

**MARKETING TRENDS TO FACE THE SUSTAINABILITY CHALLENGE: the perspective of influencers in the Peruvian sustainable fashion sector**

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**1. Introduction**

Historically, traditional business and marketing management, in general, focused on the topics of interest to the shareholders and business owners, and hardly ever on the real environment. However, management is contextualized in a society that has gradually changed from a market economy to a market society (Ayvaz and Torlak, 2016; Sandel, 2012). This reality has contributed to the increase of unjust situations and lack of sustainability.

Over time, the importance of stakeholders—such as consumers and employees—for decision-making and, above all, of the strategies for business positioning in the different markets are understood. In addition, the relationship between the companies and the third sector has changed from a confrontational situation to a business partnership through systematic steps. These include the following facts: (a) be responsible; (b) change the way of doing business; and (c) experience the co-creation of business models (Bruggman and Prahalad, 2007). For instance, large companies have a different way of thinking, since it combines financial with social logic to build a lasting success (Kanter, 2011).

The search for sustainability transformed the competitive landscape of companies, which forced them to change the way of thinking about its products, technologies, processes and business models (Kemper, Hall and Ballantine, 2019; Nidumolu, Prahalad, Rangaswani, 2010). This demanded to revise the business positions and practices in order to adapt to the new context (Sroufe, 2017). In marketing, inputs would serve as resources to make decisions related to compound marketing management, brand management and market research. With the improvement of practices and changes in consumer behavior, managers may increasingly understand that not only market issues are relevant in order to have results, but social and environmental issues are important too.

Trade relations are a consequence of the search to satisfy the customer's needs and, therefore, the organizational interests. It is essential to understand the reality of the global environment. In a broader context, the challenge of sustainable development is set, in which all entities—government, society and businesses—are responsible for the balance among economic, social and environmental issues. As a result, this reality is mainly shown through more responsible management practices. If businesses analyze its social responsibility alternatives with same frameworks guiding its business decisions, companies may discover that this can be a source of opportunities, innovation and competitive advantage (Tian; Zhang; Yu; Cao, 2019; Porter and Kramer, 2006). Managers are not only doing it because they believe it is something important, but because the consumers, society, governments, media or activists increasingly require it. However, corporate responsibility efforts—especially Corporate Social Responsibility—tend to be counter-productive due to the disconnection with the business strategy or to not making the necessary changes for society in general (Porter and Kramer, 2011).

In terms of market and marketing, there are very important and fundamental changes in habits and behaviors that affect the consumption patterns, and the corporate and business attitudes. Although the competition among companies used to be based on prices and on the generic

advantages of products, nowadays the competition and the criteria for selecting one company over another are based on elements related to people's well-being and their environment. Understanding well-being, in this new context, has a vast meaning. Feeling good implies maintaining the quality of life of people and their environment, as well as preserving the environment.

Conscious consumers look for a different business profiles and products that contribute to maintain the sustainability (Dyllick & Rost, 2017). Their decisions consider different components of goods and services, which include economic, financial, social and environmental aspects. For instance, it is known that both environmental concern and health and changing habits are factors positively associated with the value given by the consumer to products, goods and services that are environmentally friendly and the companies that bring them to the market (Lira, 2018). Thus, sustainability issues are currently included in marketing studies and practices, and demonstrate the interdependence between the interests and needs of companies and society. In this context, the importance of social and environmental responsibility and the search for sustainability is to bring the actors closer in order to give them enough space to achieve their objectives.

In this context, the fashion industry has the dilemma of being one of the most polluting in the world. In Peru the sustainable fashion sector is growing as a organized movement, aiming at quality products with social and environmental care. The main concern is to change this reality of a highly polluting sector, into a reality that encourage more sustainable consumption patterns, such as environmentally friendly care and washing practices and biodegradable packaging. For this reason, the opinion of people related to sustainable fashion management was considered of special relevance. In this sense, it was proposed to know the beliefs of influencers of the Peruvian sustainable fashion sector. The main objective of this research has been to study the marketing trends to face the sustainability challenge.

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

### **2.1 Frameworks for the search of sustainable development**

The discussions about sustainable development are not recent; these are increasing globally. In historical terms, the relevance of long-term development is a process of actions and events predominantly occurred in the last five decades.

