




“How digital content marketing shapes corporate sustainability: Evidence from consumer trust dynamics in the food and beverage industry”

AUTHORS	Khaled M. Aboalghanam  Amro Alzghoul 
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Khaled M. Aboalghanam, Ph.D.,
Associate Professor, Faculty of Business,
Marketing Department, Amman Arab
University, Jordan. (Corresponding
author)

Amro Alzghoul, Ph.D., Associate
Professor, Faculty of Business, Business
Administration Department, Amman
Arab University, Jordan.

Khaled M. Aboalghanam (Jordan), Amro Alzghoul (Jordan)

HOW DIGITAL CONTENT MARKETING SHAPES CORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY: EVIDENCE FROM CONSUMER TRUST DYNAMICS IN THE FOOD AND BEVERAGE INDUSTRY

Abstract

As companies in Jordan's food and beverage sector face increasing pressure to demonstrate environmental, social, and economic responsibility, digital content marketing has become an important channel for communicating sustainability initiatives to consumers. This study examines how digital content marketing influences consumer perceptions of corporate sustainability and whether consumer trust strengthens this relationship. Drawing on signaling theory and trust dynamics, the study explores whether sustainability-oriented digital content can shape consumer perceptions beyond the baseline of pre-existing trust. A quantitative cross-sectional survey was conducted among 346 consumers of food and beverage products in Jordan using a structured questionnaire measuring perceptions of companies' digital content marketing activities, corporate sustainability practices, and consumer trust. The respondent sample included both male and female consumers representing different age groups, educational backgrounds, and income levels, reflecting the diversity of the Jordanian consumer market. The collected data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to examine relationships among latent constructs. The findings indicate that digital content marketing has a strong positive effect on perceived corporate sustainability ($\beta = 0.526$, $t = 12.434$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that transparent and informative digital sustainability content can serve as a credible signal of corporate responsibility and help reduce information asymmetry between companies and consumers. However, consumer trust does not significantly moderate this relationship ($\beta = 0.014$, $t = 0.436$, $p = 0.663$), indicating that consumers tend to evaluate sustainability-related digital content similarly regardless of their initial level of trust in a company. Overall, the results highlight the importance of clear and substantive sustainability communication in digital environments for shaping consumer perceptions.

Keywords

digitalization, sustainability, communication, trust, consumers, marketing, food and beverage industry

JEL Classification

M31, M14, Q56, L66

INTRODUCTION

Digital transformation has significantly reshaped how organizations communicate with and are evaluated by their stakeholders. With the rapid expansion of digital communication channels, companies are now able to disseminate information about their activities more quickly and widely than ever before. As a result, stakeholders increasingly rely on digitally mediated information when forming perceptions about firms and their practices. This shift is particularly important in industries where key product attributes cannot be directly verified by consumers. The food and beverage (F&B) sector represents one such context, as consumers are often unable to directly assess characteristics such as production methods, environmental impact, or ethical sourcing. Consequently, corporate communication plays a critical role



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in shaping how stakeholders interpret and evaluate firms' responsibility and credibility (Giampietri et al., 2018). At the same time, sustainability has emerged as a central dimension of stakeholder expectations regarding corporate behavior. Growing societal concern about environmental protection, responsible production, and ethical supply chains has intensified scrutiny of corporate activities, particularly in industries closely connected to natural resources and public well-being. Companies operating in the F&B sector therefore face increasing pressure not only to implement sustainable practices but also to demonstrate their commitment to environmental and social responsibility. In this regard, digital communication environments have become important arenas through which organizations present information about their sustainability initiatives and engage with stakeholders (Rossi et al., 2025; Wang et al., 2025). Digital platforms increasingly function as key channels through which consumers obtain information about corporate practices and form perceptions about organizational responsibility (Maász et al., 2024).

However, the increasing reliance on digital communication to convey sustainability-related information raises important challenges regarding how such messages are interpreted. Sustainability claims frequently involve complex or technical aspects that consumers cannot easily verify. Under such conditions, stakeholders must rely on communicated signals when evaluating corporate sustainability practices, creating a situation of information asymmetry between organizations and consumers. In this context, digital sustainability communication becomes a critical mechanism through which firms attempt to shape stakeholder perceptions of their environmental and social performance (Mansour & Basal, 2024). Within this environment, trust may play a crucial role in influencing how stakeholders interpret corporate communication. Trust affects the extent to which stakeholders consider corporate messages credible and reliable, particularly when evaluating claims that cannot be directly verified. Although trust is widely recognized as an important factor in the evaluation of corporate responsibility and social initiatives, its role in shaping the effectiveness of sustainability-related digital communication remains unclear (Rosario & Dias, 2025). Specifically, it remains uncertain whether stakeholders' perceptions of corporate sustainability are primarily influenced by the content of sustainability communication itself or whether these perceptions depend largely on pre-existing trust in the communicating organization.

