

## **Sustainable Business Practices and Supply Chain Negative Outcomes**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This paper aims to review the literature about negative outcomes associated with the implementation of sustainable business practices (SBP) embedded in supply chains (SC). We investigate and discuss this literature in order to understand how business relationships (BR) may be affected with the implementation of SBP. We developed a literature review that evaluated 134 articles indexed at the Web of Science (98) and SCOPUS (36) databases. After the abstracts' reading and analyses, 36 papers were examined using the inclusion and exclusion criteria, which resulted on the additional exclusion of 25 papers. Then, we analyse and discuss in detail the remaining 11 selected articles. The analysis shows the negative consequences associated with the implementation of SBP in BR among SC partners, namely the emergence of an atmosphere of tension, disagreement or conflict and the business partners' perception of frustration. The negative outcomes are emphasized by the costs of implementing SBP, by the misunderstanding SBP, and by the ineffective communication between partners. Furthermore, our analysis highlights that these negative outcomes can be reduced through the development of a climate of trust, honesty, transparency, effective communication, and fair division in value ownership for all SC partners.

**Keywords:** Business relationships; supply chain; sustainability; sustainable business practices.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Sustainability is one of the most researched subjects by scientific community (Sarkis, 2019; White, Habib, & Hardisty, 2019) and the sustainable development of organizations is an essential element of their strategy, that has an influence on the entire supply chain (SC) and consequently, on industrial networks (Garrett et al., 2019; Geissdoerfer, Savaget, Bocken, & Hultink, 2017; Langert, 2019; Szulecka, 2019). Sustainability is based on preserving the environment, meeting social needs, and achieving economic progress (Garrett et al., 2019). Sustainable organizations develop their activities by ensuring the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Cha, Kim, & Cichy, 2018).

The concept of sustainability has changed over the years. Initially the concept was associated with the environmental dimension, but over time it has also come to consider the economic and social dimensions. Associated with this dynamic, changes have occurred in companies and SCs, which have influenced and modified the developed activities, the resources used and the business relationships (BR), since the SC cover the product from its initial stage of design to its final stage of consumption (Pires & Neto, 2008).

Sustainability is a driver of BR, as well as BR being an enabler of the implementation of sustainable business practices (SBP) (Kemper & Ballantine, 2019; Meqdadi, Johnsen, & Johnsen, 2017; Pressey & Vanharanta, 2016). Currently, there is a greater acceptance and ease (and in some cases, even obligation) of implementing SBPs. These, generate positive outcomes (their benefits), but can also give rise to negative outcomes (e.g. disagreement, conflicts and/or tensions) in the relationships between SC partners (Bengtsson, Raza-Ullah, & Vanyushyn, 2016; Grandinetti, 2017). Most research

findings on SBP implementation reveal a limited perspective on its negative effects, in that there seems to be a tendency in the literature to neglect them (Hahn, Figge, Pinkse, & Preuss, 2010). In this sense, this study aims to deepen and obtain a broader perspective of the results of SBPs in BR. We intend to find and analyse the most neglected research aspects presented at the literature, namely, the negative outcomes that may emerge with the implementation of SBPs, as well as the consequences and changes in the BR among SC partners. Thus, this paper aims to explore and discuss whether the implementation of SBPs in SCs originates negative outcomes. The paper intends to identify and discuss the specific types of negative externalities associated with complex interaction between organizations, such as the emergence of tensions and conflicts between firms, or the modifications occurring in BR giving rise to changes in their position, or even network exit/entry, or the emergence of new partners.

Our study and literature review will be guided by the discussion about: (i) How are BRs affected by SBP implementation?; and (ii) What are the consequences and changes in BR among SC partners associated with the implementation of SBPs?

Furthermore, the literature review presented on the paper is further supported by some research recommendations, such as: (i) to understand the effects of conflicts and how they evolve in SC (Tóth, Peters, Pressey, & Johnston, 2018); (ii) to investigate how conflicts affect partner performance, as well as, whether conflicts are experienced differently by partners with different positioning and values (Bengtsson et al., 2016); and (iii) to analyse and compare the internal tension experienced by partners (Bengtsson et al., 2016). These recommendations are supported by the limited literature about changes in BR (Bygballe, 2017; Tähtinen & Havila, 2013) and about what causes changes, processes of exchange or termination of relationships, as well as the dynamics surrounding them (Bygballe, 2017; Tähtinen & Havila, 2013).

## **2. BRIEF REVIEW OF MAIN CONCEPTS**

### **2.1 – Sustainability embedded in BRs**

The concern for sustainability has greatly increased in recent years, and with increased awareness that sustainability should be applied across the 3 pillars: environmental, economic, and social (Batista, Bourlakis, Smart, & Maull, 2018; Farooque, Zhang, Thürer, Qu, & Huisingh, 2019; Liu, Feng, Zhu, & Sarkis, 2018; Sarkis, 2019). In the same line, companies have understood its relevance (Galpin, Whittington, & Bell, 2015). After the integration of sustainability in companies, they are no longer only seen

for the financial results, but for the triple bottom line, in the same areas of sustainability (Fernando, Chiappetta Jabbour, & Wah, 2019; Touboulic & Walker, 2015).

Sustainability is integrated in SC and BR. It is embedded among actors interaction, activities performed, and/or resources used and exchanged (Sabatini, O'Toole, & Gregori, 2021). Moreover, it can be considered as a driver for BR due to BRs being facilitators of SBP implementation (Kemper & Ballantine, 2019; Meqdadi et al., 2017; Pressey & Vanharanta, 2016). Thus, in situations where it is needed to develop sustainability in SCs, BR themselves end up developing SBP and sustainability (Tura, Keränen, & Patala, 2019).

