

Editorial

Brand Management and Innovation Management in the Age of Sustainable Development

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1. Introduction

Issues of sustainable development, successful achievement of the SDGs, solving the problems of production and promotion of green products, goods and technologies, expanding the use of green brands and many other aspects related to life and production in the Age of Sustainable Development remain the most relevant and frequently discussed topics in recent years. Great hopes in solving the problems of sustainable development are pinned on innovations in all spheres of society, including new management decisions in the field of the socio-environmental responsibility of enterprises for the results of their activities, the introduction of ESG strategies, the transition to environmentally friendly production and reduction in environmental pollution, and the increasingly active development of green brands and technologies.

The Special Issue entitled “Brand Management and Innovation Management in the Age of Sustainable Development”, which includes a set of articles on key issues, attempts to answer these challenges of modernity. At the same time, a review of the research patterns in already published articles shows that the search for answers to key tasks in the Age of Sustainable Development lies in a much broader plane beyond the management of green brands, supply chains or environmentally oriented innovations.

The peculiarity of this Special Issue is also that the main period of research, the results of which are published in this volume, have unfolded against the background of two global phenomena, whose interaction affected many transformational processes in society. The ongoing digitalization of the world economy and the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic dominate the choice of conditions for the analysis of research objects. Thus, readers have the opportunity not only to become acquainted with the most relevant results of modern research in the field of Brand Management and Innovation Management, but also with the peculiarities of their manifestation in the conditions of COVID-19.

2. Contribution

The topic of this Special Issue offered to researchers and readers aroused the interest of the scientific and academic community and received many responses. In total, fourteen articles were submitted for consideration, in the preparation of which fifty-six authors and co-authors from eight countries took part. After a thorough scientific review of the manuscripts by editors and reviewers, six articles were accepted and divided into two clearly focused groups: (1) Brand Management and (2) Innovation Management.

Figure 1 shows the distribution of articles by groups and their contribution to the disclosure of the topics of the Special Issue, as well as the key aspects of the analysis reflected in the articles of different groups.



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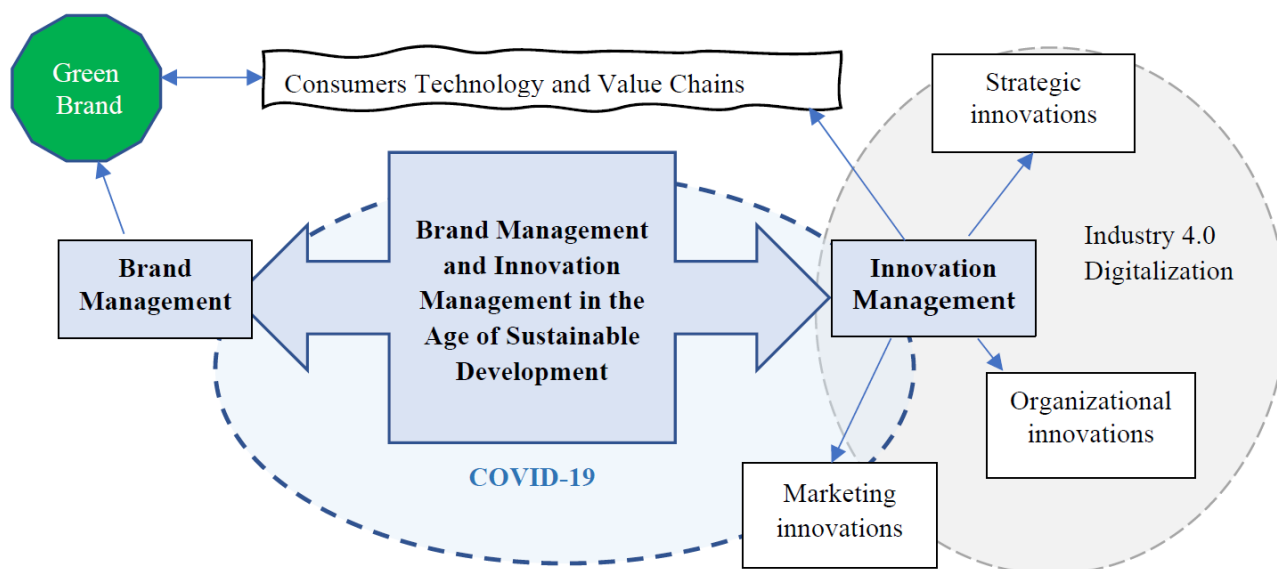


Figure 1. Thematic distribution of articles in the Special Issue. Source: Authors.

