

# SUSTAINABILITY MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS BASED ON CONSUMER VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

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## ABSTRACT

Consumers are willing to buy more from companies that share their values and principles. Increasingly and rapidly consumer values are shifting towards sustainable development. This rapid shift in values has created the need for marketing communications to become anchored in appropriate sustainable marketing principles. So, it follows that appropriate sustainability marketing creates higher and longer value-based relationships with consumers. The article analyses consumer values and principles related to sustainability and its linkage with integrated marketing communications. Even though the marketing of sustainability is a heavily covered topic by scholars, it is still perceived as an alternative or “niche” solution for certain consumer segments. Considering this information, the aim of this article is to uncover the mainstream consumer values and principles and identify how they are reflected in the mainstream brands’ marketing communications. The study is based on the analysis of general and special literature, scientific papers and periodicals published by Lithuanian and foreign scholars. The retail food sector was chosen for the study due to its significant contribution to the economy. Content analysis of the sector’s integrated marketing communications was conducted. Yet the analysis of food retailers operating in Lithuania shows that consumer values and principles are only partially reflected. The biggest gap is that no brand appears to position itself as a market leader in sustainability or focuses on sustainability development within the organization. This gap shows opportunities as well as lack of commitment from the industry.

KEYWORDS: *consumer values, integrated marketing communications, sustainability marketing, sustainable development.*

JEL CODE: D90.

DOI:

## Introduction

Sustainability has become an important topic in the modern twenty-first century society as the world population continues to grow, technologies evolve, relationships between economies change while other important topics also influence economic issues such as population, poverty, health, oil, preservation of eco-systems, food, water, climate change, and so on (Martin, Schouten, 2012: 8–9).

In 1987, the United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development (Brundtland Commission) published *Our Common Future*. In this report, sustainability was defined as ‘meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs’. This report went further, to define the key principles of sustainability. However, more comprehensive research reports imply that sustainability stands on three pillars: economic, environmental and social (Jackson, 2006; National Research Council, 1999).

D. A. Lubin and D. C. Esty (2010) highlight the importance of sustainability as an ‘emerging megatrend’. D. A. Lubin and D. C. Esty emphasize that most executives are acutely aware of the profound significance which their response to the challenge of sustainability may have on competitiveness, and perhaps even on the survival of their organizations. This view is reflected in the McKinsey Global Survey (2017), which indicates that companies are more active than ever in pursuing sustainability and engaging stakeholders. Thus,

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as environmental, social, and governance issues have become more important influencers of customer and employee expectations, organizations have tightened their embrace of sustainability programs.

The scientific problem of research. Despite the fact that various aspects of sustainability and marketing of sustainability are heavily covered topics by scholars, it is still perceived as an alternative or “niche” solution targeted to certain consumer segments, especially when we switch focus on corporations and brands. Considering this information, this article seeks to uncover the mainstream consumer values and principles and how they are reflected in the mainstream brand’s marketing communications.

The aim of this paper is to analyse the linkage between consumer values and principles related to sustainability and integrated marketing communications in the food retail sector. To accomplish this purpose two tasks have been distinguished:

The first and overarching task is to define what are major consumer values and principles related to sustainability.

The second task is to evaluate whether the mainstream retail brands’ integrated marketing communications are based on these values and principles.

The object of research is the imperative for integrating sustainability values and principles in marketing communications.

The research methods. The study is based on scientific theory and empirical research: analysis and systematic explanation of the global consumer values and principles collected from general, special literature and scientific papers published by Lithuanian and foreign scholars. Content analysis was used to identify sustainability value evidence in the food retailers’ integrated marketing communications. According to the American Marketing Association (AMA), content analysis is the analysis of articles and news stories in various media used as a method to identify positive and negative mentions about an organization, product, service, or issue. It is a method used to measure the impact of publicity and other promotional and public relations efforts.