In general, the public opinion has begun to change based on the influence of several events, such as: (1) The United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (1972), or the Stockholm Conference, was the first event to address international environmental issues. The final objective was to find alternatives to raise awareness about the importance of improving the relationship with the environment. (2) The Brundtland Report (1987), also known as "Our Common Future", is a document that reaffirms the critical view about the prevailing development model. (3) The Earth Summit (1992), also known as Rio Summit, brought new ideas of economic growth that are less consumerist and more appropriate to the ecological balance were suggested in the conference. (4) The United Nations Conference on the Natural Development (2012), or Rio +20, had participants from the private sector, NGO's, governments and other groups. The addressed topics included, besides the alternatives for environmental protection in an increasingly populated planet, the possibilities of poverty reduction and the promotion of social equity. (5) The Millennium Development Goals were initially agreed in 2000. Eight goals were to be met in the first fifteen years. In September 2015, the results and requirements were reassessed and reclassi-

fied in 17 integrated and indivisible objectives, bringing together the three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental.

With the help of the United Nations, these were the most representative efforts to think of new possibilities to achieve a more sustainable reality. The consequence was mostly the increase of public attention about development issues. In parallel, the evolution of digital media and social media helped to raise awareness and to increase the educational level (Diez-Martin, Blanco-Gonzalez y Prado-Roman, 2019; Schreiber y Siege, 2016)). Differing positions concerning the expected realities were more frequent. That is to say, the adoption of ethical and healthy positions ceased to be the exclusive responsibility of one individual; it became a responsibility shared by all governments, civil society, and companies.

## **2.2 The challenges of sustainability, business management, and marketing**

As a reflection of these changes, the access to information and the opinions about social and environmental issues increased. The new relationship between companies and society helps to understand the consequences of their actions to discover new opportunities that benefit their environments and strengthen the competitive environment more effectively (Porter and Kramer, 2011). In the same way, the market has always depended on society even to overcome the most critical moments (Patel, 2010).

A more vigorous and robust society favors the expansion of businesses to the extent that the needs are met and the aspirations are achieved (Kamlot and Schmitt, 2016). Quality has an expanded concept that includes the customers' expectations of companies and products throughout all stages of the life cycle. The conscious consumer understands that his or her consumption decisions often affect directly or indirectly the environment, since the production process until the disposal.

Modern companies are more aware of seeing things as a whole when making marketing decisions. In this context, the major management challenges are: making sure that the management is goal-oriented (relevant social and noble objectives); including the concepts of community and citizenship in the management systems; expanding and exploiting diversity (Hamel, 2009). Sustainable development is part of the solution to provide opportunities in emerging market segments. The new practices increase the credibility in society and generate inequalities in the consumer market.

Executives are the guardians of the most powerful institutions of society (Prahalad, 2010). Managers are challenged to understand that being responsible is part of the solution, which includes changing processes and programs that might generate income and positive results for the companies. The first step towards the new reality is to consider that traditional marketing, which disregards the social and environmental issues, no longer contributes to maintain business competitiveness in the long term. The great challenge for business and marketing managers is to understand that today, and especially in the future, its permanence in the markets will depend on the adequacy of their practices to the current sustainable development reality. In marketing, several subjects are discussed, such as social marketing, green marketing and sustainable marketing.

### **a) The social side of marketing or social marketing**

Nowadays, knowledge-based competition no longer allows the false dichotomy related to the separation between economic and social objectives (Porter and Kramer, 2002). Social marketing aims to influence the consumer's behavior in order to make positive impacts for society. The concept of social marketing is similar to organizational resilience due to the adaptation and change of behaviors, actions and attitudes are related to the need to adapt to certain unexpected situations (Kamlot, 2017).

In addition, there is a strong similarity between social marketing and social responsibility, since both perceptions require managers to consider the business performance, to give the same weights to income, consumer satisfaction and well-being of the society (Boone and Kurtz, 1999). Many companies include social responsibility actions to their businesses activities in order to make profits. Therefore, these actions are incorporated into marketing campaigns that relates their brands and products or services. In return, their brands are reinforced, the companies gain a good reputation, expand to new markets, and gain the customers loyalty (Oliveira, 2008).