The following articles made a joint contribution to the disclosure of these areas of research in the framework of the Special Issue (a list of articles according to the chronology of their publication in the Special Issue):

- *contribution 1 (C1)*: Sheresheva, M.; Efremova, M.; Valitova, L.; Polukhina, A.; Laptev, G. Russian Tourism Enterprises' Marketing Innovations to Meet the COVID-19 Challenges. *Sustainability* 2021, 13, 3756. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13073756>
- *contribution 2 (C2)*: Shelomentsev, A.G.; Goncharova, K.S.; Stepnov, I.M.; Kovalchuk, J.A.; Lan, D.H.; Golov, R.S. Strategic Innovation as a Factor of Adaptation of National Economies to the Development of Global Value Chains. *Sustainability* 2021, 13, 9765. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13179765>
- *contribution 3 (C3)*: Habib, S.; Hamadneh, N.N. Impact of Perceived Risk on Consumers Technology Acceptance in Online Grocery Adoption amid COVID-19 Pandemic. *Sustainability* 2021, 13, 10221. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su131810221>
- *contribution 4 (C4)*: Li, G.; Sun, X. The Impact of Green Brand Crises on Green Brand Trust: An Empirical Study. *Sustainability* 2022, 14, 611. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su14020611>
- *contribution 5 (C5)*: Mingaleva, Z.; Shironina, E.; Lobova, E.; Olenev, V.; Plyusnina, L.; Oborina, A. Organizational Culture Management as an Element of Innovative and Sustainable Development of Enterprises. *Sustainability* 2022, 14, 6289. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su14106289>
- *contribution 6 (C6)*: Li, J.; Sun, X.; Hu, C. The Role of Skepticism and Transparency in Shaping Green Brand Authenticity and Green Brand Evangelism. *Sustainability* 2022, 14, 16191. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su142316191>.

The first group includes articles based on the analysis of consumer behavior (C3, C4 and C6). The second group includes articles related to the description of innovation processes, including the analysis of the impact on the sustainable development of companies of such types of innovations as marketing innovations (C1), strategic innovations (C2), and organizational innovations (C5). A more detailed contribution of the articles to the disclosure of the topics of the Special Issue is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Publications of Special Issue “Brand Management and Innovation Management in the Age of Sustainable Development”.

Contribution	Authors	The Goal of the Study	The Basis of the Study	Focus
(1) Brand Management				
C6	Juan Li et al. [1]	Checking the influence of “green transparency” and “green” skepticism on brand authenticity, as well as the direct influence of brand authenticity on green brand evangelism	Consumer behavior based on trust in the product brand	Green Brand
C4	Gen Li, Xixiang Sun [2]	Disclosure of the internal mechanism of the crisis of “green” brands and trust in the “green” brand	Consumer behavior based on trust in the product brand	Green Brand
C3	Sufyan Habib, Nawaf N. Hamadneh [3]	Analysis of the impact of the UTAUT2 model on the perceived risk and consumer confidence in the intentions of online shopping grocery categories of products among Indian customers	Consumer behavior based on trust in the brand of an online store	Consumers Technology
(2) Innovation Management				
C2	Andrei Shelomentsev et al. [4]	To determine the role of strategic innovations in the development of national economies against the background of the transformation of global value chains	Strategic innovations	Value Chains
C1	Marina Sheresheva et al. [5]	Search for innovations that help travel companies survive the COVID-19 pandemic crisis	Marketing innovations	Tourism
C5	Zhanna Mingaleva et al. [6]	Introduction of organizational innovations that improve the activities of the personnel of innovative enterprises	Organizational innovations	Organizational culture

Source: Authors.