The paper is organised into four main sections in line with the above-mentioned objectives. It starts with the definitions of conventional or mainstream marketing and the differences between them.

The vision is not to continue with sustainable marketing definitions as a niche approach to conventional or mainstream marketing but re-defining it more as a new approach to the mainstream marketing itself. Next, the author explores and overviews major trends and shifts in consumer values and principles, collected from general and special literature and scientific papers. A deep understanding of consumer views is crucial to accelerate relevant sustainable marketing communications. Furthermore, the paper analyses how companies and brands connect with consumers in their sustainability stories and whether brands live up to consumer expectations. The final section focuses on the outcome of the analysis arguing why traditional approaches to sustainability communication are failing or not meeting the expectations, and what the mainstream brands need most to understand and create engagement with their sustainability stories.

## 1. Conventional vs sustainability marketing

The concept of marketing originated in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and rapidly became an important point of discussion. The emphasis in the early days of marketing can be summarized of “how to sell more goods” to consumers. Since its inception, marketing has continued to evolve, and broadened its compass beyond products to include other offerings, such as services, experiences, places, persons, ideas, and causes. With this change, new approaches to marketing have emerged as an alternative to mainstream or conventional marketing. These include service marketing, relationship marketing, international marketing, one-to-one marketing, micro marketing, guerrilla marketing, digital marketing, social marketing etc. New theories and models continue to be introduced, which lead to further changes in the nature and scope of marketing.

Marketing definitions and its concept is one of the most discussed topics among scholars. Several researchers have given numerous theories and models on this topic. Among different scholars, Philip Kotler (2012: 12), Theodore C. Levitt (1999: 45), Peter Drucker (2006: 15) are the most prominent contributors. As suggested by American Marketing Association (1976), ‘Marketing is the activity, set of institutions and

processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging, offering that have value for customers, clients and society at large.’ The mainstream concept of marketing was defined by P. Kotler (1967: 7–10) as the science and art of exploring, creating, and delivering value to satisfy the needs of a target market at a profit. This definition has evolved and been adapted but so far has not been replaced in mainstream marketing.

Historically, marketing strategy and communication with consumers was based mainly on the assumption of infinite resources and no environmental impact. There was no need to revise product development, pricing distribution and integrated marketing communications or the language used. The emphasis was to create and encourage more desire to consume.

With the growing recognition of finite resources and high environmental costs, marketing definitions, theory and practice needs to be re-examined or exchanged with new theories and concepts that embrace environmental issues. C. Gronroos (2007: 17) states that despite the emerging marketing ‘panaceas’ marketing as a discipline is in crisis. ‘Mainstream marketing continues to be oriented towards doing something to customers, instead of seeing customers as people with whom something is done’. According to S. Bormane, D. Skiltere and A. Batraga (2017), the essential element of sustainability is society, and its actions and thinking. Traditional marketing definitions fail to take into consideration these views.

When today’s society faces sustainability challenges, scholars are discussing what sustainability-oriented markets could be. Should conventional marketing be reinvented, or new concept need to emerge? P. Kotler (2011: 12) holds the view that conventional marketing needs to be reinvented. He emphasizes that marketing needs to focus on relationships and connectivity. There is a need to recognize the major difference in the minds of consumers and companies in the pre-sustainability versus sustainability imperatives. Moreover, one needs to consider new and unexamined assumptions, for example: wishes are infinite and unlimited consumption is where we strive, yet the planet’s resources are finite, as is capacity for waste and pollution; does the quality of life increase with increased consumption? The future of marketing must be different from the past and conventional marketing values. Consumers are increasingly aware of the environmental consequences of unsustainable economic actions and consumption habits. F. M. Belz (2006: 139–44) states that sustainability marketing merges the conventional marketing principles involving commercial transactions with the concepts of relationship marketing. ‘Sustainability marketing represents an evolution of marketing that blends the mainstream economic and technical perspectives with the emerging concepts of relationship marketing and the social, ethical environmental and intergenerational perspectives of the sustainable development agenda’.