## **2.2 – BR embedded in SC**

Company and BR management have become more complex due to political, cultural, linguistic, and socio-economic influences (Håkansson & Snehota, 1995; Ozpolat & Dresner, 2018). In addition, the increasing general awareness of sustainability among the various stakeholders and partners of a SC has led managers to consider the environmental, social and economic impacts for the organization in their decisions and priorities (Steurer, Langer, Konrad, & Martinuzzi, 2005).

The implementation of SBP, is not only confined to the organization, but extends to the entire SC, which may cause changes in the BR between partners, either among the actors, as well as in the activities and/or resources used and the selection or maintenance of BR. In this sense, sustainability criteria have become essential for the configuration of the SC (Sabatini et al., 2021; Touboulic & Walker, 2015).

BR can be characterized by considering the relational nature of the relationships themselves, partnerships, reciprocity between actors, the development of specific norms or routines unique to each relationship, mutual trust, shared goals, and long-term orientations (Claro, Hagelaar, & Omta, 2003; Hausman, 2001). On the other hand, SC can be defined as a network of various organizations that involves linkages based on different types of activities, products, and services, in which collectively they are responsible for creating value related to their activities, products, and services (Anitha & Patil, 2018; Sutia, Riadi, & Fahlevi, 2020). Ideally, SC includes all business processes spanning all organizations, from the initial supplier to the final point of consumption (Anitha & Patil, 2018; Sutia et al., 2020).

BR between the various SC actors or partners facilitate SBP implementation due to their continuous evaluation and monitoring (Langert, 2019; Szulecka, 2019), namely for

reasons of maintaining trust between the two sides of the relationship and/or in order not to miss value creation opportunities (Ortiz- de- Mandojana & Bansal, 2016).

Firms benefit from the variety of relationships with different partners (Caniëls & Gelderman, 2007). The relationships established by partners facilitate supply chain management (SCM). SCM enables SC partners to collaborate in close coordination to facilitate relationships, activities, reduce costs, competition, and innovation integration. Furthermore, SCM continuously evaluates relationships in SC, considering criteria such as trust, commitment, reliability (Kumar, 2020; Sarkis, 2019; Sutia et al., 2020). Relationships are characterized by adaptations between the various business partners and the needs for mutual adjustments between the actors, between the resources exchanged and the activities that take place over time (Bygballe, 2017; Kang, Oh, & Sivadas, 2012; Tähtinen & Havila, 2013), and that uniqueness is difficult to replicate (Bygballe, 2017; Geiger et al., 2012). In BR that develop further, adaptation occurs between partners, which tends to increase the levels of trust involved and commitment to the relationship (Brennan & Turnbull, 1999). Over time, the various partners establish routines that facilitate interaction and mature the relationship (Geiger et al., 2012). In this dynamic, BR, allow both sides, to increase mutual knowledge and experience (Bygballe, 2017), optimizing outcomes across the SC (Hsu, 2016; Liu et al., 2018; Manavalan & Jayakrishna, 2019). The BR established by SC partners directly influence organizational outcomes, by creating value with benefits for all stakeholders (Kumar, 2020).

### **2.3 – Implementation of SBPs**

SBPs can be defined as any company initiative that has a positive economic, social, and environmental impact on society (Ortiz- de- Mandojana & Bansal, 2016). In this way, SBPs have interference in BR among SC partners, especially in their implementation (Kemper & Ballantine, 2019; Szulecka, 2019). However, these SBPs can also culminate in negative outcomes and not only positive ones (Al Breiki & Nobanee, 2019; Cha et al., 2018).

Positive outcomes are associated with the definition of SBP, that is, as positive outcomes we have all initiatives that have positive social, environmental, and economic benefits for the company and/or the community in which it operates. These initiatives aim to create or increase value in a sustainable way for the various stakeholders (Baldassarre, Calabretta, Bocken, & Jaskiewicz, 2017; Ortiz- de- Mandojana & Bansal, 2016), in its subsistence in the market (Fernando et al., 2019), increase the

competitiveness of the company (El-Kassar & Singh, 2019), reduce the impact of the activity on the environment (Fernando et al., 2019; Paulraj, Chen, & Blome, 2017), improve their image and reputation in the community, improve their financial performance (bin Magbool, Amran, Nejati, & Jayaraman, 2016) and also, growth in turnover (Miska, Szócs, & Schiffinger, 2018).

On the other hand, negative outcomes are more associated with BR and the climate and atmosphere in which it takes place. The implementation of SBP can generate some negative outcomes for the partners involved in BR and for the development of BR itself, namely, an atmosphere of conflict and/or tension, as well as, disagreement between the partners and frustration on one or both sides of the relationship (Bengtsson et al., 2016; Butt & Ahmad, 2019; Pressey & Vanharanta, 2016; Tóth et al., 2018; Tura et al., 2019). Relationship management in SC is a complex process, and the organizations that work in a cooperative and competitive viewpoint generate episodes of conflict and tension (Pressey & Vanharanta, 2016; Tóth et al., 2018; Wilhelm & Sydow, 2018). Tension can be related to conflicting values within the organization (Bengtsson et al., 2016) or to discomfort generated by ambiguity (Tóth et al., 2018), which can lead to instability or even the rupture of BR (Pressey & Vanharanta, 2016; Tóth et al., 2018). Conflict can arise when one of the BR partners interferes and prevents another partner from reaching and/or achieving its goals, namely due to divergent values, objectives, and goals (Barutçu, Dogan, Barutçu, & Kulakli, 2010). Disagreement arises when partners have different opinions, and only after discussion do they reach consensus (Butt & Ahmad, 2019; Eckerd & Eckerd, 2017). Disagreement can lead to emergence of future tensions and frustration (Bengtsson et al., 2016; Pressey & Vanharanta, 2016). Finally, frustration is the result and consequence of tensions and/or differing opinions regarding SBP (Tóth et al., 2018).