This issue becomes particularly significant in emerging market contexts, where institutional environments, governance structures, and norms of transparency may differ from those typically examined in existing research. In such settings, digital communication may play an even more prominent role in shaping how stakeholders evaluate corporate behavior and responsibility (Ahmad et al., 2021; Chaban et al., 2024). Consequently, a key scientific problem arises regarding the mechanisms through which stakeholders interpret sustainability-related digital communication and the extent to which trust conditions the relationship between such communication and perceptions of corporate sustainability.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES

The digital revolution sweeping across the F&B industry has shifted company–consumer interactions away from traditional product-centric advertising toward more interactive, content-driven engagement across social media, mobile apps, and other digital interfaces (Fatorachian et al., 2021). In parallel, F&B companies face escalating environmental and social pressures that compel them to adopt sustainability policies reducing waste, promoting eco-friendly packaging, and ensur-

ing ethical sourcing, among others (Alzghoul et al., 2024; de Oliveira et al., 2025). As younger, transparency-driven consumers demand detailed information about corporate sustainability performance, DCM becomes essential for converting sustainability initiatives into powerful narratives. Effective content can enlighten the public, humanize corporate responsibility efforts, and help differentiate brands in a highly competitive, commodity-oriented market (Rosario & Dias, 2025). By consistently disseminating informative and engaging content, such as videos of conservation projects or infographics on progress in recyclable

packaging, F&B companies can craft a credible sustainability discourse that appeals to ethically conscious consumers and enhances perceptions of authenticity and reliability (Bulmer et al., 2024).

DCM involves the strategic creation and distribution of valuable, relevant brand content aimed at fostering consumer engagement, trust, and long-term relationships rather than just prompting immediate purchases. This strategy spans a wide array of formats (articles, videos, podcasts, interactive media) and platforms (owned media, social networks, and even paid channels) (AlFraihat et al., 2025; Salah & Alzghoul, 2024). Its effectiveness lies in combining persuasive techniques that enrich the communication experience (Ahmed et al., 2024). For instance, compelling narratives evoke emotion and authenticity, informative content provides clarity and legitimacy, interactive channels invite dialogue, and credibility signals (such as third-party certifications or expert testimonials) build trust (Jayasingh et al., 2025). In the F&B sector, DCM is particularly valuable due to the intimate and sensitive nature of food consumption. Consumers increasingly seek transparency about ingredients, sourcing, and production processes criteria that DCM can address through accessible, visually engaging formats (Mohammad, 2020). Because many sustainability attributes of food products are credence qualities (i.e. not directly observable by consumers), digital content serves as a key vehicle for communicating a brand's authenticity, ethical standards, and safety compliance (Contini et al., 2023). In markets where offerings are relatively homogeneous, sustainability-focused content also provides a means of differentiation by highlighting a company's unique values or philanthropic efforts. This content-driven differentiation is powerful in domains where emotional resonance and identity-based consumption are common; through DCM, companies can foster a community around their brand, align with consumers' lifestyles, and build brand affinity (Carbajal-Rubio et al., 2024).

The benefits of DCM extend beyond engagement and differentiation: when executed consistently and with integrity, high-quality content can drive positive changes in consumer behavior and attitudes. Rich content tends to increase consumer engagement, evidenced by longer platform inter-

action times, content sharing, and active discussions (Alghizzawi et al., 2018; Tan et al., 2024). Such engagement often translates into enduring positive attitudes, as consumers internalize brand values and come to see the brand as a trustworthy source of information or inspiration. Over time, this process can bolster customer loyalty and satisfaction, as consumers feel informed and valued by the brand. High-caliber content also enhances perceived functional and emotional value, especially when sustainability outcomes are communicated transparently, allowing consumers to connect their purchase decisions to broader ethical or environmental benefits (Shih et al., 2024). In essence, authentic DCM that aligns with a firm's sustainability activities can create a virtuous cycle: content drives engagement, engagement fosters trust, trust builds loyalty, and loyalty encourages further consumer-brand interactions (Arif et al., 2025). This positive feedback loop has been observed across industries and provides a theoretical basis to expect similar effects in sustainability-driven contexts. In the F&B industry, where consumers are increasingly concerned about environmental and social responsibility, DCM is likely to be indispensable for shaping perceptions, enhancing credibility, and embedding sustainability into the brand's identity (Rosario & Dias, 2025).