Sustainability marketing is a holistic approach, which involves identification and satisfaction of customer needs in a sustainable manner, while conventional marketing satisfies needs and wants in the most profitable manner. Conventional marketing does not consider the impact of goods and services on the environment, while sustainable marketing emphasizes providing the long-term environmental benefits. For brands and corporations at whose core is sustainable marketing, their strategy and communications are more credible to their customers.

So, what are the basic promises of marketing, and what impact do these have upon the natural environment? To answer this, I focus on the two textbook definitions of sustainability marketing.

Sustainable marketing according to D. Martin and J. Schouten (2014: 18) is: the process of creating, communicating, and delivering value to customers in such a way that both natural and human capital are preserved or enhanced throughout.

F. M. Belz and K. Peattie (2009: 31) give a two-part explanation of sustainability marketing: planning, organizing, implementing and controlling marketing resources and programmes to satisfy consumer wants and needs, while considering social and environmental criteria and meeting corporate objectives. Secondly, emphasising the long-term relationship and building and maintaining sustainable relationships with customers, the social environment and the natural environment.

It is clear from both the above definitions that sustainability is not considered as part of the broader definition of marketing as defined by the American Marketing Association (2018) or P. Kotler (2012). Both the above definitions call for creating sustainable customer value. This critical element is missing in the AMA definition. Therefore, future research must focus specifically on how to achieve and communicate value, ensuring that both natural and human capital will be preserved or enhanced throughout.

## 2. Consumer values and principles related to sustainability

Consumer behaviour is at the very heart of marketing. In the context of marketing, being a consumer implies that we are part of society and have some level of disposable income to buy goods and services that meet our needs and wants. According to T. Jackson (2004: 12), there are three theoretical approaches to understand, predict and explain consumer behaviour from sustainability perspective: rational, psychological and sociological. Some earlier studies on consumer behaviour and sustainability mostly relied on functional benefits and affordability of products and services, while according to F. M. Belz and K. Peattie (2012: 86–92) a broader approach to rational consumer choice is the concept of perceived benefits and costs. Perceived costs involve price, search costs, transport costs and time to prepare products (such as food). The rational school of thought puts emphasis on people's understanding of sustainability issues, as well as their willingness and ability to pay any environmental or social premium that may be involved in sustainable purchases (Olli, Grendstad, 2001: 181–208). The theory, however, implied a market segmentation based on age and socio-economic groups. This simplistic segmentation approach led to the reporting of many conflicting outcomes and led to the conclusion that demographic segmentation is not the most suitable.

Mainstream marketers trying to promote sustainable consumption concentrate too much on rational and functional benefits, neglecting how purchases contribute to the identity of the customer. The sociological and psychological aspects of consumption encompass concerns of how people perceive their behaviour as consumers. This paper will shed light on the psychological aspect of consumer behaviour related to sustainability, specifically what attitudes and beliefs, values and principles which mainstream consumers have. In the paper, global mainstream consumer values have been collected from scientific papers, journals and reports.

J. Sheth, N. Lethia and S. Srinivas (2011: 21–39) have recently introduced a notion of the mindful consumption that encompasses both socially and environmentally oriented consumption behaviours and the values behind them. These are: take care for yourself, the community and nature; thus, reflecting personal, social and environmental values.

## 3. New concept: take care

### Take care of yourself

Caring for oneself is neither selfish or self-catered, but it is about wellbeing and generally possessing a healthy lifestyle. R. H. Frank (2004: 69–79) finds considerable evidence that 'healthier, longer and happier lives' result from 'inconspicuous goods, such as freedom from a long commute or a less stressful job', and from devoting more time 'to family and friends, to exercise, sleep, travel and other restorative activities'. One of the most reflected values is eating healthy. By eating healthy, consumer values (based on Future of Sustainability Report 2018) are rapidly shifting towards consumption of locally grown or produced food and plant-based diets: vegetarianism, veganism and flexitarianism. These trends are being adopted much faster than expected by consumers and reflected in their values.