The authors of the published articles considered various substantive problems and proposed various solution models. All published works contribute to the expansion of theoretical and empirical knowledge and the replenishment of research data.

The Brand Management Group comprises three articles in which the solution of the research tasks is based on the analysis of consumer behavior and the formation of consumer confidence in various brands of goods and companies. These articles are quite progressive and interesting from the point of view of setting the task of research and have great potential for development. Two of the three articles presented have green brands as a focus, and the third is the branding of online platforms for the sale of grocery categories of products. At the same time, all the articles presented in this group demonstrate an unusual approach to the formulation of the problem and have an original authors’ solution.

The study by Juan Li, Xixiang Sun and Canwei Hu [1] is devoted to the problem of evangelization of “green” brands in the context of promoting “green” building materials (floor coverings). The importance of researching the development of green brands in the building materials industry is explained by the fact that green building materials include a wide range of other categories, such as ceramics, glass, doors and even cement. The cement industry is the main producer of CO₂ and other harmful emissions into the atmosphere and is poorly associated with “green environmentally friendly products”. Therefore, the

formation and acceptance by consumers of green brands of such goods is quite difficult and problematic. To overcome this problem, the authors propose to analyze such factors of influence on Green Brand Authenticity as brand authenticity, green skepticism, green transparency, connection with one's own brand and the need for cognition. The authors also investigate the influence of green transparency and green skepticism on brand authenticity. The contribution of this study to the scientific literature is to substantiate that the promotion of a green brand creates an important psychological and behavioral basis for promoting positive interaction between green brands and consumers, as well as for the realization of the joint creation of green brand value [6].

Gen Li u Xixiang Sun [2] prove that in the cases of a crisis of trust on the part of consumers, "green" brands are more difficult to restore trusting relationships with consumers compared to conventional brands. This is caused by the unique characteristics of "green" brands. Therefore, crises related to the value of the product damage the credibility of the "green" brand. The authors see the solution to the problem through the study of the internal mechanism of the relationship between consumer brands, "green" brands and crises of trust associated with "green" brands. This will help specialists in the field of development and management of "green" brands to prevent crises and show directions for restoring trust with "green" brands after the crises.

Sufyan Habib and Nawaf N. Hamadneh [3] use the example of grocery categories of products among Indian customers to analyze the UTAUT2 model and its impact on the perceived risk and consumer confidence in online shopping intentions. The authors substantiate that sellers in online stores should consider the fact that modern consumers are concerned about the possible risk associated with online purchases of products due to low confidence in e-commerce technologies and online platforms. The authors see the solution to the problem in the fact that online platforms offer customers efficient and safe delivery, clearly demonstrating the values and quality of the product. To avoid confusion in choosing products and taking payments from customers, as well as to reduce the time and effort of customers in selecting the goods they need, it is proposed to create and implement a user-friendly interface and conduct advertising campaigns to attract potential consumers and provide relevant information. According to Sufyan Habib and Nawaf N. Hamadneh, all these measures will reduce the perceived risk of buying on online platforms and win the consumer's trust.

The Innovation Management Group also combines three articles in which topical issues of sustainable development are solved through the introduction of various innovations (marketing, organizational, strategic). This group is more diverse in terms of subject matter and object coverage of articles, which once again confirms the conclusion that the main emphasis in solving the problems of sustainable development is on the dissemination and application of innovations in all spheres of society. Innovation is becoming the only possible way of doing business and organizing life, through which society and business achieve success and sustainable development. It should also be noted that two articles from this group are devoted to research in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic, and innovative technologies are considered as a key tool not only for sustainable development, but also for overcoming the negative manifestations and consequences of COVID-19.