Within the F&B context, corporate sustainability refers to a company's integrated focus on environmental stewardship, social responsibility, and economic viability (Gazzola et al., 2024). Guided by the "triple bottom line" of planet, people, and profit, firms are expected to minimize their environmental footprint, safeguard the well-being of workers and consumers, and conduct business ethically while remaining profitable (Silva et al., 2023). In practice, this could entail eco-friendly packaging, reduced energy and water usage, rigorous food safety and quality assurance, support for farming communities, and ethical sourcing throughout supply chains (Kamgang et al., 2024; Tarawneh & Alzghoul, 2025). With stakeholders increasingly scrutinizing performance across these dimensions, sustainability has become a core strategic priority in F&B. Firms now issue detailed sustainability reports and make measurable pledges demonstrating genuine improvements rather than mere compliance (Engida et al., 2018; Gerbens-Leenes et al., 2003). Open communica-

tion of these sustainability practices is crucial for earning stakeholder trust, but it comes with challenges. Heightened awareness of greenwashing (when companies exaggerate or misrepresent their environmental efforts) has bred consumer skepticism and vigilance in assessing sustainability claims (Delmas & Burbano, 2011; de Freitas Netto et al., 2020). This skepticism is especially acute in F&B, where past food safety and ethics scandals have made consumers wary of false or misleading information (Nguyen et al., 2019). As a result, authenticity, specificity, and verifiability have become key hallmarks of credible sustainability communication. Companies that share concrete successes, acknowledge shortcomings, and provide third-party verification of their claims are more likely to earn trust and bolster their brand image, whereas vague or inflated claims risk backlash and trust erosion. These challenges can be even more pronounced in emerging markets, where consumers may suspect that sustainability communication is more aspirational than actual, reflecting a gap between talk and practice (Mladenovic et al., 2024).

The rise of digital channels has fundamentally changed how companies disseminate sustainability information, offering a real-time, direct conduit to consumers. F&B brands can leverage social media, company websites, and multimedia content to showcase sustainability initiatives in transparent and engaging ways, for example, sharing behind-the-scenes videos of production processes, interactive dashboards tracking environmental performance, or posts announcing new sustainability certifications (Ahmad et al., 2021). Digital media's interactive nature also empowers stakeholders to ask questions, challenge claims, and engage in dialogue with companies, which in turn compels firms to be more responsive and honest in their communications. The broad reach of digital platforms means sustainability messages can spread across diverse geographic and demographic segments at relatively low cost (Li & Voida, 2024). By embracing two-way communication and demonstrating responsiveness online, companies can enhance their credibility and nurture consumer trust, especially when digital content aligns with on-the-ground practices that audiences can verify. Importantly, digital sustainability communication does more than convey information – it shapes the perceived moral identity of the company. Through

interactive campaigns, influencer partnerships, or documentary-style storytelling, digital media enable companies to present sustainability as an integral part of their brand story and value proposition. When executed authentically, these efforts can foster a sense of community and belonging among consumers, reinforcing the idea that sustainability is embedded in the company's ethos rather than merely a marketing slogan (Rosario & Dias, 2025). However, greater visibility through digital channels also means greater exposure: online audiences can quickly amplify any discrepancy between companies' proclaimed commitments and its actual performance. Thus, F&B companies must navigate digital communication with heightened rigor and transparency. This evolving landscape underpins the need to investigate how DCM influences consumer perceptions of corporate sustainability, and how factors like consumer trust might strengthen or weaken this influence.

Consumer trust is defined as a consumer's willingness to be vulnerable to a company based on the belief that the firm is competent, honest, and concerned with stakeholders' welfare (Lou & Yuan, 2019). Trust hinges on the expectation that a company will behave ethically and reliably, and it is a cornerstone of relationship marketing. In theory, trust reduces perceived risk in situations where consumers cannot directly verify product attributes, a dynamic particularly relevant in food markets, where concerns about safety and honesty are paramount (Garcia-Salirrosas et al., 2024). Signaling theory suggests that consumers rely on trust as a lens for interpreting sustainability messages: when trust is high, consumers are more likely to accept those messages as truthful indicators of a company's values. Similarly, expectancy-value theory posits that trusted information sources confer greater perceived value and credibility to the content, whereas low trust can lead consumers to discount even positive information (T. Nguyen & K. Nguyen, 2025). In this way, trust functions as a psychological filter shaping how consumers interpret and respond to brand communications, especially under conditions of information asymmetry. In the F&B sector, consumer trust is cultivated through multiple facets of a company's behavior. Product safety is paramount: companies with a strong track record of quality control and no major incidents (e.g. contamination or recalls)

tend to enjoy higher consumer trust. Transparency in ingredients and sourcing is another key driver, as modern consumers increasingly demand detailed, verifiable information about where their food comes from and how it is produced (Wu et al., 2021). Visible sustainability programs can also bolster trust, but only if the associated claims are backed by credible, non-exaggerated evidence, otherwise, such efforts might be dismissed as greenwashing. Additionally, brand reputation built over years of consistent performance can instill trust, although contemporary consumers may distinguish between legacy brands and newer brands that emphasize a mission-driven ethos (Açikgöz et al., 2024). In summary, consumer trust arises from a mix of tangible assurances, perceived transparency, and accumulated experience with the brand.

