

Sustainable, Experiential, and Value-Based Marketing: A Review of Emerging Consumer-Centric Paradigms

Dr. R. Raghuveer¹; Dr. V. Lakshmi²

¹Faculty, MBA, Yuvarajas College (Autonomous), University of Mysore, Mysore

²MBA, Rao Bahadur Y Mahabaleswarappa Engineering College, Ballari, Karnataka, India.

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Abstract: The contemporary marketing landscape is undergoing a significant transformation driven by increasing environmental awareness, evolving consumer expectations, and the growing demand for meaningful brand experiences. Traditional transactional marketing approaches are gradually being replaced by sustainable, experiential, and value-based marketing paradigms that emphasize long-term relationships, ethical responsibility, and emotional engagement. This paper aims to systematically review existing literature on sustainable marketing, experiential marketing, and value-based marketing to understand their theoretical foundations, emerging trends, and strategic implications for organizations.

Using a secondary data approach, the study synthesizes peer-reviewed journal articles, academic books, and industry reports to identify key constructs and recurring themes. The review highlights how sustainability initiatives enhance brand trust and loyalty, how experiential strategies create memorable customer journeys, and how value-based marketing aligns brand purpose with consumer beliefs. The findings indicate that organizations integrating these paradigms into their strategic frameworks achieve stronger customer engagement, improved brand equity, and sustainable competitive advantage.

The study contributes to the literature by developing a conceptual framework linking sustainability orientation, experiential engagement, and value co-creation with customer loyalty and organizational performance. The paper concludes that consumer-centric paradigms are not optional but essential strategic imperatives in modern marketing environments characterized by conscious consumption and ethical awareness.

Keywords: Sustainable Marketing, Experiential Marketing, Value-Based Marketing, Consumer-Centric Strategy, Brand Equity, Customer Experience, Ethical Marketing, Green Marketing, Customer Engagement, Competitive Advantage.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The contemporary marketing environment is witnessing a paradigm shift from transactional and product-centric approaches toward sustainable, experiential, and value-based strategies that prioritize long-term relationships and stakeholder well-being. Increasing environmental awareness, ethical consumption patterns, and demand for meaningful brand interactions have compelled organizations to rethink traditional marketing philosophies. Scholars such as Philip Kotler (2011) argue that modern marketing must evolve beyond functional benefits to address human values and societal concerns, marking the transition toward values-driven marketing. Similarly, Ken Peattie and Frank-Martin Belz (2010) emphasize that sustainability should be

embedded into core marketing strategy rather than treated as a peripheral activity.

Parallel to sustainability trends, the emergence of the “experience economy,” conceptualized by B. Joseph Pine II and James H. Gilmore (1999), highlights the growing importance of creating memorable and emotionally engaging customer experiences. Experiential marketing frameworks proposed by Bernd Schmitt (1999) further reinforce the idea that consumers seek sensory, affective, and relational value beyond mere product utility. Moreover, value-based marketing rooted in co-creation theory by C.K. Prahalad and Venkat Ramaswamy (2004) suggests that competitive advantage emerges when firms align brand purpose with consumer beliefs and actively involve customers in value creation processes.

Despite extensive research on each paradigm individually, limited integrative reviews examine how sustainability orientation, experiential engagement, and value-based alignment collectively shape consumer-centric strategies and organizational performance. Therefore, this paper aims to systematically review existing literature to synthesize these emerging paradigms and analyze their strategic implications for brand equity, customer engagement, and competitive advantage in contemporary markets.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

