



# Digital Media Strategies in Promoting Sustainable Consumption: An Evaluation of BIST Sustainability 25 Index Companies



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**Abstract:** This study evaluates the influence of brands listed in the Borsa Istanbul (BIST) Sustainability 25 Index on fostering sustainable consumption behaviors, a critical issue in contemporary society. An analysis was conducted on the sustainability-related content from these brands' websites and Instagram accounts. The BIST Sustainability Index, which serves as a benchmark for companies in Türkiye to develop policies related to environmental, social, and corporate governance (ESG) risks, was utilized to select the sample. This index plays a pivotal role in informing responsible investors about corporate sustainability practices. The investigation primarily focused on how these brands communicate sustainability on their Instagram accounts through detailed content analysis. It was observed that, while comprehensive information on sustainability initiatives is presented on corporate websites, this communication is not adequately reflected on Instagram platforms. Given the mandatory disclosure of sustainability activities by companies listed in the BIST Sustainability 25 Index, the importance of effective communication on social media, in addition to website information dissemination, is underscored. Among the brands, Arçelik was identified as the most active in sharing sustainability-related posts on Instagram. Although these posts received a considerable number of likes, they garnered minimal user engagement in terms of comments. The study reveals a discrepancy between the intensity of sustainability activities undertaken by these indexed companies and their representation on social media channels. Consequently, it is recommended that these businesses place a greater emphasis on incorporating sustainability themes within their social media marketing communications. This study underscores the need for a more robust digital media strategy to reflect sustainability efforts accurately, thereby contributing to the broader discourse on sustainable consumption and the efficacy of digital marketing.

**Keywords:** Sustainability; Digital marketing; Social media; Instagram; Content analysis

## 1. Introduction

Sustainability, a concept extensively debated across various disciplines, traces its origins to commercial activities. It encompasses the economic, environmental, and social facets of business operations, offering strategic benefits for the continuity and vision of business practices. The burgeoning global population and economic growth have intensified issues related to resource consumption, particularly energy, and waste management. In this vein, sustainability has emerged as a key consideration for businesses in fulfilling contemporary needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs (Marín-García et al., 2022).

The rising environmental consciousness in modern times has necessitated the exploration of sustainable consumption across numerous sectors. This shift is influenced by global changes and developments impacting both consumers and corporations. The world's natural balance and elements constituting the ecological equilibrium are environmental factors with significant implications for consumer choices and corporate responses. The inclination of businesses towards renewable and recyclable resources in product design and production aligns with sustainability objectives. Consumer decision-making processes are increasingly swayed by environmental impacts of products. Consequently, corporate endeavors to meet these consumer expectations and their environmental

stewardship have fostered environmental awareness and positive strides in preserving the natural equilibrium. This shift has not only affected business operations but also permeated marketing strategies, giving rise to new approaches. A growing number of brands are now integrating sustainability into every facet of their marketing endeavors.

The widespread adoption of social media, both globally and in Turkey, has garnered significant attention from brands, particularly in light of the substantial time consumers spend on these platforms. Consequently, a shift in marketing strategies towards digital channels, with a focus on social media, has been observed. Social media accounts have evolved into potent tools for brands to engage with both existing and potential customers. Given this context, social media is posited to be an influential medium for conveying brands' sustainable consumption initiatives to their target audience. This dual capacity of brand promotion and public awareness elevation regarding sustainable consumption underscores the strategic importance of social media.

According to the "We are social 2022 Turkey" report, internet penetration in the Turkish population stands at 95%, with 82% actively using the internet. Social media usage statistics reveal that 80.8% of the population are users, averaging around 3 hours per day on these platforms. Notably, WhatsApp and Instagram emerge as the predominant social media platforms, with respective user percentages of 93.2% and 92.5%. Specifically, Instagram, facilitating post and video sharing, records an average user engagement of 20.2 hours per month (Digital, 2022). This data underscores Instagram's efficacy as a targeted communication tool for businesses. This study examines the Instagram posts of brands listed in the BIST Sustainability 25 Index in Turkey, focusing on sustainability-related content through content analysis. Inclusion in the Sustainability 25 Index mandates adherence to specific environmental, corporate governance, and social criteria, suggesting that listed brands have undertaken substantial sustainability initiatives. This research aims to ascertain the extent to which these brands incorporate sustainability themes in their Instagram marketing content. Subsequent sections will present a literature review, followed by the methodology and results of the study.