Integrating these perspectives, DCM can be posited as a potent driver of consumers' sustainability perceptions, their beliefs about a company's commitment to and effectiveness in environmental and social responsibility. Through storytelling, transparency, and interactivity, high-quality digital content can lend credibility and vividness to a company's sustainability narrative (Rosario & Dias, 2025). Effective sustainability content has the power to make corporate initiatives more concrete and personally relevant to consumers. For example, rather than issuing a generic ad proclaiming concern for the environment, a company might publish a before-and-after photo series of a river cleanup it sponsored, or share a video interview with employees who volunteer in the community. Such content provides tangible evidence and detail, enhancing message credibility (Blau et al., 2022). It can also evoke emotional and moral engagement: consumers may feel inspired, educated, or even proud to be associated with a brand that vividly showcases its sustainability efforts (Arora, 2025). Interactive content allows companies to clarify and elaborate on their sustainability initiatives in real time, directly addressing consumer questions and thereby deepening understanding (Ahmad et al., 2021). All of these tactics suggest that a strong sustainability-focused DCM strategy should lead consumers to perceive the company as more sustainable. Essentially, DCM helps close the information gap surrounding corporate sustainability initiatives. Companies often engage in many positive actions that consumers

never see; by exposing these efforts through digital content, firms keep sustainability top-of-mind for their audience. Moreover, when consumers encounter consistent, recurring sustainability messages across digital platforms, it signals that sustainability is not a one-off endeavor but a core component of the company's mission and operations (Rosario & Dias, 2025). This consistency can reduce skepticism, convincing consumers that the company's sustainability commitments are genuine and in turn elevating their overall perception of the firm's sustainability. Empirical evidence supports these assertions. For instance, studies of corporate social responsibility communication on social media have found that such content can enhance a company's sustainability image, thereby boosting customer loyalty (Ahmad et al., 2021). Research on corporate narrative reporting likewise suggests that storytelling about sustainability efforts can increase stakeholder trust and engender positive attributions toward the company (Băndoi et al., 2021).

While DCM is expected to improve a company's perceived sustainability, the magnitude of this effect might vary depending on consumers' pre-existing trust in the company. As noted, trust likely predisposes how marketing communications are received (Lou & Yuan, 2019). Sustainability messages delivered via digital content should, in theory, be more persuasive for consumers who already have high trust in the company. Trusting individuals approach content with an assumption of honesty and goodwill; they are inclined to accept the facts and narratives presented at face value. Thus, positive messages and values conveyed through DCM would more readily translate into stronger beliefs that the company is indeed acting sustainably. In this scenario, high trust serves as a catalyst that amplifies DCM's impact on sustainability perceptions, reinforcing consumer confidence in the company's sustainability claims (Zhang et al., 2025). Conversely, consumers with low trust in the company may greet the same content with skepticism. Distrustful consumers might question the motives behind the sustainability content or doubt the truthfulness of specific claims. Such skepticism could lead them to dismiss the content as mere greenwashing, seek external verification, or interpret it in a way that undermines the intended message (de Jong et al., 2020). Therefore, for well-

established F&B brands with strong reputations, sustainability-focused content is likely to yield a greater uptick in positive consumer perceptions, as messages are filtered through a lens of trust and presumed goodwill. For less trusted brands, however, even expertly crafted sustainability content might struggle to change perceptions, since consumers predisposed to doubt may engage in defensive processing of the information. In essence, trust provides the contextual backdrop that can either enable digital sustainability messages to take root in consumers' minds or cause them to wither. This reasoning underscores the need to empirically test whether trust conditions the effectiveness of DCM in shaping sustainability perceptions – a core question in this study's framework.

The study anticipates that consumer trust will function as a moderating factor, amplifying DCM's positive effect on perceived corporate sustainability when trust is high, and attenuating it when trust is low. Thus, this research addresses two primary hypotheses reflecting these theoretical arguments:

- H1: Digital Content Marketing has a significant positive impact on Corporate Sustainability.*
- H2: Consumer Trust positively moderates the relationship between Digital Content Marketing and Corporate Sustainability.*

2. METHODOLOGY

To test the proposed relationships between DCM, corporate sustainability perceptions, and consumer trust, the study adopted a quantitative cross-sectional survey design. This approach is consistent with relationship marketing and stakeholder theory frameworks, which conceptualize DCM as a strategic communication process shaping stakeholder perceptions, and consumer trust as a relational asset that could condition the success of such communication. These theoretical foundations guided the development of the research model, the operationalization of constructs, and the choice of measurement and analysis techniques. The target population for the study was individual consumers of F&B products in Jordan. The study aimed for a diverse sample of regular F&B consumers in

urban areas to ensure heterogeneity in age, gender, and socio-economic background. A total of 500 survey questionnaires were distributed using a combination of online channels (social media and email lists) and in-person mall intercepts at major shopping centers. This dual approach facilitated broader reach and demographic diversity. After screening for completeness and response quality, 346 valid responses remained for analysis. This sample size was deemed sufficient for conducting multivariate analyses and structural equation modeling with multiple latent constructs.

