomazi Small-Scale Sugarcane Growers to establish Akwandze Agricultural Finance which provides unsecured credit at low interest rates to local farmers. Employees can be considered as an important element of the sustainability marketing mix, as they are at the coalface of

the creation and delivery of customer value (products and services). Hence, they are considered the most important assets (Certo & Certo, 2009). The 2022 Global Marketing Trends found that the majority of the 1099 global executives surveyed were of the view that employee wellbeing is one of the top outcomes to achieve in the next 12 months. This finding underscores the centrality of employees in the enterprise's drive to create economic value. In the context of sustainability, they are referred to as sustainable employees and as such should be well versed with the concept of sustainable development and its related organisational culture. They should understand the need to balance the needs of the current generation with those of future generations and be willing to join their organisation's efforts to address environmental and social concerns. To create sustainability awareness, organisations should embark on an education drive about sustainability among their employees so that they can appreciate the value thereof and behave in a socially and environmentally responsible way (Larashathi, Hudrasyah & Chandra, 2012). Consistent with the Sustainable Development Goals, the guide-and-co-create marketing paradigm, stakeholder theory, assemblage theory, socio-ecological systems theory and the heterodox ecological economics approach, no one in both the present and future generations should be left behind. Profits should not come at high social and environmental costs to both current and future generations. It can be argued that societal value that is devoid of social value is not sustainable.

Convenience

The consumption of sustainable products will lead to environmental sustainability. Therefore, marketers should make sure that they are accessible to consumers. The main environmental impacts are packaging, waste, emissions and the use of fossil fuels. Distribution of products should have a minimal impact on the environment (Szymankiewicz, 1993). To minimise the negative impact of transportation on the environment, the production of goods should be localised (Oppenheim, 1998). The development of 24/7 retailing is making products more accessible. To minimise negative environmental impact, marketers should shift from road to rail for domestic transportation and from air to sea for international freight. To make sustainable products and services more accessible, online commerce should be used (Belz & Peattie, 2012). Therefore, it can be said that the transportation of products should be environmentally friendly. Marketers should not damage the environment in the process of making their products

accessible. It can be said that to maximise societal value, sustainable products should be distributed in an environmentally friendly manner.

Customer cost

Sustainable cost is any charge that consumers pay to use a product during its entire product life cycle (Martin & Schouten, 2012). Customer cost should reflect the environmental and social costs (Charter et al., 2002). Businesses should minimise customer costs as manifested in the price, and the social and environmental costs. Customer costs include purchase costs, use costs and post-use costs. Marketers could charge discounted prices to encourage consumers to buy environmentally friendly products. Alternatively, they could charge high prices to symbolise the prestige of sustainable products (Belz & Peattie, 2012). It can be concluded that maximum societal value can only be achieved if environmental and social costs are minimised.

Communication

Sustainable communication can be defined as the process of making stakeholders aware of an organisation's market offerings with regard to their customer, social and environmental value. Communication should be directed towards highlighting the benefits and the socio-ecological aspects of products and services (Belz & Peattie, 2012). Communication should empower consumers to make sustainability-oriented marketplace choices (Wymer & Polonsky, 2015). A study of sustainable marketing practices and consumer behaviour among tertiary students revealed that there is a link between customer awareness and responsible behaviour. This means that businesses should intensify communication campaigns to heighten awareness about their sustainable market offerings in order to influence consumers to act in an environmentally friendly manner. Sustainability themes should feature in communication campaigns (Seth & Parvatiyar, 2021). Businesses should build stakeholders' trust in their commitment to advance society's environmental and social interests. Moreover, stakeholders should have access to information on the organisation's plans and activities to sustain natural resources. Significantly, dialogue with stakeholders is important to solicit inputs during decision-making processes (McDonagh, 1998). Consistent with Freeman's stakeholder theory, an organisation's stakeholders should not be limited to customers and shareholders but should also include noncustomer