## 2. Literature Review

Sustainability is commonly delineated as the capacity to fulfill present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs (Marín-García et al., 2022). This concept has gained prominence in addressing environmental concerns by influencing consumer preferences towards ecologically sound products. Furthermore, individual beliefs, attitudes, perceptions, and personal moral imperatives to safeguard others and the environment are pivotal in motivating consumers towards environmentally responsible purchasing behaviors (Balderjahn et al., 2013). For businesses, sustainability encompasses the integration of social and environmental considerations into economic activities. Entities, whether operating nationally or globally, bear responsibilities that span economic, environmental, and social domains. It is thus imperative for businesses to embrace this tripartite responsibility towards all stakeholders, inclusive of investors and shareholders (Clarke & Clegg, 2000).

The escalating trend in consumption and its consequent environmental ramifications underscore the criticality of sustainability. The proclivity for overconsumption and the insatiable demand for resources have engendered significant environmental challenges. Addressing these challenges necessitates measures that align with the principles of sustainable consumption. Such measures are crucial for bequeathing a habitable environment to succeeding generations and should be embraced by all societal stakeholders. The growing consumer awareness heightens environmental and social concerns, supplementing personal needs. Elevating this awareness level is vital, necessitating concerted efforts from both businesses and consumers in promoting environmental consciousness.

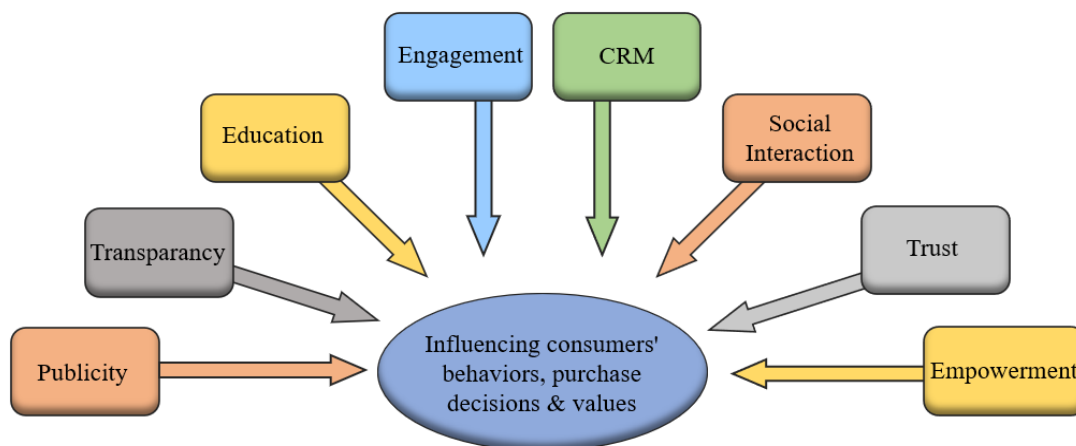
International agreements have catalyzed economic progress and the globalization of commercial activities, subsequently intensifying consumption. In contemporary society, consumption transcends basic needs, evolving into a medium for self-expression, happiness, and status. It is increasingly recognized as a mechanism that organizes and classifies social relations (Peattie & Collins, 2009). This paradigm shift positions consumption as a conduit for psychological fulfillment and nonverbal communication, rather than merely satisfying physiological needs. Individuals engage in consumption not solely for utilitarian purposes but to realize aspirations, express their identity, and affirm their unique place in the universe (Koç, 2012).

The consumer behaviors and habits prevalent today indirectly or directly contribute to environmental degradation. Manifestations of these adverse impacts include carbon dioxide emissions, overexploitation of natural resources, biodiversity loss, disruption of vital cycles, and exacerbation of global warming. These environmental concerns have been a subject of extensive discourse within the scientific community. Central to these discussions are rapid population growth, personal economic development driving consumption, and factors such as globalization, urbanization, women's increased participation in the workforce, and enhanced quality of life contributing to heightened consumption levels (Karalar & Kiracı, 2011). To render the concept of consumption sustainable and mitigate risks to future generations, the implementation of result-oriented scientific research is essential. Globalization, while contributing to increased consumption and consequent environmental damage, has also revolutionized communication and technology. The rise of the internet has amplified social interactions, with social media platforms enabling individuals to adopt and popularize sustainable lifestyles. Social media empowers

users to share information, create content, and enhance social interactions, transitioning from passive to active participants in digital discourse (Zolkepli & Kamarulzaman, 2015).