The adoption of social marketing develops the ethical and transparent relationship with target markets and establishes business goals that are compatible with the development of society, respecting diversity and promoting the reduction of social inequalities. Improving the lives of people at the bottom of the pyramid (the poorest socio-economic group) is a noble effort, but it can be lucrative too (Prahalad and Hammond, 2005).

In developing countries, social marketing has focused much more on products and services, while in developed countries has often focused on persuasive communications to change behaviors (Lefebvre, 2011). In daily life, the purpose of social marketing is to develop programs to motivate (or not) the acceptance of ideas or social behaviors (Vázquez, 2006). In addition, objectives provide information, stimulate beneficial actions to the society, modify harmful behaviors, and transform the values of society.

Moreover, the manager is responsible of understanding the cultures which are crucial to create empathy and social sensitivity. The greater the proximity between the company and the different audiences, the greater the potential for having successful strategies (Sroufe, 2017). In commercial terms, the focus is on the so-called social products, which tend to be ideas, practices or tangible products (Kotler and Roberto, 1992). The ideas correspond to beliefs, attitudes, and values. The practices involve actions and behaviors. The tangible products are tools to establish a social practice. Sometimes these are physical products or services included in a campaign with social purpose.

Social marketing is a result of adapting traditional marketing technologies to programs that influence the consumers' behaviors in order to improve the individual and collective well-being (Andreasen, 1994). It is the result of social actions and marketing activities that have the objective to benefit society without directly generating links with the brand or to sell more (Zenone, 2006). The differences of this aspect of marketing are: change behaviors, raise awareness, provide resources, and recruit volunteers for specific actions (Kotler and Lee, 2005). However, the term is often misused to describe the promotion of multi-component interventions

or communication campaigns (McDermott, Stead, and Hastings, 2005). In addition, this perspective must not be only perceived as a public relations tool or a means to inform critical social issues resulting from business practices, but also as the companies' obligations to act as corporate citizens and to consider the social problems in their business models (Kotler, Kartajaya and Setiawan, 2010).

Citizenship is relevant to the sustainability and sustainable consumption concepts (Frame and Newton, 2007). Social marketing focuses on issues related to behavioral changes for the well-being of society in the future; therefore, it has an impact in this context. One of the most evident links between marketing and sustainability is the way in which a growing number of companies are emphasizing its commitment to sustainability in order to differentiate themselves from their competitors and to improve the brand and corporate reputation (Jones, Clarke-Hill and Comfort, 2008). However, in some markets there is a concern about moral issues in social marketing practices; many consumers believe that their practices must be highly regulated by the Government (Ayvaz and Torlak, 2016).

#### **b) The green side of marketing or the “green marketing”**

Managers are increasingly taking into account the importance of researching the ecological effects of raw materials, production processes, logistics and distribution, and final disposal of the products. In terms of the use of natural resources, the challenge goes beyond a simple discussion about regulations. Being “green” is also a means to achieve competitiveness (Sroufe, 2017). Many businesses prioritize using financial resources to comply with the regulations, including those related to environment; however, companies should be looking for solutions to adapt to the relationship of resources versus productivity (Porter, 1995).

Although it sounds like a recent topic, the search for alternative solutions has been an important issue for decades. Green Marketing reflects the extent to which society is concern about the importance of preserving the environment. In general, companies are expected to have green marketing strategies due to four main causes: the costs of materials and energy continue to increase; the public pressure continues to increase; “*triple-bottom line*” practices might increase the consumer's demand; and the increasing antipathy of consumers toward globalization strengthens Non-Governmental Organization activities in relation to the environmental performance (Cronin et al., 2010).

The value of a company in the market is related to its long-term impacts, whether in the processes or products offered in the market. Quality is an image that is not separated from the generated impact. The brand must be managed considering the long-term objectives, the impact and its consequences, the profits, and the compatibility between communications and actions. There are many environmentally friendly possibilities in products and services. In addition, there are five desirable benefits commonly related to green products: cost efficiency and effectiveness; health and safety; performance; symbolism and status; and convenience (Ottmann, Stafford, Hartman, 2006).

The development of products considers several concerns, such as the protection of the environment and the increase of the useful life of the product. Some of the solutions are the use of

productive processes that make the most of natural resources, such as energy, water, soil; the use of less packaging; recycle and reuse of materials; the adoption of transport systems; and the use of clean technologies (Richers, 1996).