The conflicts and tensions generated in BR can be of different types: structural, economic, psychological, and behavioural. Structural tensions refer to issues of managing the BR itself and how the different relationships between partners, whether horizontal or vertical, are managed (Pressey & Vanharanta, 2016; Tóth et al., 2018; Tura et al., 2019). Economic tensions are associated with differences in value capture among the various SC partners (Tura et al., 2019). Psychological tensions refer to cognitive aspects, such as attitudes and perceptions of the different partners, related to (dis)trust and time orientations. Behavioural tensions refer to the partners' activities,

routines, and communication practices, whether these behaviours are active or passive, cooperative or competitive (Pressey & Vanharanta, 2016; Tóth et al., 2018; Tura et al., 2019).

Different types of tensions inhibit cooperation and joint value creation, unless partners demonstrate the ability to overcome their differences and conflicts in favour of SC (Tóth et al., 2018). Furthermore, tensions between partners may be influenced by culture and diverging individual interests depending on each partner's different perceptions of sustainability (Tóth et al., 2018; Tura et al., 2019). Unresolved conflicts negatively influence SC BR (Park, Chang, & Jung, 2017) and uncertainty and concern increase the larger and more heterogeneous the number of stakeholders are (Tura et al., 2019). Moreover, the more SBPs involve higher costs and greater risks, the more intense is the conflict situation generated and, in this sense, for the implementation of SBPs, new activities and resources are required that require adjustments among the various BR actors and the network where they are embedded (Halme & Laurila, 2009). Therefore, the most common way to deal with and try to reduce negative SBP outcomes involves, among others, involving different actors with different roles (Halme & Laurila, 2009), specific training of managers (Butt & Ahmad, 2019), open communication with stakeholders, involvement of all partners in the BR (Tura et al., 2019), by thoroughly assessing the potential value that SBPs cause in companies, customers, and stakeholders, and by offering additional services, training, and educational activities that facilitate the acceptance of change and contribute to the ultimate sustainability goals (Hoejmose, Brammer, & Millington, 2012).

In sum, BR in SCs are vital to SBP implementation, and SBP implementation affects BR (Kemper & Ballantine, 2019; Szulecka, 2019). The implementation of SBP can create tension between partners (Tura et al., 2019). However, the nature and substance of the BR help to find specific solutions to the very challenges that arise from the relationship and the influence of the context that manifests in the SC (Langert, 2019; Szulecka, 2019). In situations where the need for sustainability in SC occurs, BR themselves end up developing SBP (Tura et al., 2019). On the other hand, communicating the results of SBP implementation to stakeholders can cause changes in behaviour, especially when the various partners have different sustainability criteria (Tura et al., 2019). When this occurs, tension can further increase, particularly when one partner does not understand the SBPs or fails to implement them. It can lead to decreased activity in the relationship, vulnerability, and/or a change in their position of



power in the SC (Bygballe, 2017; Tura et al., 2019). This is because when partners do not respond to the requirements for SBP implementation they may lose their position in the network, decrease their power position, and in some cases the relationship may even end (Tura et al., 2019). Thus, with changes in positioning there may be changes in the portfolio of relationships and therefore all other partners in the SC may also suffer implications (Kang et al., 2012) which stems from the transitive nature of BR.

### **3. METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN**

The objective of this study is to review the literature about negative outcomes associated with the implementation of SBP embedded in SC. Thus, we investigate and discuss the literature to understand how BR may be affected by the implementation of SBPs, namely what negative consequences and changes may occur in BR among SC partners due to the SBPs.

For this purpose, we performed a systematic literature review (SLR) in order to synthesize, show and discuss the literature evidences, regarding the objective under study (Donato & Donato, 2019). We followed all steps recommended for a SLR (Moher, Liberati, Tetzlaff, & Altman, 2010; Tranfield, Denyer, & Smart, 2003): the definition and formulation of research objectives, the location and selection of studies, their critical appraisal, the collection, analysis and presentation of data, the interpretation of results and their discussion (Higgins et al., 2011; Moher et al., 2010).

The research was conducted in February 2021 and focused on the full articles published and indexed in Web of Science (WoS) and SCOPUS databases in the period between January 2014 and March 2021. We selected the last 7 years, considering the study by Tidström (2014) served as starting point for this research. In this article, the author suggested to research how BR and tensions developed over time and what factors outside of dyadic BR caused consequences or changes in BR. Additionally, Corsaro (2014) recommended studying how negative externalities are managed in BR.

Our search does not include studies associated with editorials, forum revision, conference papers and opinion articles or articles where the keywords appeared in the references. The following keywords were used at the SLR:

((business relationship OR business relationship management OR business relationship management process) AND (sustainable business practices OR sustainable business practices companies) AND (negative outcomes NOT positive outcomes) AND supply



chain)).