### Take care of the community

Localization and the matter of place is one of the trends in consumer values and principles mentioned in the Future of Sustainability Report 2018. People tend to care more for the people and things that are immediately within their reach. A greater emphasis on community may help build social cohesion and increase social capital and wellbeing.

P. C. Whybrow (2005: 255–256) states that most people find happiness in the social context and in relationships they have with others. He highlights that vibrant local communities and equitable society are essential if we wish to secure happiness. Financial success and material goods are weak substitutes to the empathic understanding of friends and family, and the social networks of community which act as vital buffers when we are challenged by uncertainty and stressful circumstances.

Research conducted by the Harvard Divinity School (2017) shows how religious affiliations are being replaced ‘by organizations that blend a sense of community, a sense of self awareness, and a resemblance of religion’ through ritual meetings around shared values. Some examples include yoga clubs and lifestyle communities. This helps to explain why brands like “Lulu lemon” (yoga community) and “Rapha” (cycling community) have experienced tremendous growth in recent years.

This sense of community affects how consumers perceive brands as well as their expectations of the brands they use. In fact, according to the recent Havas Worldwide ‘Project Super Brand’ report 2016, transparency is one of the key values among global consumer groups. Consumers do not view transparency as optional anymore, as more than 70% of consumers actively seek out information about the companies that provide products and services they buy. The same report implies that consumers around the globe are hungry for socio political change with the active cooperation of big businesses. Actually, 62% of consumers would like their favourite brands to play bigger role in solving social problems.

#### Take care of the environment

W. E. Kilbourne (2006: 39–52) states that caring for the environment is based on three fundamental values: intrinsic, instrumental, and aesthetic. Nature or the ecosystem is seen as having intrinsic value in the deep ecology tradition. Based on this value it is our obligation to preserve the environment regardless of any utilitarian concerns that mark the instrumental value orientation. This value encourages preserving the environment so that it may be useful for humans. Moreover, the environment has value for aesthetic purposes. Wild areas, such as forests, serve as recreational spaces. M. Belz and K. Peattie (2012: 106) state that an increasing number of customers consider “the world behind the product”, i.e., where and under what conditions it was produced. This is more clearly described by the Global Reporting Initiative (2009) Ecological Objectives of Sustainability Marketing:

- Material use (e.g., use of non-renewable energies, use of toxic materials);
- Water use (e.g., volumes used during production and/or product use);
- Emissions (e.g., greenhouse gases, toxic, ozone depleting emissions);
- Effluent (e.g., effect on water quality of production and/or use);
- Waste (e.g., no ability to reclaim, toxic materials/ compounds).

Collecting and analysing consumer values and attitudes with regard to environmental sustainability, we see that recycling and care for waste is the most mentioned objective. This is largely driven by lack of knowledge or the perception of how an individual can make influence. Global consumer values and principles related to sustainability have been collected from scientific literature and consumer behaviour reports (2004-2017).

Table 1. Global consumer values and principles related to sustainability

Global consumer values and principles related to sustainability		
Take care of yourself	Take care of the community	Take care of the environment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consumption of local foods</li> <li>• Plant based diets</li> <li>• Work and life balance</li> <li>• Efficiency and cost effectiveness</li> <li>• Health and safety</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transparency, openness and trust</li> <li>• Localization</li> <li>• Empathy for family, friends and community</li> <li>• High expectations from businesses</li> <li>• Communities of shared values</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recycling</li> <li>• “World behind the product”</li> <li>• Durability of products</li> <li>• Climate change</li> </ul>

Source: collected by the author based on scientific literature and the above-mentioned reports.

#### 4. Food retailers' Integrated Marketing Communications based on consumer values and principles

According to G. E. Belch and M. Belch (2017: 23), integrated marketing communications is the use of marketing strategies to optimize the communication of a consistent message of the company's brands. In this paper, food retailers were chosen for analysis for two reasons: firstly, the sector's importance to sustainability issues and, secondly, because Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) is targeting the mainstream market.