- Philip Kotler (2011) introduced the concept of Marketing 3.0, emphasizing the transition from product-centric and consumer-centric marketing toward values-driven marketing. He argued that modern consumers seek brands that align with their personal beliefs and societal values. Marketing 3.0 integrates sustainability, ethics, and corporate responsibility into strategic marketing decisions, suggesting that companies must address social and environmental concerns to remain competitive. This framework laid the foundation for value-based marketing paradigms that prioritize human welfare and long-term societal impact.
- Ken Peattie and Frank-Martin Belz (2010) expanded the idea of green marketing into sustainability marketing, which integrates ecological responsibility, social equity, and economic viability. Their work emphasized stakeholder orientation and long-term relational value rather than short-term profit maximization. They argued that sustainability must be embedded in corporate strategy, product development, and communication to create authentic brand positioning.
- Jacquelyn Ottman (2017) examined consumer skepticism toward environmental claims and emphasized transparency and credible certification in green marketing. Ottman highlighted that misleading claims, or “greenwashing,” can damage brand trust. Her research reinforces the importance of authenticity in sustainable marketing initiatives.
- Archie B. Carroll (1991) proposed the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) pyramid, categorizing corporate responsibilities into economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic dimensions. This framework has significantly influenced sustainable marketing by linking ethical obligations with long-term corporate legitimacy and consumer trust.
- Shuili Du et al. (2010) demonstrated that effective communication of CSR initiatives enhances brand credibility and consumer loyalty. Their findings suggest that transparency and stakeholder engagement strengthen the positive impact of sustainability efforts on brand equity.
- Kirsi Niinimäki (2015) explored ethical consumer behavior and found that environmentally conscious consumers prefer brands aligned with sustainable practices. The study highlighted the role of consumer awareness and education in promoting sustainable purchasing decisions.
- B. Joseph Pine II and James H. Gilmore (1999) introduced the Experience Economy theory, arguing that experiences represent a distinct economic offering beyond goods and services. They suggested that memorable experiences create emotional value and differentiation, forming a core component of experiential marketing strategies.
- Bernd Schmitt (1999) developed the Strategic Experiential Modules (SEMs), which include sensory, affective, cognitive, behavioral, and relational experiences. His framework emphasized that emotional and sensory engagement significantly enhances customer satisfaction and loyalty.
- J. Joško Brakus et al. (2009) empirically validated the concept of brand experience and found that sensory and affective experiences positively influence brand attachment and repurchase intention.
- Katherine N. Lemon and Peter C. Verhoef (2016) emphasized managing customer journey touchpoints across online and offline channels. Their research demonstrated that integrated customer experiences lead to higher engagement and loyalty.
- Morris B. Holbrook (1994) conceptualized consumer value as interactive and experiential rather than purely functional. He emphasized hedonic and symbolic dimensions of consumption, contributing to value-based marketing theory.
- Jagadish N. Sheth et al. (1991) introduced the Theory of Consumption Values, identifying multiple value dimensions influencing purchase decisions. Their multidimensional framework supports value-based segmentation strategies.
- C.K. Prahalad and Venkat Ramaswamy (2004) proposed value co-creation, suggesting that consumers actively participate in shaping product and service experiences. This perspective shifted marketing from value delivery to collaborative value creation.
- Stephen L. Vargo and Robert F. Lusch (2004) introduced Service-Dominant Logic, arguing that value is co-created through interactions rather than embedded in products. This theory supports experiential and relational marketing paradigms.
- Kevin Lane Keller (2001) proposed the Customer-Based Brand Equity model, highlighting emotional resonance and consumer perception as key drivers of brand strength.
- David A. Aaker (1996) identified brand awareness, perceived quality, brand associations, and loyalty as components of brand equity, reinforcing the strategic value of consumer-centric marketing.
- Christian Grönroos (2004) emphasized relationship marketing and long-term value creation rather than transactional exchanges.
- V. Kumar and Werner Reinartz (2016) linked customer engagement metrics with financial performance outcomes.
- Rajendra S. Sisodia (2014) discussed conscious capitalism and purpose-driven branding, emphasizing stakeholder value maximization.

- Eric J. Arnould and Craig J. Thompson (2005) introduced Consumer Culture Theory, explaining how identity and cultural meaning shape consumer value perceptions.

III. RESEARCH GAP

Although extensive literature exists on sustainable marketing, experiential marketing, and value-based marketing, most studies have examined these paradigms in isolation rather than as interconnected components of a unified consumer-centric strategy. Research on sustainability primarily focuses on environmental responsibility, CSR initiatives, and ethical consumption, often emphasizing consumer attitudes and green purchase intentions without sufficiently linking these practices to experiential engagement or long-term brand equity outcomes. Similarly, experiential marketing studies largely concentrate on sensory stimulation, emotional branding, and customer journey management, but they rarely integrate sustainability orientation or value alignment as core strategic drivers of experience design. In the domain of value-based marketing, theoretical discussions on co-creation, stakeholder value, and brand purpose are well developed; however, empirical integration with sustainability initiatives and experiential practices remains limited.