The survey instrument consisted of a structured questionnaire measuring three key constructs: perceptions of the company's digital content marketing, perceptions of the company's corporate sustainability performance, and the level of consumer trust in the company. All items were measured on a five-point Likert scale (1 = "strongly disagree," 5 = "strongly agree"). The questionnaire was originally developed in English and then translated into Arabic using a forward-and-back translation process to ensure conceptual and linguistic equivalence for Jordanian respondents. A pilot test with 30 consumers was conducted to assess item clarity, relevance, and reliability. Feedback from the pilot led to minor wording adjustments for improved comprehension and reduced ambiguity. Ethical considerations were closely observed in the survey's administration. Participation was entirely voluntary, and respondents were informed of the study's academic purpose. The questionnaire's introduction emphasized that responses would remain confidential and be used exclusively for research; no personally identifiable information (such as names, phone numbers, or email addresses) was collected. Informed consent was obtained implicitly, as participants proceeded with the survey only after reading the consent information. Respondents were also assured that they could withdraw at any point without any consequences.

3. RESULTS

To analyze data, the study used a Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to test the measurement and structural models. The use of PLS-SEM was based on the appropriateness of the model with comparatively

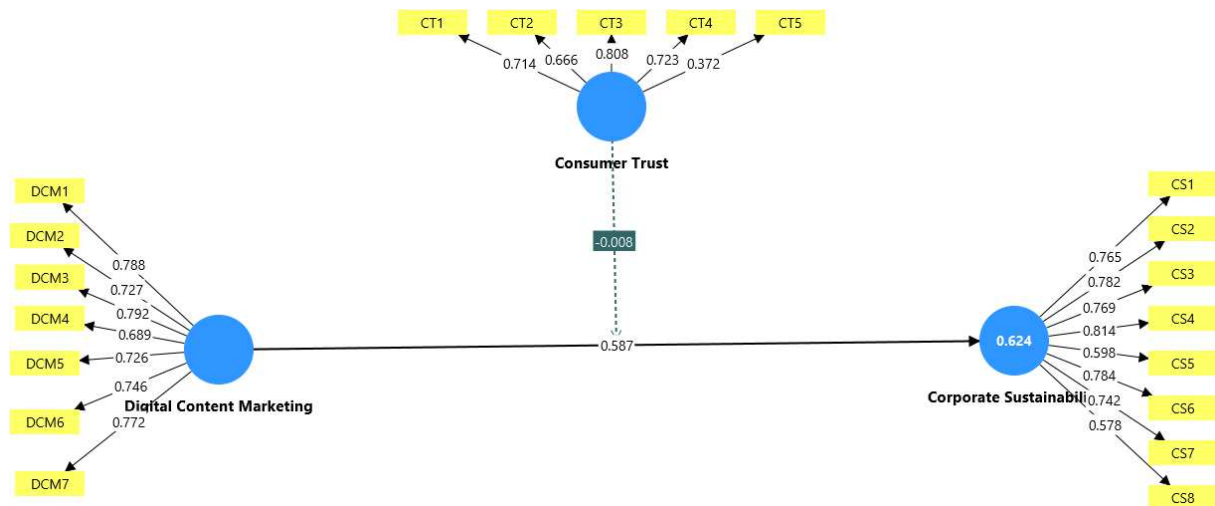


Figure 1. Evaluation of measurement model

high complexity and the intent to predict phenomena, its strength due to the sample size of 346 and the presence of latent constructs (Hair et al., 2019). The test of the measurement model was performed with Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling that the constructs Digital Content Marketing, Corporate Sustainability and Consumer Trust were measured reliably with the help of respective items (Hair et al., 2011). In respect to the measurement evaluation, the indicators CT5, CT2, CS5, CS8 and DCM4 were sequentially removed in a process considered to be an industry standard to establish indicator reliability by factor loadings being below the threshold of 0.70. The remaining scales were commendably retained in Table (1) Construct Reliability and Validity. The remaining constructs all show significant internal consistency reliability, in terms of the Composite Reliability (rho_c) values (CT: 0.822, CS: 0.909, DCM: 0.895) owing to the values being greater than the threshold of 0.70. In addition, all constructs demonstrate established convergent validity owing to their respective Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values being greater than 0.50 (CT: 0.607, CS: 0.625, DCM: 0.589), thereby affirming that each of the constructs clarifies more than 50 per cent of the items variance. Based on PLS-SEM, the scale re-

liability in the context of PLS-SEM was affirmed owing to there being a greater rho_c value in the context of Consumer Trust despite there being a slight underperformance in the norm being set at 0.70 for the Cronbach's Alpha (0.674) (Hair et al., 2011).