Social media has been integrated into consumers' daily routines as a critical component (Zeren & Keşlikli, 2019). For businesses, it serves as a vital marketing communication tool, enabling them to reach a broad spectrum of potential customers irrespective of geographical and temporal constraints. Platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram facilitate the dissemination of corporate messages, enhancing customer relationships and fostering new customer acquisition (Zeren & Gökdağlı, 2020). Through strategic social media marketing, businesses can engage with their audience, prompting roles such as participant, collaborator, and partner among their followers. This constant interaction not only supports consumer engagement but also provides valuable feedback through likes, shares, and comments, which can be instrumental in refining business strategies and boosting revenues (Demmers et al., 2020). However, the primary objectives for businesses utilizing social media extend beyond sales revenue enhancement. They encompass improving product and brand awareness, promoting the business, enhancing reputation, and gathering customer complaints and suggestions (Şengöz & Eroğlu, 2017). Contemporary businesses also leverage social media to communicate on socially significant matters, including special days, social responsibility projects, and sustainability. Sustainability is defined as the endeavor to protect the environment while meeting human needs, preserving natural resources, and ensuring their availability for future generations (Collin, 2004).

Companies lacking a social media presence risk missing critical opportunities to disseminate their sustainability messages to society (Strähle & Gräff, 2017). Social media possesses the capacity to influence users' decisions, purchasing behaviors, and even worldviews. Hence, these digital platforms can play a pivotal role in guiding society towards more sustainable and ethical behaviors. Presently, the vast majority of companies have adopted social media as a fundamental component of their corporate communication strategies (Reilly & Hynan, 2014). The study of Strähle & Gräff (2017) establishes the role of social media in the adoption of sustainable practices, as illustrated in Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** Role of social media in shaping the approach towards sustainable consumption  
Source: Strähle & Gräff, 2017

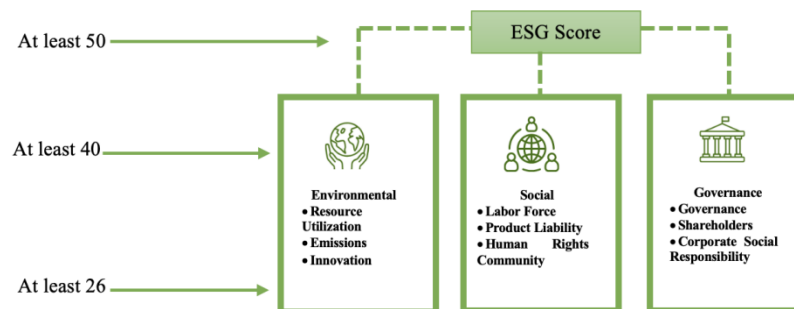
Strähle & Gräff (2017) identified various roles of social media in shaping sustainable consumption, including publicity, transparency, education, engagement, customer relationship management support, social interaction, trust, and empowerment. The role of promotion, as the initial function of social media, offers benefits such as enhancing brand awareness, accentuating sustainability themes, and stimulating product demand. Effective social media campaigns, characterized by concise, impactful messages or creative initiatives, resonate with environmentally conscious audiences. Given that the internet is a primary source for green product information, a dynamic presence on diverse social networking platforms can significantly elevate awareness levels. Consequently, social media platforms provide businesses with opportunities to gain universal popularity and appeal.

Transparency constitutes another vital role of social media, enabling the visualization of sustainable consumption advantages and distinctions between unethical and sustainable products through videos and images. This transparency complements consumer education, as social media facilitates understanding of companies' sustainable consumption initiatives and environmental projects. It allows consumers to access sustainability information without the necessity of perusing extensive company reports. The ultimate goal of this education via social media is to embed the significance of sustainable consumption within consumer consciousness. Furthermore, social media plays a crucial role in transforming society into a community that is more sustainable, green, and ethical. Following education, transparency and community involvement are additional facets of social media's

impact on sustainable consumption. Businesses seek to engage individuals who share similar sustainability principles in their activities. Additionally, social media serves as an efficacious tool for customer relationship management. Prompt and satisfactory responses to consumer inquiries on social media, such as career opportunities, store hours, or product information, significantly bolster customer relationship management (Strähle & Gräff, 2017).