stakeholders (Kumar et al., 2016). These stakeholders include society, politicians advocacy groups , trade associations and the media (Roke & Jaeger, 2009). Integrating sustainable communication efforts is a complex task because of the involvement of multiple stakeholders such as advocacy groups and trade associations (Fuller, 1999:265). Marketers should deploy marketing communication tools in an integrated manner, as integrated marketing communication ensures message consistency and maximum impact. The communication tools should include advertising, personal selling, direct mail, and public relations (Belz & Peattie, 2012). Businesses should capitalise on the interactive capabilities of online sustainability marketing (Belz & Peattie, 2012). Communication materials should not have a negative impact on the environment (Kotler, 2011). Marketers should avoid greenwashing by using eco labelling that is consistent with the actual performance of the product (Masocha, 2018). In other words, businesses should not make claims that are not consistent with their business practices. They should not claim to be socially and environmentally responsible when in practical terms they are not. Businesses should report on their economic, social and environmental performance through integrated reporting (McDonagh, 1998). It can be concluded that communication should focus on all the dimensions of societal value, that is, customer, social and environmental value

RECOMMENDATIONS

As indicated previously, this paper is an articulation of the role of sustainability marketing in creating societal value based on an analysis and review of scholarly perspectives on the issue. The paper explored the conceptualisation of sustainability marketing and examined its role in creating long-term societal value. The review has shown that the world system is environmentally and socially unstable and that sustainability marketing is the basis on which marketers can create a sustainable competitive advantage and a survival tool in a highly competitive marketplace. From the heterodox ecological economics heterodox approach, sustainable development can therefore be conceptualised as an approach to human development that creates long-term societal value by advancing the economic, social and environmental sustainability of current and future generations. From the guide-and-co-create marketing perspective, sustainability marketing can be defined as a business-guided process of creating long-term societal value as manifested in customer, social and environmental value. On a global level, to

create an economically, socially and ecologically sustainable world, the Sustainable Development Goals have been adopted. Continentally, the AU's Agenda 2063 serves as a sustainability framework, and nationally, the National Development Plan is a framework for creating a sustainable society. As Mohammad and Ghasem (2019) found, there is a correlation between environmental performance and financial performance. Therefore, businesses should act in an environmentally friendly manner to attain economic sustainability. The literature review has shown that businesses are in the main in control of production systems and have the ability to influence consumption patterns. They can opt to offer environmentally friendly products and services, thereby bringing about environmental sustainability. They have the financial muscle to influence consumers through sustainability marketing to act in an environmentally friendly way. They also have the financial resources to act in a socially responsible manner to bring about social sustainability. In the light of the enormous corporate power that they wield,

I recommend that business organisations should guide the process of creating long-term societal value. Creating long-term societal value means meeting customers' needs and the social and environmental interests of current and future generations. The societal value creation process should be preceded by a societal value exploration process whereby businesses identify customers' needs and society's social and environmental expectations. Societal value creation is a process of translating customers' needs and society's social and environmental expectations into reality.

To create long-term societal value, businesses should embrace what I term the CSE framework. CSE stands for customer, social and environmental value. The CSE framework will empower organisations to create value for the entire society, empowering organisations to create value for customer and noncustomer stakeholders. In line with the guide-and-co-create marketing paradigm, the stakeholder theory, assemblage theory and socio-ecological systems theory, businesses should mobilise stakeholders in a collective effort to create customer, social and environmental value (societal value) for present and future generations. They should create economic and social value for the present generation while preserving the environment for future generations. Consistent with Siddiqui and Brastaviceanu 's advice (2013) business organisations should adopt the open value network model to collaboratively create customer, social and environment value (societal value) .

To implement the CSE framework, the process of creating long-term societal value should be supported by top management. Sustainable development and sustainability marketing should underpin business organisations' strategic outlook. Sustainability should be pervasive in business planning and implementation processes (Polonsky & Rosenberger, 2001), waste should be minimised in both production and consumption systems (Polonsky, 2011) and cross-functional teams should plan and implement and evaluate sustainability marketing strategies (Seth & Parvatiyar, 2021).

While this paper sheds light on the role of sustainability marketing in creating long-term societal value, the conceptual views expressed in this paper should be subjected to empirical scrutiny by other researchers. Therefore, I suggest that future researchers should explore the research issue empirically, involving marketers in different sectors of the economy.

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Customer value that is devoid of socio-environmental value is not sustainable

Economic value that is devoid of socio-environmental value is not sustainable

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