This validated model is illustrated in Figure 1, which depicts the constructs as latent variables, the other items as their indicators, and the calculated factor loadings. This figure demonstrates the purification process and the degree to which the latent constructs relate to their empirical measures. The successful reliability and validity evaluations exhibited high factor loadings and, as a result, confirmed the existence of a theoretical relationship between the empirical constructs and the indicators as they were operationalized in the survey. At this point, the measurement model has been validated and confirmed for reliability and convergent validity (Hair et al., 2019).

Table 2 presents the Fornell-Larcker approach for measuring discriminant validity, which allows us to determine whether the model's constructs are empirically distinct. The diagonal entries in the table correspond to the square roots of the Average Variance Extracted (Consumer Trust =

Table 1. Construct reliability and validity

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Consumer Trust	0.674	0.667	0.822	0.607
Corporate Sustainability	0.880	0.880	0.909	0.625
Digital Content Marketing	0.862	0.877	0.895	0.589

Table 2. Discriminant validity Fornell-Larcker criterion

Construct	Consumer Trust	Corporate Sustainability	Digital Content Marketing
Consumer Trust	0.779		
Corporate Sustainability	0.612	0.791	
Digital Content Marketing	0.474	0.699	0.767

Table 3. Goodness of fit

Indicator	Saturated model	Estimated model
SRMR	0.118	0.118
d_ ULS	1.659	1.661
d_ G	0.722	0.722
Chi-square	1297.670	1298.248
NFI	0.627	0.627

0.779, Corporate Sustainability = 0.791, Digital Content Marketing = 0.767). The off-diagonal entries indicate the constructs' interconstruct correlations. For each construct to be considered truly distinct, the AVE needs to be greater than each of the correlations of the other constructs in the model. Since the diagonal entries (0.779, 0.791, 0.767) are all greater than the off-diagonal entries (e.g., 0.612, 0.474, 0.699), the table demonstrates that discriminant validity was successfully confirmed in all constructs as the model constructs empirical distinctness and thus allows the analysis to proceed to the structural equation model.

The goodness of fit in Table 3 depicts metrics to determine the model fit for the four measurements. SRMR = 0.118 and NFI = 0.627. Both measurements' range of thresholds indicate a model with a poor global fit (Smith & Rose, 1995). However, with the aim of prediction, the model fit metrics are not the sole reason to halt in the PLS-SEM, especially in a scenario where the measurement model has been validated. Previously, all tables have validated reliability and validity; thus, poor global fit is seen as a caveat. and the PLS-SEM aims to determine the predictive capability of the model rather than focus on whether the structure provides a good fit with the data structure. It is therefore justified to proceed to the structural model to evaluate the path coefficients and predic-

tion capability that digital content marketing and consumer trust have for corporate sustainability (Sarstedt et al., 2024; Shmueli et al., 2019).

4. STRUCTURAL MODEL AND HYPOTHESES TESTING

The bootstrapping technique constitutes the structural model analysis and serves as a last test of the presumed relationships. Within the path coefficients (see Table 4), the relationship in *H1*, positing that DCM positively and significantly affects Corporate Sustainability (CS), receives strong, direct confirmation. The path coefficient (beta = 0.526) is large in magnitude, and the height of the t-statistic (12.434) along with the p-value (0.000) ascertains that this relationship is substantively significant and of great importance, this suggests that the food & beverage sector is positively influenced by a strong digital content marketing strategy in terms of the corporate social responsibility outcomes (Hair et al., 2013). Moreover, *H2* is contrary, holding that Consumer Trust (CT) positively moderates the relationship between DCM and CS, and is thus not the case. In conjunction, the path of the interaction term's coefficient bears a small value (beta = 0.014), and the p-value (0.663) is significantly greater in relation to the 0.05 levels of imposition in the validity.