Furthermore, much of the existing research is conceptual or context-specific, lacking comprehensive frameworks that explain how sustainability orientation, experiential engagement, and value alignment collectively influence customer engagement, brand trust, organizational performance, and competitive advantage. There is also insufficient cross-industry comparative research and limited empirical validation in emerging markets where consumer expectations regarding ethics and experience are rapidly evolving. Additionally, prior studies often examine short-term behavioral outcomes such as purchase intention rather than long-term relational metrics such as loyalty, advocacy, and lifetime value. Therefore, a significant research gap exists in developing and empirically testing an integrated model that connects sustainable, experiential, and value-based marketing paradigms within a cohesive strategic framework to explain holistic organizational performance outcomes.

➤ *Statement of the Problem*

In the contemporary business environment, consumers are increasingly driven by ethical awareness, experiential expectations, and value alignment with brands. Organizations are under growing pressure to integrate sustainability initiatives, immersive customer experiences, and purpose-driven marketing into their strategic frameworks. However, despite substantial academic attention to sustainable marketing, experiential marketing, and value-based marketing individually, many firms struggle to combine these paradigms into a cohesive and measurable strategy that enhances long-term organizational performance. The lack of an integrated framework creates uncertainty regarding how these consumer-centric approaches collectively influence customer engagement,

brand equity, and competitive advantage. Therefore, the problem addressed in this study is the absence of a comprehensive and synthesized understanding of how sustainable, experiential, and value-based marketing paradigms interact to shape strategic marketing outcomes in modern organizations.

➤ *Scope of the Study*

This study focuses on reviewing and synthesizing scholarly literature related to sustainable marketing, experiential marketing, and value-based marketing within a consumer-centric framework. The scope is limited to secondary data sources, including peer-reviewed journal articles, academic books, and credible research publications. The study examines conceptual developments, theoretical foundations, and strategic implications of these paradigms across various industries. It emphasizes key constructs such as sustainability orientation, experiential engagement, value alignment, customer engagement, brand trust, brand equity, and organizational performance. However, the study does not include primary empirical data collection or industry-specific case analysis. Instead, it aims to provide an integrated theoretical framework that can guide future empirical research and managerial application in diverse market contexts.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a **systematic literature review approach** based on secondary data to examine sustainable, experiential, and value-based marketing within a unified consumer-centric framework. Relevant peer-reviewed journal articles, academic books, and credible research publications were collected from scholarly databases such as Google Scholar and Scopus-indexed sources using keywords including “Sustainable Marketing,” “Experiential Marketing,” “Value-Based Marketing,” and “Customer Engagement.”

Studies were selected based on relevance, theoretical contribution, and methodological rigor, while non-scholarly and unrelated sources were excluded. The selected literature was categorized thematically into sustainability orientation, experiential engagement, and value-based alignment. A thematic analysis was conducted to identify key constructs and relationships among variables. Based on the synthesis, an integrated conceptual framework was developed linking these paradigms with customer engagement, brand equity, and organizational performance.

This methodology ensures a structured and analytical integration of existing knowledge while providing a foundation for future empirical research.

➤ *Theoretical Backdrop:*

The present study is grounded in multiple complementary marketing and management theories that collectively explain the emergence of sustainable, experiential, and value-based marketing as consumer-centric paradigms.

First, Stakeholder Theory, proposed by R. Edward Freeman (1984), provides the foundational lens for sustainable marketing. The theory argues that organizations must create value not only for shareholders but also for customers, employees, communities, and the environment. Sustainability orientation aligns with this perspective by integrating ethical, social, and environmental responsibilities into strategic decision-making.