However, it is important to note that the ability to penetrate the markets is not only a consequence of offering “green” products, but also that also the ability to communicate the other benefits of environmentally correct products. When consumers perceive green and “non-green” benefits, the possibilities to buy these products increase (Ottmann, 1994). Communicating the benefits not only considers the objective benefits, but also the intangible results from experiences and sensations.

### **c) Sustainable Marketing**

Sustainable marketing, in contrast to traditional marketing, acts on the community. Sustainable Marketing looks for a solution in which products can be responsibly commercialized without having an adverse impact on sustainability. When Green Marketing and Social Marketing strategies are combined, this can be an effective “pathway” to encourage more sustainable marketing solutions (Gordon, Carrigan and Hastings, 2011). Sustainable marketing highlights the importance of ethics, social responsibility, the environment, people, and the planet in order to understand the market. While traditional marketing prioritizes the individual (consumers) and organizational (companies) objectives, sustainable marketing involves the generation of collective benefits. The combination of social marketing, green marketing, and critical marketing (Tadajewski, 2014) is aimed to regulate, control, and encourage innovation with a focus on sustainability. Marketing practices shall convey the company's strategic decision to consider equally relevant financial, social, and environmental objectives.

Due to its complexity, sustainable marketing may be analyzed from three categories (Kemper and Ballantine, 2019): 1. Auxiliary Sustainability Marketing, which focusses on the production of sustainable products; 2. Reformative Sustainability Marketing, which extends the auxiliary approach through the promotion of sustainable lifestyles and behavioral changes; 3. Transformative Sustainability Marketing, which further extends the auxiliary and reformative through the need for transformation of current institutions and norms, and critical reflection. Sustainable thinking involves considering the availability of resources in the long term, the characteristics of the influence communities, and the consequences of consuming the products.

In organizational terms, studies associate sustainable practices with positive organizational performance, such as increased profit on product sold, quality improvement, reputation improvement, waste reduction, among other gains (Hepper, Hansen, Santos, 2016). However, the structural and contextual conditions for the promotion of sustainable consumption depend heavily on the articulation between companies, governments and civil society, considering both sides - consumption and production - to mitigate social and environmental externalities (de Oliveira, Gomez, Correia, 2018).

In terms of market positioning, sustainability can be a basic criterion for penetrating certain markets. By incorporating sustainable meanings and influencing processes of change in current consumption patterns, companies should seek to immerse themselves in leading sustainability-related subcultures to identify widespread sociocultural trends (de Oliveira, Correia, Gomez, 2016).

Another way for participating in some markets is to obtain certifications to validate the adequacy of business practices related to social and environmental standards, which are an alternative for companies to stand out or to penetrate in the “sustainability markets”. However, in order to “get easier benefits”, several organizations adopt the greenwashing practices to promote themselves, as a result of the new demands of the market for ecologically correct or sustainable positions that require an adaptation of the organizations to be able to compete in this new competitive context (Andreoli, Crespo, Minciotti, 2017). If consumers identify misleading practices such as greenwashing, it can damage the image and lower the sales volume, market share, financial results, and in extreme cases, this will continue until the product is withdrawn from the market (Braga Junior, Martínez, Correa, Moura-Leite and Dirceu Da Silva, 2019).

### **2.3 What do innovative companies do when faced with the challenge of sustainability?**

It is important to consider that innovative or disruptive companies, in a market or sector in which the complexity and high costs are constant, manage to introduce new and sustainable solutions because of the simplicity, convenience, and accessibility (Christensen, Raynor, and McDonald, 2015). Sustainable Marketing managers are challenged to balance the economic, social and environmental factors (Kemper, Hall and Ballantine, 2019), while working with actions aimed to: 1. The innovative culture, proactivity and leadership; 2. The consumer orientation and market positioning; 3. The creation of new alternatives and solutions; 4. Transparency and information.

The first step to change is the creation of a corporate culture that respects the environment and society. Innovation must be introduced within the organization at all levels. The long-term objective shall involve the business model and strategy. It is a process of education, internalization of values, and adoption of proactive and leadership positions. The perspective not only provides immediate actions, but it also considers the efforts to maintain the behaviors that generate long-term benefits, and the consciousness that it will benefit more people in the future. Culture focuses on continuity, and not in short-termism. The culture of sustainability creates the image of a change agent and a contributor to the improvement of reality.