Social interaction through social media, facilitated by electronic word-of-mouth (E-WOM) communication, plays a pivotal role in consumer engagement. Social media platforms, serving as hubs for content generation, advice sharing, and experience exchange, enable consumers to discuss and comment on businesses' posts. This participation actively contributes to the sustainability performance of businesses. Empowerment and social interaction on these platforms significantly influence consumer trust. Trust is often cultivated through social support among users within these online communities. Comments, recommendations, and communities on social media can augment trust in products, services, or brands. Positive consumer feedback, such as commendatory comments and high ratings, further solidifies this trust. Moreover, the comparative aspect offered on social media platforms mitigates perceived risks, enhancing consumer confidence. Given these multifaceted impacts of social media and its ubiquity, its effectiveness in fostering sustainability adoption is posited (Strähle & Gräff, 2017).

Companies embracing sustainability integrate this ethos into their marketing strategies, demonstrating their societal responsibility. They often communicate these commitments through their corporate social media accounts. In this study, businesses listed in the BIST Sustainability Index were selected as the sample. Inclusion in the Sustainability Index necessitates meeting specific environmental, corporate governance, and social criteria. Moreover, a comprehensive sustainability score of 50 or above is required, with each principal category (environmental, social, governance) scoring at least 40, and a minimum of 8 of the category scores reaching 26 or above. These criteria are detailed in Figure 2.



**Figure 2.** Criteria for inclusion in the BIST Sustainability Index

Source: Çelik, 2023

The Sustainability Index serves as an instrumental tool for assessing corporate actions concerning critical global and local issues, including global warming, natural resource depletion, diminishing water resources, health, security, and employment. It facilitates an independent evaluation and, in a sense, formal registration of corporate activities and decisions. Furthermore, this index allows for the comparison of corporate sustainability performances on both global and local scales. Companies benefit from the index as it provides a performance evaluation tool, enabling the setting of new objectives and the implementation of enhancements. Additionally, it offers opportunities for companies to refine their management capabilities in areas such as corporate transparency, accountability, and sustainability.

Criteria for inclusion in the BIST Sustainability 25 Index, calculated by BIST since November 2022, encompass stocks with distinguished sustainability performance and a specified market capitalization threshold. The requirements are:

- An overall sustainability score of 70 or above,
- A score of 60 or above in each of the main categories,
- A minimum of 50 or above in at least 8 of the category grades.

This study aims to elucidate the extent to which entities with high sustainability scores emphasize the theme of sustainability on Instagram, one of the most prevalently utilized social media platforms.

### 3. Methodology

In this study, a content analysis method, a systematic approach to examining content based on predetermined categories (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008), was employed to analyze the websites and social media accounts of companies listed in the BIST Sustainability 25 Index. The focus was on assessing the emphasis these companies place on sustainability and the extent of its reflection on their Instagram accounts, one of the most widely used social media platforms. Instagram, being the second most utilized social media platform following WhatsApp, was the primary

focus. The investigation included solely the corporate Instagram accounts of the companies. An evaluation was conducted to determine whether these companies featured a sustainability section on their websites, along with sustainability reports and information pertaining to the climate crisis. Additionally, the usage of various social media platforms by these enterprises was ascertained through the links provided on their websites. Subsequently, the Instagram pages of these enterprises were meticulously analyzed individually. This analysis encompassed examining the Instagram posts of these companies, covering the period from September 1, 2023, to November 30, 2023. In total, 51,087 Instagram posts were scrutinized.

Each post was manually examined, and separate content tables were created in the Excel program for individual posts. Posts addressing economic, environmental, and social themes related to sustainability were coded under the sustainability theme. The limitations of this research include the constrained time frame and resources, and the exclusive focus on Instagram posts for analysis. Relevant tables derived from this analysis are presented in the results section.

#### 4. Results

In this research, the websites of the companies listed in the BIST Sustainability 25 Index were systematically examined. Access was successfully gained to the websites of 24 out of the 25 companies included in the study. The website of one company remained inaccessible. An evaluation was conducted to determine the presence of a sustainability tab or sustainability information in the 'about us' section on these websites. Subsequently, an assessment was made regarding the availability of sustainability reports and activities addressing the climate crisis on these companies' websites. The findings related to these aspects are succinctly summarized in Table 1.