The search resulted in 134 studies. Then, duplicate studies in WoS and SCOPUS were removed to ensure that the analysis includes only one of these studies. Next from the 134 articles, 4 were duplicated, 43 were from conference abstracts or editorials; 21 showed content unrelated to this research; 17 were not published in English or Portuguese; and 13 were not discussing sustainability. This analysis resulted on a selection of 36 articles to be completed read and examined. Then, after reading the articles in full, another 25 articles were also excluded from the research for the following reasons: 10 articles discussed unrelated to this paper subject and for presenting the keywords only in their references; 5 for being articles, which were later, deepened, having more recent results; 9 because they did not study, treat or evaluate the relationships between business partners and, finally, 1 for not presenting any consequence or negative outcome, but only positive SBPs results. Thus, from this research, 11 papers were finally selected for a deeper and detailed analysis. All the excluded papers, for one reason or another, are not in accordance with our research objectives and inclusion criteria. Our research process is presented in Figure 1.

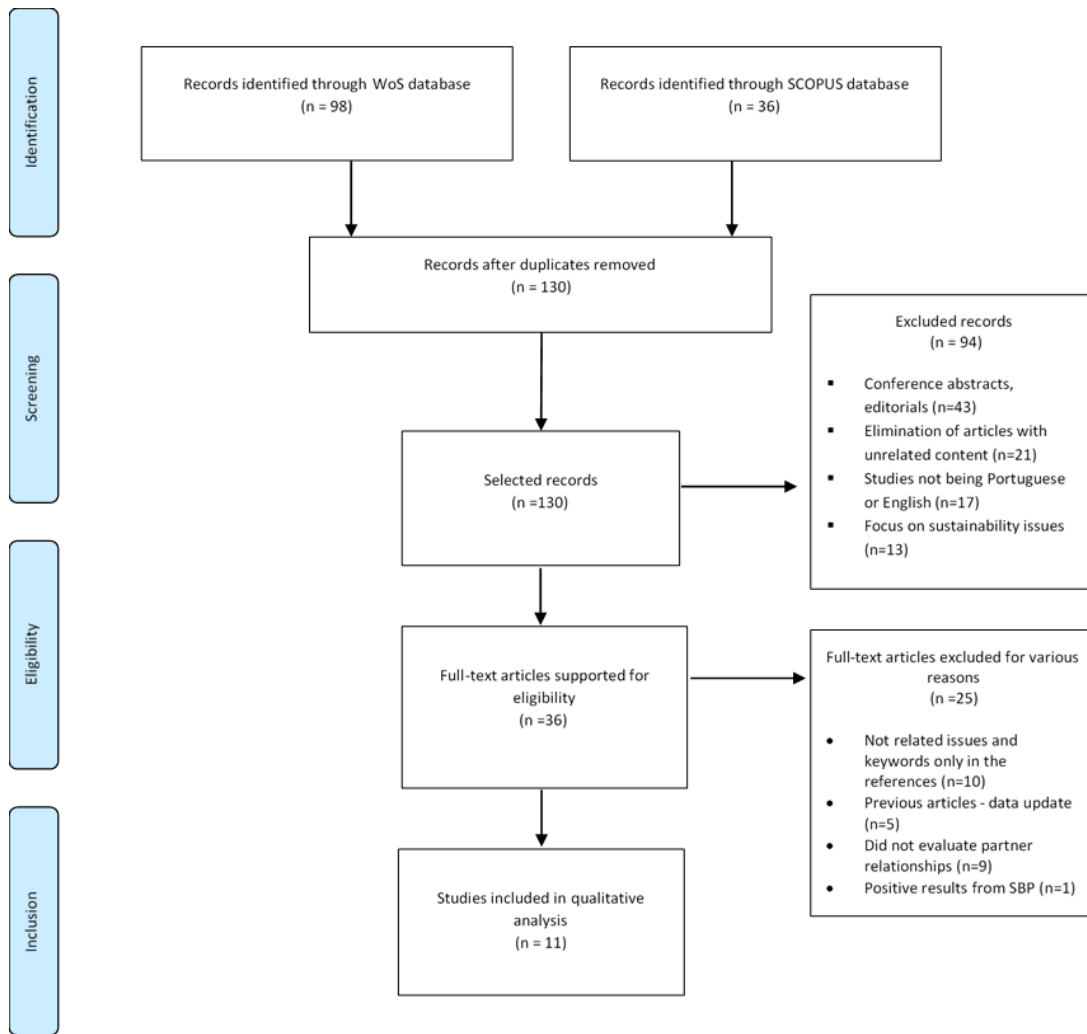


Figure 1 - Flow diagram of systematic review

Table 1 presents the main characteristics of the selected 11 studies and that have been included for a deeper analysis.

Table 1 – Included studies.