Initially, the retailers' integrated marketing communications during the period of June-July 2018 were reviewed. In other words, the core mission and values of each chosen brand were identified basing on their websites, annual reports and other marketing communications.

Next, consumer marketing communications, retail website materials and corporate press releases were collected and analysed. Subsequently, content analysis was used to identify sustainability value mentions in the food retailers' integrated marketing communications. According to the American Marketing Association (AMA), content analysis is the analysis of articles and news stories in various media used as a method of identifying positive and negative mentions about an organization, product, service, or issue. It is a method used to measure the impact of publicity and other promotional and public relations efforts.

Therefore, all communications with respect to sustainability were broadly grouped into three categories: take care of yourself, take care of society and take care of the environment. Then these categories were mapped onto the identified consumer core values. A summary of the results is reflected in the table below.

Table 2. Linkage between consumer values and principles and food retailers' Integrated Marketing Communications (ICM)

Consumer values and principles related to sustainability	<i>Maxima</i>	<i>Rini</i>	<i>Lidl</i>	<i>Norfa</i>	<i>Migros</i>	<i>Wal-Mart</i>	<i>IKI</i>
Consumption of local foods	X	–	X	X	X	X	–
Plant based diets	X	X	–	–	X	X	–
Work and life balance	–	X	–	–	X	–	–
Efficiency and cost effectiveness	X	–	X	–	X	X	X
Health and safety	–	X	–	–	X	X	–
Transparency, openness and trust	–	X	X	–	X	X	–
Localization	X	–	–	X	X	X	X
Empathy from family and friends	X	X	X	–	X	X	X
High expectations from businesses	–	–	–	–	X	X	–
Communities of shared values	–	–	–	–	X	–	–
Recycling	X	–	X	–	X	X	X
World behind the product	–	–	–	–	X	X	–
Durability of products	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Climate change	–	X	X	–	X	X	X

Note: x marks 'positive linkage'; marks 'no linkage'.

Source: collected by the author from publicly available food retailers' Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC).

Table 2 reflects how consumer values and principles are reflected in seven food retail brands' integrated marketing communications. Five of these retailers operate in the Lithuanian market and "Wal-Mart" and "Migros" were taken to serve as examples of sustainability development leadership worldwide.

The analysis shows that less than 50% of consumer values and principles are reflected in the integrated marketing communications of "Maxima", "Lidl", and "Rimi". Yet "Norfa" and "IKI" communication show even lower linkage to customer values.

Among the most reflected values in communication are:

- Empathy for family, friends and the community;
- Consumption of locally grown and produced food;
- Efficiency and cost effectiveness.

Empathy from family, friends and the community often falls under the social responsibility umbrella. It is reflected in marketing communications primarily as care for children or families in need, and often in cooperation with leading NGOs of this sector. This value was the most reflected one, being present in communications of six investigated food retailers out of seven. Yet only "Norfa" was lacking in this regard.

The "Migros" chain takes leadership in communications with respect to the locally grown/produced value, stating "we are fully committed to locally grown production and agriculture". This commitment is present on the multiple levels of the retailer's communication channels. In Lithuania, communication leadership of the locally grown value is split between the "Maxima" and "Lidl" chains via multiple communication channels transmitting messages as 'Made in Lithuania' or 'From Lithuanian soil to your table.' Though "Norfa" is communicating mainly about locally produced meat. Moreover, despite the growing trend towards plant-based diets, there is still a long way to go before these consumer values are reflected in full in the retailer's mainstream communication. Both "Maxima" and "Rimi" communicate about increased demand for these types of products and reflect these values and trends in communication like 'special recipes how to prepare vegan or vegetarian dishes in the most effective and efficient way'.