The article of *Marina Sheresheva* is devoted to the search for innovative ways to overcome the negative impact of COVID-19 on the sector of the world economy most affected by the pandemic, i.e., the tourism industry. Prof. Sheresheva and her colleagues [4] provide an overview of modern Russian tourism enterprises' marketing innovations to meet the challenges of COVID-19. The results of the study are aimed at deepening knowledge in the field of various marketing innovations that helped travel companies survive in the conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic crisis. Generalization of the experience of doing business by Russian tourism enterprises in crisis conditions can translate into more effective responses to such crises in the future and contribute to increasing the sustainability of the tourism sector after a pandemic or similar events involving mass restrictions on changing tourist routes and closing countries and regions to tourists. At the same time, the article

touches on a broader range of issues related to the support of the financial condition of travel companies that suffered under the restrictions and quarantine during COVID-19. In particular, the study addresses such issues as state support for companies affected by COVID-19, as well as issues of adapting the business strategy of travel companies in response to COVID-19. The article contributed to the expansion of academic knowledge and the literature in the field of sustainable development and Innovation Management in the tourism industry.

A study by *Andrey Shelomentsev* and his colleagues is devoted to the global aspects of the impact of strategic innovations in the development of national economies against the background of the transformation of global value chains [5]. The researchers identified and evaluated the factors influencing the implementation of strategic innovations in the context of the integration of various sectors of the economy into global value chains in the era of sustainable development. The dependence of the evolutionary development of global value chains on the types of innovations, established by researchers, is of scientific and practical importance, ranging from the process and product innovations of individual companies to the formation of global innovation ecosystems [5]. The presented research results expand the understanding of the role of strategic innovations in the formation of global value chains and the development of national economies.

The third article presented in the Innovation Management section was prepared by a team of researchers led by *Zhanna Mingaleva* in the framework of the complex issue of the relationship between Innovation Management and the financial performance of companies, the issues of staffing the innovation process, and the problems of managing the innovative activities of employees in modern conditions [6]. The study complements the gap in the literature related to the study of complex dynamics and the relationship between the management of the organizational culture of an innovative company and the improvement in the sustainability of its activities. Based on the results obtained, the authors conclude that the organizational culture of innovatively active organizations and enterprises is currently an important and significant resource in managing the sustainable development of the company. At the same time, organizational culture is also part of organizational innovation. Therefore, to achieve the sustainability of an innovation-oriented business, it is necessary to make a reasonable and adequate choice of directions and methods of organizational changes that adapt the company to rapidly changing business conditions. During the analysis, problem areas in Innovation Management were identified and described that require the transformation of the organizational culture of the company. This study is aimed at reducing a specific gap in the scientific literature related to the assessment of the compliance of the organizational culture of innovative companies with the current and future requirements of sustainable development. The importance of the research lies in the fact that the results obtained can be used for strategic planning of organizational culture management of any innovative enterprises, since the main parameters of the innovation process are universal for specific types of activities and do not depend on national specifics.

3. Discussions and Comments

A review of the articles of the current Special Issue allows us to make several comments on the prevailing topics and geography of the articles.

1. Research is divided into two groups with a clearly defined basis and focus of research, namely consumer behavior based on trust in the brand of the product [1–3] and innovation [4–6]. This indicates both distinctly defined priorities in research and the importance of these factors for achieving sustainable development.
2. All articles are prepared by teams of researchers (from two [2] to six people [5,6]), including international teams. In addition, most teams bring together scientists and researchers from different universities, which indicates the breadth of coverage and relevance of research topics.

3. Most of the research was carried out considering the research venues in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic crisis [3,4]. Another factor reflected in the presented articles is the global digitalization of all social and economic processes [6].
4. In general, it should be noted that the articles published in this Special Issue have attracted the attention of specialists and aroused great interest among readers in general as the total number of views of the articles in the Special Issue by the time of preparation of this review has exceeded 20,000 views.

4. Conclusions

The importance of Brand Management and Innovation Management for the sustainable development of various aspects of society is becoming increasingly important. The articles included in this Special Issue show a much wider range of issues discussed extending beyond Brand Management or Innovation Management. The subject matter of the published articles shows that Brand Management covers not only the management of brands of goods and products, but also ensures the successful development of individual business areas and companies. Innovation Management is the basis for the successful implementation of Brand Management. At the same time, Innovation Management is a broad phenomenon and process, and a successful innovation itself can become a brand for a company or region.

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