Author	Title	Journal	Purpose	Keywords	Methodology	Description & Findings
(Ortiz-de-Mandojana & Bansal, 2016)	The long-term benefits of organizational resilience through sustainable business practices	Strategic Management Journal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Confirm that social and environmental practices (SEPs) create organizational resilience and contribute to less volatility, higher organizational growth, better chances of long-term survival, and reduced short-term profitability.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organizational resilience</li> <li>Social and environmental practices</li> <li>Business sustainability</li> <li>Corporate social responsibility</li> <li>Short-termism</li> </ul>	Quantitative Study	<p>It is argued that socially responsible and sustainable practices help companies become more resilient, which helps them avoid crises and recover from upheaval. Long-term outcomes were analysed.</p> <p>It was observed that firms that adopt socially and environmentally responsible practices, have lower financial volatility, higher sales growth, and higher chances of survival.</p>
(Pressey & Vanharanta, 2016)	Dark network tensions and illicit forbearance: Exploring paradox and instability in illegal cartels	Industrial Marketing Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understanding the dark side of BR.</li> <li>BR and opportunism' nature regarding price fixing and the role of illicit tolerance.</li> <li>Understand the tensions in BR environments.</li> <li>Understand the purpose of BR in illicit practices undertaken by marketing managers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dark BR</li> <li>Dark networks</li> <li>Price-fixing cartels</li> <li>Paradox</li> <li>Relationship tensions</li> </ul>	Case study supported by secondary data	<p>Understand the dark side of BR in the areas of price fixing and illicit tolerance, the tensions arising in BR environments, and the purpose of BR in the illicit practices carried out by marketing managers.</p> <p>They concluded that price fixing creates tension and exacerbates relationship management, particularly in the face of opportunistic behaviour.</p>
(Park et al., 2017)	How Do Power Type and Partnership Quality Affect Supply Chain Management Performance?	Sustainability by MDPI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess whether different types of power improve SCM performance through partnerships.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SCM</li> <li>SCM performance</li> <li>Mediated power</li> <li>Non-mediated power</li> <li>Partnership quality</li> </ul>	Conceptual research model composed of 4 constructs (Mediated Power, Non-Mediated Power, Partnership Quality, SCM Performance)	<p>The study evaluates how power types form a causal relationship between partnerships within SC and performs an empirical investigation into the influence of power types on SCM performance.</p> <p>The results revealed that unmediated powers had a significant influence on partnership quality and SCM performance. Furthermore, the higher the degree of partnership between firms, the higher the level of satisfaction, resulting in better SCM performance.</p>

Author	Title	Journal	Purpose	Keywords	Methodology	Description & Findings
(Ozpolat & Dresner, 2018)	A dark side of long-term VMI relationships: supply chain trust	Research in Logistics & Production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigating the dark side in long-term Vendor Managed Inventory (VMI) relationships relative to SC reliability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unspecified</li> </ul>	Cross-sectional study	<p>Demonstrated the dark side of collaborative SC relationships in the context of long-term VMI are associated with higher levels of psychological contract violation and lower levels of distributor trust.</p> <p>They found long-term VMI relationships are associated with low levels of distributor trust toward the manufacturer. In the case of VMI adoption, there should not decrease the communication between both partners.</p>
(Tóth et al., 2018)	Tension in a value co-creation context: A network case study	Industrial Marketing Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess the tension and resulting obstacles in the collaborative nature of value co-creation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Value co-creation</li> <li>Tension</li> <li>Communication networks</li> <li>Project networks</li> <li>Social network analysis, network case study</li> </ul>	Case Study	<p>Structural, emotional, and behavioural tensions are identified. It is suggested that tension triggered by actors can destabilize the network by creating unsustainable communication structures.</p> <p>It was found that in an unbalanced network structure there can be structure-related tensions, which can activate other types of tensions and can impede value co-creation in complex networks.</p>
(Tura et al., 2019)	The darker side of sustainability: Tensions from sustainable business practices in business networks	Industrial Marketing Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore the potential tensions and conflicts that can cause SBPs in multi-stakeholder networks.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sustainability</li> <li>SBP</li> <li>Tensions</li> <li>Negative consequences</li> <li>Business networks</li> <li>Environmental</li> </ul>	Multiple case study	<p>It identifies 4 types of tensions (economic, structural, psychological, and behavioural) that tend to arise when companies implement SBPs in networks and illustrates how different stakeholders (implementers, suppliers, customers, other network partners) perceive them.</p>
(Wilhelm & Sydow, 2018)	Managing Cooperation in Supplier Networks – A Paradox Perspective	Journal of Supply Chain Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complementing the structural view of cooperation and competition with a paradoxical perspective, to investigate the competitive tensions that arise when buying companies try to involve cooperation and competition simultaneously in their relations with key suppliers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supplier Management</li> <li>Partnering (Alliances)</li> <li>General Management Issues</li> </ul>	Case study	<p>It was investigated how cooperation and competition coexist and are managed by SC firms.</p> <p>They found that separating these contradictory elements functionally, spatially and/or temporally allows managers to deal with these uncertainties, in the long run. However, these measures may be an undesirable strategy at the level of BR between organizations. Acceptance of the paradox of cooperation and competition helps to avoid negative tension in BR.</p>