Transparency, openness and trust are among the top values regarding sustainability, though very moderate information or no information is available to confirm these claims. International chains as "Rimi" and "Lidl" put some ground under the claims of transparency and trust, while "Maxima" receives controversial and negative information about transparency openness and trust.

The importance of localisation and local communities are growing worldwide, but this value is only partially reflected by Lithuanian food retailers. The global chains "Wal-Mart" and "Migros" have extensive programmes how to involve local communities in various activities through volunteering or organising events, etc. In Lithuania, "Maxima" communicates most about its influence on the welfare of local communities.

Disappointingly, none of the Lithuanian food retailers show leadership in the value of 'high expectations from business' with respect to sustainability. Internationally, "Migros" and "Wal-Mart" have taken leadership and responsibility in these matters and have adopted and communicated a strategy of the 'top to toe' approach to sustainability. In "Migros", most of the suppliers must meet social and environmental standards for when a customer walks into the store they can be sure that their sustainability values are reflected.

'Communities of shared values' is a newly emerging value and trend popular mainly among millennials. Therefore, except for "Migros", retailers have not yet adopted this trend in their strategy and communications. "Migros" have support for several communities of shared values though most of them are targeted to the senior segment.

Summarising, though Lithuanian food retailers have made good progress in reflecting the sustainability values of consumers, they still lag far behind the more comprehensive programs of the retailers such as "Wal-Mart" and "Migros". This is particularly evident in 'business transparency', 'communities of shared values' and 'business lead in sustainability' overall.

## Conclusions and discussion

Consumers are willing to buy more from companies that share their values and principles. Increasingly and rapidly consumer values are shifting towards sustainable development. This rapid shift in values has created a need for marketing communications to become anchored in appropriate sustainable marketing principles.

The purpose of this paper was to analyse the linkage between consumer values and principles related to sustainability and integrated marketing communications in the food retail sector.

Following the first task, global consumer values and principles were defined and grouped under the intuitive concepts of: take care of yourself, take care of the community and take care of the environment.

The second task was to determine whether these values and principles were reflected in integrated marketing communications of the mainstream retail brands.

Analysis of the communications of food retailers operating in Lithuania revealed that consumer values and principles are only partially reflected, and the communicated sustainability values are not heavily supported by the brands' strategy. Furthermore, the communication lacks consistency and scale within marketing communication channels. The largest observed gap is due to the fact that no brand positions itself as a market leader in sustainability or puts focus on sustainability development within its organization. This gap shows opportunities as well as lack of commitment from the industry.

This analysis implies that deeper research into the subject and other related topics must be carried out to fully understand the linkage between consumer behaviour and brand values. Having conducted deeper research into global consumer values and principles, the latter should be tested/validated within the local, e.g., the Lithuanian market, to find out if national values and principles differ from these of the global mainstream. The findings of research have revealed a gap between the brands' communication, daily actions and the brands' strategy.

Future research can focus on analysing how consumer values and principles are reflected in their actions, i.e. the "say–do gap", and what are the initiatives to minimize or close the gap (if it exists). Another topic to explore is whether individuals or groups of individuals can influence businesses to make a radical shift towards sustainability or do both consumer values and appropriate regulations needs to be implemented. Finally, there is still much work to do in demonstrating how companies can create more value for shareholders by better aligning their communications with consumer values, particularly with respect to sustainability.

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## VARTOTOJŲ VERTYBĖMIS IR NUOSTATOMIS PAGRĮSTA DARNIOSIOS RINKODAROS KOMUNIKACIJA

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### Santrauka

Vartotojai vis dažniau renkasi prekes ir paslaugas tų įmonių, su kuriomis sutampa jų asmeninės vertybės ir nuostatos. Pastebimas ryškus vertybių ir nuostatų kryptingumas darnaus verslo vystymo link. Toks ryškus kryptingumas rinkodarą ir jos komunikaciją verčia reflektuoti besikeičiančią situaciją, kad išlaikytų konkurencingumą ir bendromis vertybėmis pagrįstą ryšį su vartotojais.