Second, Service-Dominant (S-D) Logic, developed by Stephen L. Vargo and Robert F. Lusch (2004), supports experiential and value-based marketing. S-D Logic posits that value is not embedded in products but co-created through interactions between firms and customers. This theoretical lens explains how experiential engagement and collaborative participation enhance perceived value and strengthen long-term relationships.

Third, Experience Economy Theory, introduced by B. Joseph Pine II and James H. Gilmore (1999), underpins experiential marketing strategies. The theory emphasizes that memorable experiences generate emotional attachment and competitive differentiation beyond functional product attributes.

Additionally, Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) Theory, proposed by Kevin Lane Keller (2001), explains how emotional resonance, trust, and value alignment contribute to brand strength and loyalty. This framework supports the linkage between sustainability initiatives, experiential engagement, and brand equity outcomes.

Finally, Value Co-Creation Theory, advanced by C.K. Prahalad and Venkat Ramaswamy (2004), emphasizes collaborative value creation between firms and consumers. This perspective integrates sustainability and experiential engagement within a shared-value framework that enhances customer commitment and organizational performance.

Collectively, these theories provide a robust foundation for developing an integrated conceptual model linking sustainability orientation, experiential marketing practices, and value-based alignment with customer engagement, brand equity, and competitive advantage.

V. DISCUSSION

The present review integrates sustainable, experiential, and value-based marketing into a unified consumer-centric framework and provides important theoretical and strategic insights. The findings suggest that these three paradigms are not independent strategic choices but interrelated mechanisms that collectively enhance customer engagement, brand equity, and long-term organizational performance.

From a sustainability perspective, embedding environmental and social responsibility into marketing strategy strengthens brand credibility and stakeholder trust, consistent with Stakeholder Theory proposed by R. Edward Freeman. Consumers increasingly reward brands that demonstrate authentic ethical commitment. However,

sustainability alone may not guarantee competitive advantage unless it is effectively communicated and integrated into customer experiences.

Experiential marketing, supported by the Experience Economy framework of B. Joseph Pine II and James H. Gilmore, enhances emotional attachment and memorability. The literature indicates that immersive experiences—whether physical or digital—stimulate affective responses that influence loyalty and advocacy. When sustainability initiatives are embedded within experiential touchpoints, they become more tangible and meaningful to consumers.

Value-based marketing further strengthens this integration by aligning brand purpose with consumer beliefs. The value co-creation perspective of C.K. Prahalad and Venkat Ramaswamy emphasizes collaborative engagement, where customers actively participate in shaping brand meaning. This alignment fosters deeper emotional bonds and enhances brand equity, consistent with Customer-Based Brand Equity theory developed by Kevin Lane Keller.

The discussion also highlights that customer engagement and brand trust function as mediating mechanisms translating strategic initiatives into measurable performance outcomes. Organizations that integrate sustainability orientation, experiential engagement, and value alignment within a coherent strategy are more likely to achieve competitive advantage. Conversely, fragmented implementation may limit long-term impact.

VI. CONCLUSION

This study reviewed and integrated the literature on sustainable, experiential, and value-based marketing to understand their collective role in shaping contemporary consumer-centric strategies. The findings indicate that these paradigms represent a significant shift from transactional marketing toward purpose-driven, relational, and engagement-focused approaches. Sustainability orientation enhances brand credibility and ethical positioning; experiential marketing strengthens emotional attachment through meaningful interactions; and value-based alignment fosters deeper connections between brand purpose and consumer beliefs.

The review demonstrates that when these approaches are strategically integrated, they positively influence customer engagement, brand trust, brand equity, and ultimately organizational performance and competitive advantage. Rather than operating as isolated initiatives, sustainability, experience, and value alignment function synergistically to create long-term stakeholder value.

The study contributes theoretically by synthesizing fragmented streams of literature into a unified conceptual framework grounded in stakeholder theory, service-dominant logic, experience economy theory, and brand equity theory. From a managerial perspective, the findings emphasize the importance of authentic implementation,

strategic coherence, and long-term value creation in meeting evolving consumer expectations.

Overall, sustainable, experiential, and value-based marketing are not optional trends but essential strategic imperatives for organizations seeking relevance, resilience, and competitive differentiation in modern markets.

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