## Sustainable Business Practices and Supply Chain Negative Outcomes

Author	Title	Journal	Purpose	Keywords	Methodology	Description & Findings
(Kemper & Ballantine, 2019)	What do we mean by sustainability marketing?	Journal Of Marketing Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Understand the discourses of sustainability marketing</li> <li>▪ Classify and categorize the different visions of sustainability marketing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Sustainability marketing</li> <li>▪ Sustainable marketing</li> <li>▪ Green marketing</li> <li>▪ Sustainability</li> <li>▪ Discourse analysis</li> </ul>	Case study	<p>3 concepts of sustainability marketing (auxiliary, reformative, and transformative) are addressed.</p> <p>ASM includes the integration of sustainability into the entire marketing mix.</p> <p>RSM encompasses ASM in its entirety and is further responsible for promoting sustainable lifestyles and removing certain harmful or undesirable products or services from the market.</p> <p>TSM aims to change the thinking of institutions that hinders the transition to a sustainable society</p>
(Meqdadi et al., 2017)	The role of power and trust in spreading sustainability initiatives across supply networks: A case study in the bio-chemical industry	Industrial Marketing Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Understand the spread of sustainability as a process of change affecting different actors in the SC and the impact of power and trust in the diffusion process.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Supply Network</li> <li>▪ Sustainability</li> <li>▪ Spread</li> <li>▪ Change</li> <li>▪ Power</li> <li>▪ Trust</li> </ul>	Case study	<p>It was found that power and trust, significantly impact actors' involvement in sustainability initiatives and their spread in SC. Also, both power and trust have a significant impact on involvement in SBP, being spread more quickly through the network of partners. Power and trust help in the joint development of SBP, as in this way, partners help each other in ways to achieve sustainability goals.</p>
(Hsu, 2016)	Strategic orientations, sustainable supply chain initiatives, and reverse logistics: empirical evidence from an emerging market.	International Journal of Operations & Production Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop and test a theoretical model to predict, how sustainable SC initiatives can influence reverse logistics outcomes as well as, the impact of eco-reputation and eco-innovation orientation strategies on the implementation of sustainable SC initiatives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Unspecified</li> </ul>	Quantitative Study	<p>It was identified ways to teach managers to initiate eco-friendly business practices. They advise that, the creation of sustainable SC policies and initiatives should not ignore the role of eco-reputation and eco-innovation strategic guidelines, which the results identify as important facilitators.</p>
(Paulraj et al., 2017)	Motives and Performance Outcomes of Sustainable Supply Chain Management Practices: A Multi-theoretical Perspective	Journal of Business Ethics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Study the links between corporate motives, SSCM practices and company performance based on the SC and business ethics literature</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Motives</li> <li>▪ Environmental sustainability</li> <li>▪ Supply-chain management</li> <li>▪ Firm performance</li> </ul>	Quantitative Study	<p>It was found that companies that exhibit a high level of moral concerns for the environment tend to outperform those that are driven primarily by amoral considerations. Morality-based SSCM practices and financial performance are not mutually exclusive. Instead, they can be "complementary" in the sense that companies can "do well by doing good."</p>

#### 4. RESULTS

The results achieved from the exhaustive search carried out in WoS and SCOPUS databases according to the criteria mentioned in the previous section.

The first work, Ortiz- de- Mandojana and Bansal (2016) shows that companies that frequently use social and environmental practices (SEPs) reduce their financial volatility, since they can perceive and correct maladaptation trends more easily. SEPs increase firms' chances of survival because they enable them to protect themselves from possible disruptions or crises. As well, reduce vulnerability to possible breakdowns, and they help firms acquire flexible resources that can be applied on alternative practices. However, firms using SEPs are less profitable than their competitors because environmental practices require the use of more upfront resources, involve higher operating costs, and generate conflicts and tensions with various stakeholders.

Pressey and Vanharanta (2016) refer the opportunistic behaviours in BR namely in price setting. These behaviours generate tension and intensify relationships management. This paper also shows that the commitment of certain marketing managers and the illicit collusion between companies can lead to illegal practices such as bribery, spying, corruption, and/or violation of competition laws.

Park et al. (2017) analyse the influence of relationships and types of power on SCM performance. The research results show that mediated power has no direct influence on partnership quality and SCM performance. Coercion and reward have no beneficial influence on the transactional relationship, although legal and institutional factors do. Furthermore, the results revealed that unmediated powers had a significant influence on partnership quality and SCM performance, i.e., the results show that expert knowledge, information, and corporate culture among partners increase firms' resilience.

Ozpolat and Dresner (2018) identify the trust connections between partners and how these are relevant to the survival and development of SC BR, because they give rise to higher compliance and peer satisfaction. The results reveal that relationships are associated with low levels of distributor trust towards the manufacturer. The communication can help manufacturers ensure that any breach of the psychological contract with the distributor is noticed before there is a breakdown of the trust relationship.

Tóth et al. (2018) analyse the evolution of behavioural, psychological, and structural tension experienced by different actors in a business network and its impact on value

cocreation. In an unbalanced network structure, there can be structure-related tensions, which can activate other types of tensions and can inhibit value cocreation in complex networks. Psychological tension can influence the different actors, leading them to disengage from communication flows. Behavioural tension decreases from different working practices, particularly the tensions felt in encouraging some actors to adopt the current best practices.

Tura et al. (2019) identified a variety of types of tensions that arise from SBP implementation. These tensions tend to manifest in 4 distinct categories: economic, structural, psychological, and behavioural tensions. All occur across multiple actors (internal and external) as well as at different levels (individuals, groups, and organizations) and are perceived differently by different actors and by their position in network.

The economic tensions for companies implementing SBP generally translate into higher investments, more opportunities, and higher costs.

Structural tensions refer to the need and balance of coordination and balanced way of managing vertical and/or horizontal relationships with stakeholders. They usually manifest themselves with increased requirements for monitoring and control of SC of companies and their value chain.

Psychological tensions concern changes in attitudes, motivations, and feelings, mainly caused by the additional uncertainty associated with SBPs. Thus, for companies the psychological tensions are related to the possible occurrence of higher financial, technological, and political risks.

Finally, behavioural tensions concern changes in operational or communicational behaviours within the business network. For SBP implementers these manifest themselves in the dissemination of sustainability criteria to environmental and political authorities, customers, and potential business network partners.