Straipsnyje analizuojamos globalios vartotojų vertybės ir nuostatos, jų ryšys su integruota rinkodaros komunikacija. Nors darnioji rinkodara – dažnas mokslinių tyrimų objektas, kartais į ją žvelgiama kaip į alternatyvius sprendimus, kurie susiję su tam tikrais rinkos segmentais. Įvertinus šią situaciją, straipsnyje siekiama apibrėžti visuotines masinio vartotojo vertybes ir nuostatas, nustatyti jų ryšį su į masinę rinką orientuotų prekės ženklų komunikacija. Šio straipsnio tikslas – išanalizuoti globalių masinio vartotojo vertybių ir nuostatų, kurios susijusios su darniu vystymusi, bei masinių prekybos tinklų integruotos rinkodaros komunikacijos tarpusavio ryšį. Pirmiausia siekiama nustatyti pagrindines globalaus masinio vartotojo vertybes ir nuostatas, kurios susijusios su darniu vystymusi. Kitas uždavinys – įvertinti, ar masinių prekės ženklų integruota rinkodaros komunikacija pagrįsta tomis vertybėmis ir nuostatomis.

Tyrimo objektas: vartotojų vertybių ir nuostatų, susijusių su darniu vystymusi, integravimo į rinkodaros komunikaciją imperatyvas. Atliktas teorinis ir turinio analizės tyrimas. Prekės ženklo integruotai komunikacijai tirti pasirinkti masinio vartojimo prekybos tinklai, savo veiklą vykdančys tiek Lietuvos, tiek užsienio rinkose.

Tyrimo rezultatai. Masinio vartojimo prekybos tinklų, vykdančių veiklą Lietuvoje, analizė atskleidė, kad vartotojų vertybes ir principus jų komunikacija atskleidžia tik iš dalies, o pati darnios veiklos kryptis nėra prekės ženklo kūrimo ir vystymo strateginis pagrindas, o tik paviršutiniška, ne visada faktais grindžiama rinkodaros komunikacija. Pačiai komunikacijai trūksta nuoseklumo visais integruotos komunikacijos kanalais. Atlikus tyrimą paaiškėjo, kad nė vienas iš analizuotų prekės ženklų neužima lyderio pozicijos darnaus vystymosi dimensijoje. Būtent ši įžvalga rodo galimas veiklos vystymosi kryptis, kartu ir per mažą masinių prekės ženklų įsitraukimą į darnų vystymąsi. Ši analizė implikuoja galimus tolesnius tyrimus darniosios rinkodaros srityje, siekiant išsamesnės analizės ir vartotojo elgsenos bei prekės ženklų tarpusavio ryšio.

Tolesni tyrimai gali būti atliekami, siekiant suvokti, kaip vartotojo vertybės ir principai veikia jo pirminių krepšelių ir ar egzistuoja atotrūkis tarp „sakau ir darau“, jei taip, kokios yra tokios elgsenos priežastys ir to atotrūkio mažinimo galimybės. Kitas tyrimo objektas gali būti pasirinktas, siekiant suprasti, kiek pavieniai individai ar jų grupės bei jų nuostatos gali pastūmėti masinio vartojimo prekės ženklus įgyvendinti darnaus vystymosi strategiją ir rinkodarą. Daug sutelkto darbo turi būti atlikta tam, kad ryšys tarp masinių prekės ženklų kurtų didesnę vertę tiek vartotojams, tiek akcininkams ir reflektuotų savo darnios rinkodaros nuostatas komunikacijoje.

**PGRINDINIAI ŽODŽIAI:** *vartotojo vertybės, integruota rinkodaros komunikacija, darni rinkodara, darni plėtra.*

JEL KLASIFIKACIJA: D90

*Received: 2018.07.10*

*Revised: 2018.08.23*

*Accepted: 2018.08.28*