The data in Table 1 indicate that the website and Instagram account of Ereğli Iron and Steel Factories were not accessible. Analyzing the content scores in Table 1, it was observed that 18 brands met all the examined criteria on their websites, each earning 3 points. Three brands fulfilled only two of the criteria and received 2 points, while two brands met just one criterion, receiving 1 point each. According to Table 1, BİM scored the lowest in content analysis. Despite having a website, BİM's site lacked any information or reports on sustainability and climate change initiatives.

**Table 1.** Sustainability information on companies' websites

Brands	Sustainability Information	Sustainability Report	Combating Climate Change	Score of Content Analysis
Akbank	+	+	+	3
Arçelik	+	+	+	3
BİM	-	-	-	0
Çimsa	+	+	+	3
Doğan Şirketler Grubu	+	+	+	3
Doğuş Otomotiv	+	+	+	3
Enerjisa	+	+	+	3
Enka İnşaat	+	+	+	3
Ereğli Demir ve Çelik Fabrikaları	-	-	-	0
Ford	+	+	-	2
Hacı Ömer Sabancı Holding	+	-	-	1
Koç Holding	+	+	+	3
Migros	+	+	+	3
Pegasus	+	-	-	1
Petkim	+	+	+	3
Tav Havalimanları Holding	+	+	+	3
Tofaş	+	+	+	3
Turkcell	+	+	-	2
THY	+	+	+	3
Türk Traktör ve Ziraat Makineleri	+	+	+	3
Garanti Bankası	+	+	+	3
Türkiye İş Bankası	+	+	+	3
Şişecam	+	+	+	3
Vestel	-	+	+	2
Yapı Kredi Bankası	+	+	+	3

Table 2 delineates the distribution of social media platform accounts held by the companies. The analysis extended to examining the presence of the companies in the BIST Sustainability 25 Index on various social media platforms, specifically Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, X, and LinkedIn. This was accomplished by utilizing the account links provided in the contact information on the companies' websites. The findings indicated that, among

the listed brands, the Instagram accounts for Petkim and Ereğli Iron and Steel Factories were not identified. However, the Instagram profiles of the remaining 23 companies were successfully accessed. According to the content analysis scores presented in Table 2, 14 brands were found to have a presence on all the evaluated social media platforms, each achieving a content analysis score of 5. Five companies attained a content analysis score of 4, four companies scored 3, and only one company, Şişecam, recorded a content analysis score of 2.

**Table 2.** Social media accounts owned by companies

Brands	Instagram	Facebook	YouTube	X	LinkedIn	Number of Content Analysis
Akbank	+	+	+	+	+	5
Arçelik	+	+	+	+	-	4
BİM	+	+	+	-	-	3
Çimsa	+	+	-	+	+	4
Doğan Şirketler Grubu	+	+	+	+	+	5
Doğuş Otomotiv	+	+	-	-	+	3
Enerjisa	+	+	+	+	+	5
Enka İnşaat	+	+	+	+	+	5
Ereğli Demir ve Çelik Fabrikaları						
Ford	+	+	+	+	+	5
Hacı Ömer Sabancı Holding	+	+	+	+	+	5
Koç Holding	+	+	+	+	+	5
Migros	+	+	+	+	+	5
Pegasus	+	+	-	+	+	4
Petkim	-	+	-	+	+	3
Tav Havalimanları Holding	+	+	+	+	+	5
Tofaş	+	+	+	-	+	4
Turkcell	+	+	+	+	+	5
THY	+	+	+	+	+	5
Türk Traktör ve Ziraat Makineleri	+	+	+	-	+	4
Garanti Bankası	+	+	+	+	+	5
Türkiye İş Bankası	+	+	+	+	+	5
Şişecam	+	-	-	-	+	2
Vestel	+	+	-	+	-	3
Yapı Kredi Bankası	+	+	+	+	+	5