The consumer orientation and market positioning in Sustainable Marketing consist in focusing on the individual as a member of a community. The consumer is perceived as an active participant during the change process. The approach to consumers and their beliefs increases the possibility to have behaviors that are consistent with the expectations (Engel, Blackwell, and Miniard, 2000). Companies use sustainable management principles to: (1) anticipate and meet the customer’s demands through the effective integration of environmental intelligence with the operating and marketing systems; (2) apply systems of cost-effective, socially and environmentally responsible values; and (3) generate positive results in the long term in economic, social and environmental terms that are acceptable to the stakeholders (Mitchell, Wooliscroft, and Higham, 2010).

The following verbs are used during the process of change: minimize, reuse, educate, preserve, prevent, include, assess, donate, share, recycle, return, raise, rationalize, empathize, inform, respect, etc. The communication process is fundamental, even to provide credibility and legitimacy with consumers and different audiences. The proximity relies upon simple solutions and effective communication and education—both internal and external to the company.



Innovation results from recognizing the need to accept new alternatives and solutions. It is an exercise of recognizing standards, rules, problems to be solved, and experimentation. The new ways consumers use the products, the adoption of new technologies, simple changes in the processes, or making products and services simpler and more accessible to a public that is usually a new population or audience that until then had unmet needs, can help to achieve new results.

New outcomes are obtained due to a new architecture for management and marketing. Changing the logic demands supplying products and innovative solutions, even though it is necessary to get out of the comfort zone and break the established order. Business managers can meet the sustainable consumers' demands while their attitudes and habits are still forming, increasing the possibilities of obtaining more benefits (Ottmann, 1994).

Last, but not least, information is a key element that increases the value of products and services for consumers (Engel et al., 2000). The credibility affects the consumer's perception about the brand personality, which is a consequence of the competitive positioning strategy (Schultz, 1994). The brand personality concept in sustainable marketing is adapted to the perceptions, ideologies and behaviors of different audiences. Communication processes are essential if companies want consumers to have specific information. Consumers can only make the most of the information if it can be used to understand and improve their purchase decisions (Quelch and Jocz, 2007). Given population's general lack of knowledge of environmental and social issues, companies and other industry sectors have to provide information about the consequences of consuming certain products and services (Belz, Peattie and Gali, 2013).

### **3. Methodological procedures**

The objective of this research has been to study the company's marketing trends in order to face the sustainability challenge, from the perspective of influencers in the Peruvian sustainable fashion sector. This is study predominantly quantitative, descriptive and explicative. It is also non-experimental as the variables are not manipulated, nor was it the purpose to influence to modify them (Hernández-Sampieri and Mendoza, 2018). Regarding the temporal aspect. it is classified as transversal, since its data collection was carried out in only one moment, that is, during the month of April 2019, during the realization of a sustainable fashion management event, held at the University of Lima, Lima-Peru, during the second week of April 2019.

The target population were Peruvian influencers, attending a sustainable fashion management event - including businesspeople, researchers, students, journalists and other professionals at the University of Lima/ Peru. For the purposes of the present investigation, sampling techniques were not used, since the sample was not probabilistic (Hernández-Sampieri and Mendoza, 2018; Kerlinger and Lee, 2002). The selection was guided by the characteristics of the subjects and by the context of the research. For this purpose a casual sampling was used (Arias, 2012). Thus, 60 questionnaires were submitted, of which 55 were completed. It is important to mention that, initially, the research strategy considered to collect the data in a virtual way by sending the survey to a database of Peruvian sustainable companies' managers. However, the result was not favorable, as from the 150 questionnaires sent to these companies, only 12 responded to the request. For this reason, it was decided to redirect the sample and the procedure.

The main data collection technique was carried through a survey, defined by Sierra (2003) and Kerlinger and Lee (2002) as the one in which the researcher makes the application of data collection instruments, in this case a questionnaire. The questionnaire was structured according to the aspects that were considered essential in the theoretical review to characterize the phenomenon under study (Tamayo and Tamayo, 2008; Sierra, 2003; Kerlinger and Lee, 2002).