Table 4. Evaluation of structural model

Hypothesis	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	t-statistics (O/STDEV)	p-values
Digital Content Marketing → Corporate Sustainability (<i>H1</i>)	0.526	0.526	0.042	12.434	0.000
Consumer Trust x Digital Content Marketing → Corporate Sustainability (<i>H2</i>)	0.014	0.013	0.032	0.436	0.663

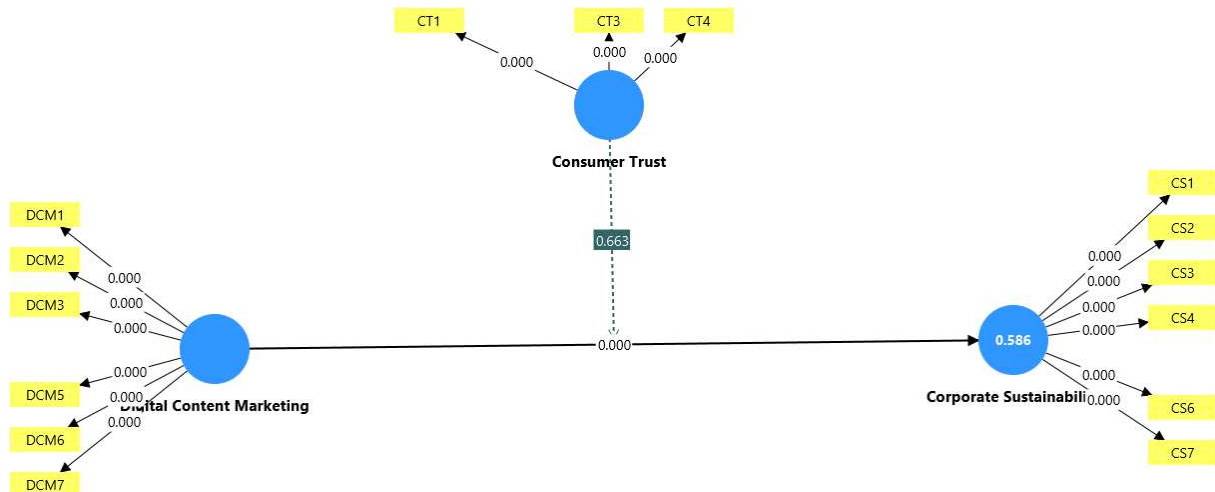


Figure 2. Structural model results

Moreover, structural model diagram illustrates the model’s predictive capabilities, as evidenced by the R² value of 0.586 for Corporate Sustainability (CS), signifying that Digital Content Marketing and the interaction term jointly account for 58.6% of Corporate Sustainability, which reflects a reasonable to a high degree of predictive accuracy. The image also illustrates the non-significant moderation effect with a void line and the 0.663 p-value (marked as 0.663 in the picture) in the interaction path.

5. DISCUSSION

This study examined whether digital content marketing (DCM) influences consumers’ perceptions of corporate sustainability in the food and beverage (F&B) sector and whether consumer trust moderates this relationship. The results indicate that DCM has a significant and positive impact on perceived corporate sustainability. This finding suggests that sustainability-oriented digital communication can shape consumer perceptions by providing accessible and transparent information about companies’ environmental and social practices. In the context of the F&B industry, where many sustainability attributes are not directly observable, digital content appears to function as an important informational signal that helps consumers evaluate corporate responsibility. The positive effect of DCM identified in this study is consistent with previous research highlighting the role of digital communication in shaping stakeholder perceptions of corporate sustainabil-

ity. For example, Mansour and Basal (2024) found that digital sustainability communication can enhance perceptions of corporate responsibility by reducing information asymmetry between firms and consumers. Similarly, Wu et al. (2021) demonstrated that transparent sustainability communication improves the credibility of corporate sustainability initiatives and strengthens positive consumer evaluations. The present findings extend this line of research by providing empirical evidence from the Jordanian F&B sector, an emerging market context that has received limited attention in prior studies.

The results also align with broader research indicating that digital platforms have become important channels for communicating sustainability practices to consumers. Ahmad et al. (2021) reported that consumers in emerging markets increasingly rely on digital media to obtain information about corporate responsibility initiatives. Likewise, Li and Voida (2024) observed that sustainability-related digital content can enhance stakeholder awareness and engagement with corporate environmental initiatives. The strong positive relationship between DCM and perceived corporate sustainability observed in this study supports these findings and suggests that digital sustainability communication can effectively influence consumer perceptions even in markets where sustainability communication is still developing. In contrast to expectations, the study did not find a significant moderating effect of consumer trust on the relationship between DCM and perceived corporate sustainability. This result suggests that consumers

evaluate sustainability-related digital content primarily based on the information presented rather than filtering it through their pre-existing level of trust in a company. One possible interpretation is that sustainability content, when presented in a clear and informative manner, may be perceived as relatively objective information that influences perceptions regardless of prior attitudes toward the firm.