**Table 3.** Information on brands' Instagram profiles

Brands	Number of Followers	Number of Follow-ups	Number of Posts	Posts Sharing of Sustainability
Akbank	119 B	8	1.394	+
Arçelik	18,5 B	59	979	+
BİM	12,3M	0	10.461	+
Çimsa	5709	3	683	+
Doğan Şirketler Grubu	7072	85	564	+
Doğuş Otomotiv	31,1 B	20	905	+
Enerjisa	32,2 B	7	387	+
Enka İnşaat	28,8 B	19	907	+
Ereğli Demir ve Çelik Fabrikaları	-	-	-	-
Ford	286 B	20	870	-
Hacı Ömer Sabancı Holding	101 B	23	930	+
Koç Holding	223 B	100	825	+
Migros	3,1 M	14	13.729	+
Pegasus	424 B	4	2.137	-
Petkim	-	-	-	-
Tav Havalimanları Holding	18,7 B	306	2.334	+
Tofaş	42,4 B	13	640	+
Turkcell	334 B	22	2.319	+
THY	2,2 M	14	2.329	+
Türk Traktör ve Ziraat Makineleri	33,6 B	5	1.035	+
Garanti Bankası	153 B	13	1.808	+
Türkiye İş Bankası	166 B	12	1.409	+
Şişecam	83 B	14	404	+
Vestel	196 B	13	2.658	+
Yapı Kredi Bankası	120 B	9	1.380	+

Table 3 presents data pertaining to the Instagram profiles of the companies included in the study. Key metrics such as the number of followers, followings, total Instagram posts, and the presence of sustainability-related posts on these accounts were analyzed.

The results summarized in Table 3 reveal that BİM has the highest follower count with 12.3 million, whereas Çimsa has the lowest at 5,709 followers. Notably, BİM's number of followings is zero. TAV Airlines holds the highest number of followings, amounting to 306. In terms of total Instagram posts, Migros and BİM exhibited the highest activity, with Migros leading at 13,729 posts and BİM following with 10,461 posts. The predominance of retail companies such as Migros and BİM in posting frequency, often featuring products, discounts, and campaigns, is considered a contributing factor to this high activity. Conversely, Şişecam had the lowest number of posts, totaling 404. Among the 23 brands with an Instagram presence, 21 have shared posts related to sustainability. However, Ford and Pegasus did not post any content during the review period.

Table 4 provides an overview of the distribution of total Instagram posts, the number of sustainability-related posts, the featuring of such posts in highlights, and the utilization of tags or links in these posts during the three-month research period. BİM emerged as the most active company with 1,015 posts, while Enka had the fewest at 34 posts. Arçelik (18 posts), Yapı Kredi (17 posts), and Hacı Ömer Sabancı Holding (15 posts) were the top contributors in terms of sustainability disclosures. Among the 23 companies with Instagram accounts, 12 featured sustainability-related posts in their highlights, whereas 11 did not adopt this practice. Akbank was the sole company that utilized both hashtags and links under its sustainability posts. Of the 21 companies that shared posts on sustainability, 5 refrained from using either tags or links. While 14 companies exclusively used tags, only one opted for links alone.

**Table 4.** Sustainability posts of companies

Brands	Number of Posts	Sustainability Posts	Highlights Sustainability Posts	Hashtag/Link of Sustainability Posts
Akbank	113	6	+	++
Arçelik	52	18	+	+-
BİM	1.015	2	-	--
Çimsa	57	9	-	+-
Doğan Şirketler Grubu	55	7	+	+-
Doğuş Otomotiv	62	5	+	+-
Enerjisa	46	12	+	--
Enka İnşaat	34	2	-	+-
Ereğli Demir ve Çelik Fabrikaları	-	-	-	-
Ford	67	-	-	--
Hacı Ömer Sabancı Holding	75	15	+	+-
Koç Holding	76	5	+	--
Migros	222	4	-	+-
Pegasus	114	-	-	--
Petkim	-	-	-	-
Tav Havalimanları Holding	42	3	-	+-
Tofaş	56	3	-	+-
Turkcell	62	1	-	--
THY	90	8	-	+-
Türk Traktör ve Ziraat Makineleri	70	14	+	+-
Garanti Bankası	58	11	+	+-
Türkiye İş Bankası	97	8	+	+-
Şişecam	51	7	-	--
Vestel	87	3	+	+-
Yapı Kredi Bankası	69	17	+	-+

Table 5 provides an analysis of the average number of likes and comments on sustainability posts, as well as the proportion of these posts relative to the total number of posts during the research period. This analysis aims to gauge the significance and interaction associated with sustainability posts on Instagram. The data from Table 5 indicates that the highest average likes for sustainability posts were recorded by THY (3,080.75 likes). Other companies with significant average likes include BİM (1,995 likes), Hacı Ömer Sabancı Holding (1,919.6 likes), Doğuş Automotive (1,576.8 likes), and Türkiye İş Bank (1,449.25 likes). It is observed that the average number of comments on sustainability posts is considerably lower than the average number of likes. THY again leads in terms of average comments (107.75 comments per post). An important metric, the ratio of sustainability-related posts to the total number of posts during the research period, was also examined. Arçelik exhibited the highest percentage

(34.61%) of sustainability posts relative to its total posts. Despite BİM having the highest average likes for its sustainability posts, it has the lowest ratio (0.19%) of sustainability posts to total posts. The high follower count of BİM, a prominent discount market brand in Turkey, and its frequent postings about discounted products, are speculated to contribute to its high average likes.