In accordance with the above, a questionnaire with 11 questions was prepared for the data collection process. The instrument consisted of 7 questions with a five-degree sociometric scale and 4 questions with options to select the most relevant aspects from multiple alternatives; in total there were 70 items. Likewise, the multiple-choice questions included “other” as a possible answer, with the aim of capturing content that was not foreseen by the researchers.

For the questions with a psychometric scale, a Likert attitude scale was used (Hernández-Sampieri and Mendoza, 2018; Kerlinger and Lee, 2002; Hair et al., 1999), while for questions of type estimation, ranking and previously defined options, response options used a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 was “not important at all” and 5 was “very important”.

**Figure 1. Instrument for data collection.**

<b>Questions</b>	<b>Options</b>	<b>Measuremen</b>
1. What is the importance of each aspect to the the company’s marketing trends in order to face the sustainability challenge?	a) Innovative culture; b) Proactivity; c) Leadership; d) Consumer orientation; e) Market positioning; f) Creation of alternative solutions; g) Transparency in information and h) Value generation.	Psychometric scales
2. Which aspects are necessary to change the management of an organization in order to adapt to the sustainability challenge?	a) Products; b) Technologies; c) Processes; d) Price; f) Business models; f) Stereotypes; g) Information; h) Involvement with causes; i) Others	Selection
3. What is the influence of each of the aspects indicated in the change process?	a) The society; b) The third sector (NGOs); c) Government; d) Environmental performance; e) Consumer behavior.	Psychometric scales
4. How do you evaluate the influence of each of these aspects in business decisions?	a) Social; b) Environmental and c) Financial	Psychometric scales
5. How do you evaluate the influence of each of these aspects within business competitiveness?	a) Social; b) Environmental and c) Financial	Psychometric scales
6. What kind of social impact should a company expect to generate?	a) Behavior changes; b) Changes in attitudes; c) New actions; d) Influence the welfare of society; e) Others. Which?	Selection

<b>Questions</b>	<b>Options</b>	<b>Measuremen</b>
7. How can business impact the lives of the poorest people?	a) Generating jobs; b) Improving territorial conditions; c) Offering donations; d) Improving the environment; e) There is no way to impact it.	Selection
8. To what extent should solutions consider aspects such as those indicated?	a) The use of energy; b) The use of water; c) The use of the land; d) Packaging changes; e) Material recycling; f) The reuse of material; g) The adaptation of transport systems; h) The use of clean technologies.	Psychometric scales
9. What is the importance of communicating the indicated aspects to increase the sales of the products?	a) The tangible aspects of the product; b) Client's experiences; c) The sensations caused by the product.	Psychometric scales
10. To what extent should sustainable management affect the indicated processes?	a) Selection of suppliers; b) Training of personnel; c) Product management; d) Brand management; e) Communication.	Psychometric scales
11. Which of these verbs are part of the daily communication of companies in the sustainable fashion sector? (Choose 3 main options)	a) Minimize; b) Reuse; c) Educate; d) Preserve; e) Prevent; f) Include; g) Measure; h) Donate; i) Share; j) Recycle; k) Return; l) Increase; m) Rationalize; n) Empathize; o) Inform; p) Respect	Selection

Source: from research (2019)

The treatment and analysis of the data was carried out by tabulating the data and processing with the use of the SPSS program. The instrument degree of reliability was verified using the Conbrach's Alpha Test. In addition, descriptive statistics and expert judgment techniques, specifically the Kendall Coefficient of Concordance were used for the analysis. The Kendal W coefficient of concordance indicates the degree of association, consensus or agreement between the ranges of the evaluations carried out by judges or experts (Kerlinger and Lee, 2002). This coefficient, W, varies between 0 and 1, with the value "1" being the maximum degree of agreement or total agreement, and "0" being the total absence of agreement or total disagreement (Dorantes-Nova, Hernández-Mosqueda and Tobón-Tobón, 2016 ; Gómez, Danglot and Vega, 2003; Kerlinger and Lee, 2002). The greater the value of W Kendall, the stronger is the consensus, which indicates that observers are applying the same criteria to select the items (Escobar-Pérez and Cuervo-Martínez, 2008).