Wilhelm and Sydow (2018) aimed to understand how cooperation and competition coexist and are managed by SC firms. Acceptance of the paradox of cooperation and competition helps to avoid negative tension in BR. In addition, when the buying firm exhibits high evaluation capabilities, it can provide useful cost improvement suggestions that, in turn, increase the potential for joint value creation by increasing supplier confidence. Finally, when the buying company's evaluation capabilities are high and it demonstrates an intention for a fair division of value appropriation between both parties, supplier trust levels increase.



Kemper and Ballantine (2019) organize the concept of sustainability into 3 distinct groups of sustainability marketing: auxiliary sustainability marketing (ASM), reformative sustainability marketing (RSM), and transformative sustainability marketing (TSM). ASM includes the integration of sustainability into the entire marketing mix, focusing on the environmental, social, and economic dimensions of production and consumption. RSM encompasses ASM in its entirety and is further responsible for promoting sustainable lifestyles and removing certain harmful or undesirable products or services from the market, thereby changing current forms of marketing and consequently ways of doing business. Finally, TSM contemplates shared responsibility by both companies and consumers, as sustainability marketing cannot rely exclusively on sustainable production practices, but also needs positive collective citizen action.

Meqdad et al. (2017) investigated how power trust influenced the spread SBP among SC partners and what their impact was on the process. They found that both power and trust have a significant impact on SBP involvement, being spread more quickly through the partner network. Power and trust help in the development of SBP, as in this way partners help each other to achieve sustainability goals. Non-coercive power is a more subtle way to enforce the implementation of SBP, as otherwise it may be difficult to persuade the other SC partners.

Hsu (2016) developed and tested a theoretical model to see whether SBPs in SC influence logistics and what is the impact of eco-reputation and eco-innovation on SBP development strategy in SC. This study shows that SBPs positively influence company logistics, especially in a sustainable SC. The study presents evidence that implementation of SBP in SC, creates value and is a source of competitive advantage. Also shows that SBP implementation should consider eco-reputation and eco-innovation, as they are considered strategic elements facilitating implementation, and that it is easier for SC to be sustainable when partners already have a sustainable image. They also advise partners to carry out more than one activity, to reduce the impact of several companies carrying out only one activity.

Paulraj et al. (2017) aimed to understand what instrumental, relational, and moral motives influenced SC management and company performance. These authors showed that firms who demonstrate a high level of moral concerns for the environment tend to overtake those that are driven primarily by amoral considerations. Plus, they have shown that sustainable SCM practices based on morality and financial performance are not mutually

exclusive. Instead, they can be “complementary” in which companies can “do well by doing good”.

## 5. DISCUSSION

The 11 articles were published in different journals such as *Industrial Marketing Management*, *International Journal of Operations & Production Management*, *Journal of Business Ethics*, *Journal of Marketing Management*, *Journal of Supply Chain Management*, *Research in Logistics & Production*, *Strategic Management Journal* and *Sustainability* by MDPI. It is important to highlight that 4 articles were published at the *Industrial Marketing Management*. It is also worth mentioning, the author Andrew Pressey, which authored two articles. Following, we present the results discussion of analysed papers.

### 5.1 – BR and SBPs

First, the analysis shows that BR are considered facilitators and a powerful tool in SBP implementation (Kemper & Ballantine, 2019; Pressey & Vanharanta, 2016; Tura et al., 2019). In turn, sustainable management shows impact on firm productivity (Meqdadi et al., 2017; Paulraj et al., 2017) and thus, sustainability marketing strategies impact the firm and its partner networks (Kemper & Ballantine, 2019).

Moreover, sustainability can be explained as meeting the needs of present and future generations, comprising the satisfaction of needs among existing parties (Hsu, 2016; Kemper & Ballantine, 2019; Meqdadi et al., 2017; Ortiz- de- Mandojana & Bansal, 2016; Park et al., 2017). Sustainable organizations manage their relationships not only in their broader environments, where natural and social environments are included, but also over time so that short-term financial performance does not compromise future wealth (Ortiz- de- Mandojana & Bansal, 2016). Sustainability in organizations is implemented through SBPs (Ortiz- de- Mandojana & Bansal, 2016; Tura et al., 2019). These require new performance standards, regulation, training programs, institutional practices, promotion through awarding grants to new projects and taxes on unsustainable products, and scientific research and development, being aware that these practices add costs in short term (Kemper & Ballantine, 2019; Ortiz- de- Mandojana & Bansal, 2016; Tura et al., 2019).

Finally, the integration of SBPs for the purpose of achieving social, economic, and environmental in a company or SC relies on a triple bottom line approach developed

among the partners of company (Hsu, 2016; Ortiz- de- Mandojana & Bansal, 2016; Paulraj et al., 2017; Tura et al., 2019). SC management is been replaced by a new paradigm that has shifted the focus of competition from dyadic level to a network of cooperating partners in SC (Wilhelm & Sydow, 2018). Despite it, SBPs cause changes directly between partners and indirectly in all partners in SC (Hsu, 2016; Ortiz- de- Mandojana & Bansal, 2016; Paulraj et al., 2017). The shift from traditional management was due to the fact that, although all processes and activities were defined, as well as roles and activities, it showed low levels of trust between partners, needing to maintain communication between partners to avoid breaches of trust (Ozpolat & Dresner, 2018). Loss of trust or distrust between partners has significant outcomes and damages SC (Pressey & Vanharanta, 2016).