**Table 5.** Data on sustainability posts

Brands	Average Likes of Post for Sustainability	Average Comment of Posts of Sustainability	Ratio to Total Number of Posts (%)
Akbank	336	10	5,3
Arçelik	156,05	1,8	34,61
BİM	1,995	-	0,19
Çimsa	336,6	3	14
Doğan Şirketler Grubu	48,5	1	12,72
Doğuş Otomotiv	1,576,8	5	8,06
Enerjisa	151	6,14	26,08
Enka İnşaat	166	3	5,88
Ereğli Demir ve Çelik Fabrikaları	-	-	-
Ford	-	-	-
Hacı Ömer Sabancı Holding	1,919,6	4,38	19,73
Koç Holding	901	10,4	6,57
Migros	346,5	-	1,8
Pegasus	-	-	-
Petkim	-	-	-
Tav Havalimanları Holding	339,6	4	7,14
Tofaş	321,3	1	5,35
Turkcell	240	18	1,61
THY	3,080,75	107,75	8,88
Türk Traktör ve Ziraat Makineleri	444,42	2,71	20
Garanti Bankası	801,54	8,8	18,96
Türkiye İş Bankası	1,449,25	18	8,24
Şişecam	266,28	2,71	13,72
Vestel	129,3	2	3,44
Yapı Kredi Bankası	93	12,25	24,63

In the assessment of sustainability posts, the inclusion of at least one element related to economic, social, or environmental aspects was considered sufficient for a post to be categorized under sustainability. Comments on these posts typically comprised expressions of satisfaction and emojis, with occasional messages containing complaints. In such instances, companies often provided their corporate contact information, directing followers to alternative communication channels.

## 5. Discussion

The prevalent use of the internet and digital tools has notably benefited marketing managers by providing extensive opportunities in digital marketing and social media. In this study, an analysis of the websites and Instagram accounts of companies listed in the BIST Sustainability 25 Index was conducted. The overarching findings suggest that while these companies engage in extensive sustainability initiatives and document these on their websites, their utilization of social media platforms, particularly Instagram, for sustainability communication appears limited.

Parallel findings are observed in existing literature. Reilly & Hynan (2014) conducted an analysis of the social media accounts (Facebook and Twitter), alongside corporate annual and sustainability reports of green brands, focusing on corporate communication and sustainability. Their study hypothesized that green companies might be more inclined to report sustainability information in their official corporate communications compared to non-green companies. Another research by Aydın & Tufan (2018) explored the purchasing behavior of Generation Y social media users within the context of sustainability and green consumption. The study found that participants were environmentally conscious and that this attitude was reflected in their purchasing behavior. Notably, the majority indicated that their awareness of sustainability and green issues was primarily sourced from internet and social media content. Additionally, Zeren & Kapukaya (2021) examined the Instagram posts of Turkey's 25 most valuable brands in 2019, assessing Instagram's potential in sustainability communication. The findings revealed



that sustainability-related content was relatively scarce among the brands' posts. These results align with the findings of the current study. However, a distinct observation in this study was that three brands demonstrated a higher frequency of sustainability posts.

A study by Feyyaz & Uğurhan (2019) also addressed similar themes, examining the communication efforts of global automobile brands concerning environmentally friendly products and services. This study employed content analysis to compare posts on local and global official Twitter accounts of automobile brands. It was observed that there were both similarities and differences in posts related to environmentally friendly products, special days, weeks, and events across global and Turkish accounts. The researchers recommended that businesses should incorporate more environmentally friendly and sustainable practices in their content to enhance consumer brand loyalty. Russo et al. (2022) investigated the impact of social media on the sustainability performance of organizations, utilizing environmental, social, and governance (ESG) factors. Their study identified a statistically significant and positive correlation between businesses' sustainability performance and their active use of social media profiles.