#### 4. Discussion of the results

The analysis of the quantitative data occurred through the tabulation of the data and analysis with the use of the SPSS program. First, it was verified that the instrument presented an acceptable degree of reliability, which resulted in a Cronbach's Alpha (CAC) value 0.78. All items for which the CAC was under/ below 0.76 were deleted. These results were obtained by processing 96.4% of the cases, since, of the 55 cases, two cases were excluded from the analysis due to missing data.

The agreement of the expert opinions was analyzed, using Kendall's coefficient of concordance, obtaining a value of Kendall's W of 0.84. This result represents a high agreement between the evaluators, or a strong consensus (Dorantes-Nova, Hernández-Mosqueda, Tobón-Tobón, 2016; Escobar-Pérez and Cuervo-Martínez, 2008; Kerlinger and Lee, 2002). Also, the asymptotic significance was 0.00, with a significance level of 0.05.

As explained, in the materials and methods, the questionnaire was composed of 7 questions with psychometric scales- Likert rating scales - and 4 questions with options to select three or more items. The psychometric scales were from 1 to 5, where 1 was "Not important at all", "2 "Not important", " 3 Moderately important ", " 4 Important "and" 5 Most Important ".

According to the results, the aspects assessed in terms of the highest potential to influence the sustainability challenge for a company are: 1. The innovative culture, the creation of alternative solutions and the transparency in the information, rated as very important by 65.5% of the subjects; 2. The generation of value, rated as very important by 60% of the subjects; 3. proactivity and consumer orientation, rated very important by 54.6% and 54.5% of the subjects, respectively. The leadership and market positioning categories were rated as very important by 43.6% of the respondents.

Additionally, it was found that the main aspects necessary to change in the management of an organization, when seeking to adapt to the challenge of sustainability, are the technologies (70.9%), the processes (67.3%) and the products (52.7%); while the information received 38% of the votes. The remaining items received less than 36%.

Regarding the influential aspects in the processes of change in the companies, it was verified that the following were very important: 1. society and consumers (67.3%); 2. environmental performance (49.1%); 3. the government (30.9%). It is also important to emphasize that the results between the ratings of important and very important indicated the relevance of society (89.1%) and consumers (80.9%). Likewise, although the NGO sector - has not stood out as very important, when the "important" rating was added, the sum of the two ratings was 71% of the respondents.

When evaluating the influence of each of the sustainability aspects of business decisions, it was verified that the financial aspect is considered very important by 60%; while the social dimension was rated as very important by 50.9% of the subjects and the environmental issues were rated as very important by 36.4%. Once again, when given the question regarding the influence of sustainability aspects on business competitiveness, it was verified that the financial aspect was rated as the most important by most of the subjects. Likewise, it was observed that among the very important and important categories, the following results were obtained: 78.2% value the financial aspect; 70.9% value the social aspect; 65.4% value the environmental aspect.

Regarding the most relevant solutions to the sustainability challenge, respondents rated as: 1. very important the reuse of materials (76.4%), recycling (69.1%), water use (63.7%), the use of clean technologies (60.0%), the use of energy (51%), packing changes (43.6%), land use (36.4%) and adaptation of transport systems (25.6%). Likewise, it can be emphasized that by adding the very important and important categories, the aspect that stood out most was the use of clean technologies (92.7%).

Regarding the kind of social impact expected from a company, the most valued were the influence on societal wellbeing (59.3%), the change of attitudes (40.7%) and the change of behavior (31.5%). Besides, when considering the kind of expected impact in the life of poor people, the most relevant were job creation (83.6%), environmental improvement (43.6%) and territorial conditions changes (16.4%).

When verifying the impact of sustainable management on business processes, the main subjects rated as very important were communication (58.2%), product management (56.4%), staff training (56.4%) and the selection of suppliers (49.2%). It is also important to note that, when the very important and important ratings are added together then, product management was highlighted by the most people (94.6%), followed by communication and personnel training (both with 83.7%). In addition brand management was rated as “important” by 40%.

In order to understand the relevance of communication processes, it was observed that intangible aspects, related to the individual - such as sensations and experiences -, are more valued than the tangible aspects of the products. With that, influencers pointed out that: 1. The sensations caused by the product are very important (50.9%), and when adding “very important” and “important” categories a result of 76.4% was obtained; 2. The clients experiences are very important for 49%, and very important and important for 80%; 3. In turn, the tangible aspects of the product were qualified as important by 40.0% of the subjects. Finally, it was identified that the main verbs that make are part of the daily communication of sustainable companies, are: 1. Reuse (70.9%); 2. Recycle (58.2%); 3. Minimize (41.8%); 4. Preserve (37%). Likewise, it should be emphasized that there is a variety other verbs that can be used, but in this investigation they were considered relevant by less than 35% of respondents.