## **5.2 – Negative outcomes of SBPs**

When sustainability spreads across SC and partners begin to collaborate from a coopetition perspective, it means that there is a need for stakeholder satisfaction, which sometimes generates negative outcomes. Examples of negative outcomes are economic, social, structural and psychological tensions that tend to arise when companies implement SBPs giving rise to problems between partners in SC (Tura et al., 2019).

SBP implementation causes negative outcomes for SC partners because there is an obligation to apply the sustainable requirements, in addition to, their involvement, contribution and investment (Ortiz- de- Mandojana & Bansal, 2016; Tura et al., 2019), causing delays in its implementation. Then, the resistance to SBP implementation leads to conflict, for instance, the partner finds that the other does not share the same sustainability criteria (Ortiz- de- Mandojana & Bansal, 2016; Tura et al., 2019; Wilhelm & Sydow, 2018). Moreover, there is a tendency to increase conflict between companies when communication is not done effectively and there is difficulty in understanding them (Tura et al., 2019). When this happens, conflict sets in, which must primarily be resolved between managers in a way that does not influence the companies and indirectly all SC partners (Butt & Ahmad, 2019). In situations of disagreement where managers have differing opinions, makes a discussion necessary to generate consensus. If consensus does not occur, this creates frustrations, which are the result of different types of tension (Butt & Ahmad, 2019).

Tensions arise because values are conflicting rather than divergent (Pressey & Vanharanta, 2016; Tóth et al., 2018; Tura et al., 2019; Wilhelm & Sydow, 2018). Even in divergent

situations, after specific training and explanation of potential value, there is reduction of doubt, leading the partner to accept SBPs (Halme & Laurila, 2009). But, if after finding that sustainability criteria are conflicting and there is no way to reach consensus, there will be an intensification of discomfort, which creates different types of tension (Pressey & Vanharanta, 2016; Tóth et al., 2018; Tura et al., 2019). Tensions show an instability in BR, demonstrating a breakdown in trust and commitment, which can result in a rupture of BR (Pressey & Vanharanta, 2016; Tóth et al., 2018; Tura et al., 2019).

The rupture of BR is delayed by situations of partners' dependence, normally with more fragile positioning. Which means that dependence on the other partner may force him to accept the SBPs, no matter how much his values, goals and objectives do not agree with the partner who is implementing the SBPs (Meqdadi et al., 2017; Ozpolat & Dresner, 2018; Pressey & Vanharanta, 2016; Tóth et al., 2018; Tura et al., 2019; Wilhelm & Sydow, 2018).

In situations of SBP non-acceptance, a loss of power may emerge from the non-accepting partner, and the partner who wants the implementation starts looking for a new one to maintain the desired value (Caniëls & Gelderman, 2007; Cha et al., 2018). As a way to counteract these negative outcomes they conduct an evaluation of results, to be able to provide useful suggestions in improving costs and dividing the value appropriation fairly among the various partners, thus increasing the value creation potential and trust levels of SC partners (Tura et al., 2019; Wilhelm & Sydow, 2018). In addition, there is a need for training of managers to deal with negative outcomes to maintain sustainable advantage (Tura et al., 2019).

We can conclude that SBPs require a management approach based on effective communication, trust, honesty, transparency, and mutual benefits for all SC partners (Meqdadi et al., 2017; Ortiz- de- Mandojana & Bansal, 2016; Ozpolat & Dresner, 2018; Paulraj et al., 2017; Pressey & Vanharanta, 2016; Tóth et al., 2018; Tura et al., 2019). Structural, emotional, and behavioural tensions typically break the stability between the various SC partners, reducing the effectiveness of communication, causing structural imbalances in value co-creation, correcting these adversities by balancing the interests of all SC stakeholders (Pressey & Vanharanta, 2016; Tóth et al., 2018; Tura et al., 2019).

## 6. CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS, AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The results of this study are relevant and show a contribution for the use of sustainability in industrial markets and at the B2B marketing arena. We present and discuss the negative consequences of the implementation of SBP in BR, which are useful for managers and for the scientific community and are an incentive for future research on this subject.

The paper contributes for theory, reviewing and discussing the literature to show how BR facilitate the implementation of SBPs. Our analysis shows that SBP may cause changes in BR, namely among SC actors, as well as in the SC activities, and over the resources used and/or exchanged. Sometimes the changes are affected by ineffective communication, which cause negative outcomes, such as disagreement, tension, conflict, and frustration. Then, the dialogue between managers, specific training, and explanation of potential value are not sufficient to achieve consensus, and the instability in BR emerges. In addition, if it continues, it may result in BR breakdown or ending.

Our paper also contributes to the increase of managers' knowledge in reducing negative consequences or changes in BR by SBP implementation. Effective communication between BR partners reduces negative externalities, as well as cost improvement of SBP implementation and fair division of value ownership. These increases confidence levels among SC partners, reducing instability in BR.

Finally, our research has some limitations. The paper analysed and discussed in detail a limited number of articles, which is related with the scarce research about the subject. Therefore, future studies should extend the literature. First, other keywords searches may enrich the discussion about the SBP, clarifying and densifying the understanding of the negative outcomes of the implementation of the SBP, but also of the positive ones. Second, new theoretical and empirical research is further necessary about sustainability, and its relationships with BR and SPB. Finally, it is also recommended new studies to explore the role of communication in mitigating or reducing negative SBP outcomes among SC partners.

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