This finding partially diverges from studies that emphasize the central role of trust in evaluating corporate social responsibility communication. For instance, Rosario and Dias (2025) argue that consumer trust strengthens the persuasive impact of sustainability communication. However, the result is consistent with other research indicating that trust may influence outcomes beyond immediate perception formation. Lou and Yuan (2019), for example, show that trust is more strongly associated with downstream behavioral outcomes such as purchase intentions and brand loyalty rather than with the initial interpretation of informational content. Similarly, Canova et al. (2020) suggest that while trust is important

in shaping long-term consumer–brand relationships, informational signals may independently influence how consumers evaluate corporate sustainability efforts. The absence of a moderating effect of trust may also be influenced by the contextual characteristics of the Jordanian market. In emerging markets, where digital communication channels often serve as primary sources of corporate information, consumers may rely more heavily on the content itself when forming perceptions of corporate sustainability. As a result, the informational value of sustainability-related digital content may outweigh the influence of pre-existing trust when consumers evaluate corporate sustainability practices. Thus, the findings contribute to the literature on sustainability communication by demonstrating that digital content marketing can significantly shape consumer perceptions of corporate sustainability, even when consumer trust does not act as a moderating factor. These results highlight the importance of transparent and informative digital communication in reducing information asymmetry and improving stakeholder understanding of corporate sustainability initiatives.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to examine the effect of digital content marketing on consumer perceptions of corporate sustainability in the food and beverage (F&B) sector and to determine whether consumer trust moderates this relationship in the context of the Jordanian market. The findings indicate that digital content marketing has a strong and statistically significant positive impact on perceived corporate sustainability. This result suggests that when companies actively communicate their sustainability initiatives through engaging and transparent digital content, consumers are more likely to perceive these firms as environmentally and socially responsible. By providing accessible information about sustainability activities, digital content helps reduce information asymmetry between companies and consumers and strengthens the credibility of corporate sustainability claims. However, the analysis revealed that consumer trust does not significantly moderate this relationship. In other words, the positive influence of sustainability-related digital content on consumer perceptions occurs regardless of the level of trust consumers initially have in the company.

Based on these results, it can be concluded that the effectiveness of sustainability communication in digital environments depends primarily on the clarity, transparency, and informativeness of the content rather than on pre-existing levels of consumer trust. For companies operating in the F&B sector, particularly in emerging markets such as Jordan, this highlights the strategic importance of consistently communicating sustainability initiatives through credible digital channels. Well-designed digital sustainability content can play a key role in shaping consumer perceptions of corporate responsibility and strengthening the company's sustainability image. More broadly, the study underscores the growing role of digital communication strategies in enhancing public understanding of corporate sustainability efforts and supporting more informed consumer evaluations of responsible business practices.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Conceptualization: Amro Alzghoul.

Data curation: Khaled M. Aboalghanam

Formal analysis: Khaled M. Aboalghanam

Funding acquisition: Khaled M. Aboalghanam

Investigation: Khaled M. Aboalghanam, Amro Alzghoul.

Methodology: Khaled M. Aboalghanam, Amro Alzghoul.

Project administration: Amro Alzghoul.

Resources: Khaled M. Aboalghanam, Amro Alzghoul.

Software: Khaled M. Aboalghanam

Supervision: Amro Alzghoul.

Validation: Khaled M. Aboalghanam.

Visualization: Khaled M. Aboalghanam, Amro Alzghoul.

Writing – original draft: Khaled M. Aboalghanam, Amro Alzghoul.

Writing – review & editing: Khaled M. Aboalghanam, Amro Alzghoul.

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APPENDIX A

Table A1. Study questionnaire

Digital Content Marketing					
1	The company frequently shares information about its sustainability activities on digital platforms	1	2	3	4 5
2	The company's online content clearly communicates its environmental and social initiatives	1	2	3	4 5
3	The company uses engaging digital formats (e.g., videos, images, or posts) to present its sustainability efforts	1	2	3	4 5
4	The company's digital content helps me understand its sustainability practices	1	2	3	4 5
5	The company provides transparent and detailed information about its sustainability initiatives online	1	2	3	4 5
6	The company regularly updates its digital platforms with sustainability-related content	1	2	3	4 5
7	The company's digital content demonstrates a commitment to responsible business practices	1	2	3	4 5
Consumer Trust					
1	I trust this company to act responsibly toward society and the environment	1	2	3	4 5
2	I believe the company is honest in communicating its sustainability practices	1	2	3	4 5
3	I believe the company keeps its promises regarding sustainability	1	2	3	4 5
4	I consider the company to be reliable in its sustainability commitments	1	2	3	4 5
5	I trust the company when it communicates about sustainability	1	2	3	4 5
Corporate Sustainability					
1	The company behaves in an environmentally responsible manner	1	2	3	4 5
2	The company contributes positively to society	1	2	3	4 5
3	The company integrates sustainability into its business practices	1	2	3	4 5
4	The company takes environmental impacts into account in its operations	1	2	3	4 5
5	The company demonstrates long-term commitment to sustainability	1	2	3	4 5
6	The company acts responsibly toward its stakeholders	1	2	3	4 5
7	The company supports sustainable development through its activities	1	2	3	4 5
8	I perceive the company as a sustainable organization	1	2	3	4 5