## **5. Conclusions**

As the conclusion of the investigation, it was found that the main marketing trends in order to face the sustainability challenge are a culture of innovation, the creation of alternative solutions and information transparency. Therefore, it was verified that the studied context is in accordance with the one indicated by Kemper, Hall and Ballantine (2019), when they emphasize that sustainable marketing managers are challenged to balance the sustainability dimensions, while working with actions related to the aspects valued by the subjects participating in the investigation.

In terms of internal changes, the importance of the technologies, processes and products offered to the public are highlighted. The that stood out as the most relevant are the reuse and recycling of materials, the use of water, clean technologies and clean energy. The answer to this type of problem is not new, given that Richers (1996) pointed it out over two decades ago; however it remains still necessary in the Peruvian context.

When verifying the impact of sustainable management on business processes, the importance of communication, product management, staff training and the selection of suppliers is confirmed. These aspects are directly related to the need that managers be in constant attention and researching solutions to adapt the relationship of resources versus productivity (Porter, 1995). Again, it is important to emphasize that the potential solution and the problem are not recent, but they are still necessary.

From another perspective, when evaluating the influence of each of the sustainability dimensions in business decisions and competitiveness, it is verified that the order of relevance considers, in the first instance, the financial dimension, followed by the social and, in a way quite different from the first dimension comes the environmental issues. At the same time, when considering the social impact expected by the companies, the findings verified the relevance of contributing to the societal well-being of society and to the changes in attitudes and behaviors. From this, it can be concluded that influencers in the sustainable Peruvian fashion sector believe that business management should include the concepts of community and citizenship in their management systems (Hamel, 2009), as executives are responsible for some of the most powerful institutions of society (Prahalad, 2010). Likewise, it is emphasized that the information is seen as a key element that increases the value of products and services for consumers (Engel et al., 2000), especially when it can even show the consequences of consuming certain products and services (Belz, Peattie and Gali, 2013).

However, given the question about the impact on the lives of the poorest people, it is verified that job creation is most important, followed by improvements of the environment. Therefore, it is important to highlight that improving the lives of people at the bottom of the pyramid also can be a lucrative action (Prahalad and Hammond, 2005). In addition, at that point, The results verified the dissociation between the perception of environment relevance when compared to the influential aspects of the processes of change, business decisions and the competitiveness of companies.

Therefore the growth of the market for sustainable products depends on the intention of the actors involved in market relations. The special relevance of individuals, as members of society and as consumers, is observed. Likewise, although the NGO sector is not considered an agent of first relevance, it also plays a special role in that change. With that, the contextual conditions for the promotion of sustainable consumption depend heavily on the coordination between different actors (de Oliveira, Gomez, Correia, 2018). However, the most relevant action is perceived as being the one that starts with people, whether when they are members of a society or in their consumption habits.

Thus, in order to reach society and consumers, it is important to communicate the experiences and sensations as superior to the tangible aspects of the products. These experiences and sensations may be related to actions such as reuse, recycling, minimizing and the act of preserving. As mentioned by Ottman (1994), the ability to penetrate the markets is not only a consequence of offering “green” products, but also that also the ability to communicate the other benefits. So, companies should know how to communicate the positive results generated in economic, social and environmental terms that are acceptable to the stakeholders (Mitchell, Wooliscroft, and Higham, 2010).

Finally, it is important to identify in which category of sustainable marketing, the company intends to devote its efforts, whether as an Auxiliary Sustainability Marketing, Reformative Sustainability Marketing or Transformative Sustainability Marketing (Kemper and Ballantine, 2019). The adoption of sustainable positions not only facilitates reaching new markets, but it also expresses values, contributes to corporate transformation, and increases credibility in the long-term. Likewise, Sustainable Marketing Management might be part of a long-term strategic program that includes consumer orientation and sustainability issues (Sroufe, 2017). Having said that, the focus should be on innovative actions and their potential, which often contribute to transforming markets and society, seeking their welfare and prosperity.

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