Furthermore, Zhao et al. (2022) analyzed the visual and textual content shared by sustainable fashion brands on social media. The study concluded that the images and captions published by the examined businesses were in alignment with their brand identities and sustainability goals. Similarly, Milanesi et al. (2022) analyzed 300 visual posts from corporate Instagram accounts of sustainable fashion companies. This content analysis revealed the most frequently used visual categories to depict sustainability and how these categories engage users digitally.

In the context of the current study, it can be stated that while the majority of the brands within the scope do share posts related to sustainability on their social media accounts, the frequency of such posts is not particularly high.

## 6. Conclusions

This study aimed to analyze the websites and Instagram accounts of companies listed in the BIST Sustainability 25 Index from a sustainability perspective. The websites of 24 out of the 25 companies were accessed and analyzed using content analysis. The focus was to ascertain the presence of sustainability information, sustainability reports, and initiatives addressing the climate crisis. The findings revealed that the majority of the companies provided sustainability information, reports, and suggestions for combating the climate crisis on their websites. When examining the social media presence of these companies, it was observed that 23 of them maintained official Instagram accounts. Furthermore, 14 of these brands were active on all five evaluated social media platforms. An analysis of the Instagram activity of these companies showed that BİM had the highest follower count at 12.3 million, while Çimsa had the lowest at 5,709 followers. Retail companies were noted for their high frequency of Instagram posts. Among the brands with Instagram accounts, 21 shared posts related to sustainability. BİM was the most active during the research period with 1,015 posts, whereas Enka had the least activity with 34 posts. In terms of sustainability disclosures, Arçelik (18 posts), Yapı Kredi (17 posts), and Hacı Ömer Sabancı Holding (15 posts) were the leading companies. Arçelik was particularly notable, addressing sustainability in one out of every three posts, marking it as the company most focused on sustainability among the sample. Regarding the usage of Instagram features, 12 companies highlighted sustainability-related posts in their featured posts, while 11 did not. Akbank was unique in using both hashtags and links under its sustainability posts. Of the companies sharing sustainability posts, five did not use tags or links, 14 used only tags, and one used only links.

Regarding the average number of likes for sustainability posts, THY achieved the highest average at 3,080.75 likes. When examining the ranking based on average likes, BİM (1,995 likes), Hacı Ömer Sabancı Holding (1,919.6 likes), Doğu Automotive (1,576.8 likes), and Türkiye İş Bank (1,449.25 likes) followed closely. However, the average number of comments on sustainability posts was significantly lower than the average number of likes. The highest average number of comments was recorded by THY (107.75 comments per post). An essential measure of the importance companies place on sustainability posts is the ratio of sustainability-related posts to their total posts. Arçelik led this ratio at 34.61%, while BİM, despite having the highest number of likes, showed the lowest ratio at 0.19%. This study noted that users generally expressed their approval of sustainability posts through likes rather than comments. Analysis of comments, particularly on highly interactive posts, revealed that they predominantly consisted of emojis and occasionally, complaints. The study's findings suggest that while companies effectively utilize Instagram for marketing communication, the frequency of sustainability-related posts is limited, despite their inclusion in the BIST Sustainability 25 Index and apparent sensitivity to sustainability issues.

This research was constrained by its limited time frame and the sole focus on Instagram accounts and company websites. The reliance on only Instagram posts and company websites from a specific time frame may not comprehensively represent the entirety of organizations' sustainability communication efforts, presenting a limitation of this study. Additionally, the data collection period coincided with the centennial anniversary of the founding of Turkey, leading to a significant presence of special day celebrations in the companies' posts, which is another limitation. For future research, it may be beneficial to examine brands' sustainability posts on other social

media platforms over different time periods. Companies are advised to use social media more effectively as a marketing tool, particularly by carefully crafting their social media posts on sustainability issues, an area where consumer sensitivity is increasing.

## Ethical Approval

This study adheres to strict ethical guidelines, ensuring the rights and privacy of participants. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and personal information was protected throughout the study. The methodology and procedures of this research have been approved by the appropriate ethics committee. Participants were informed of their rights, including the right to withdraw from the study at any time. All collected data is used solely for the purpose of this research and is stored and processed in a secure and confidential manner.

## Data Availability

The data used to support the research findings are available from the corresponding author upon request.

## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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