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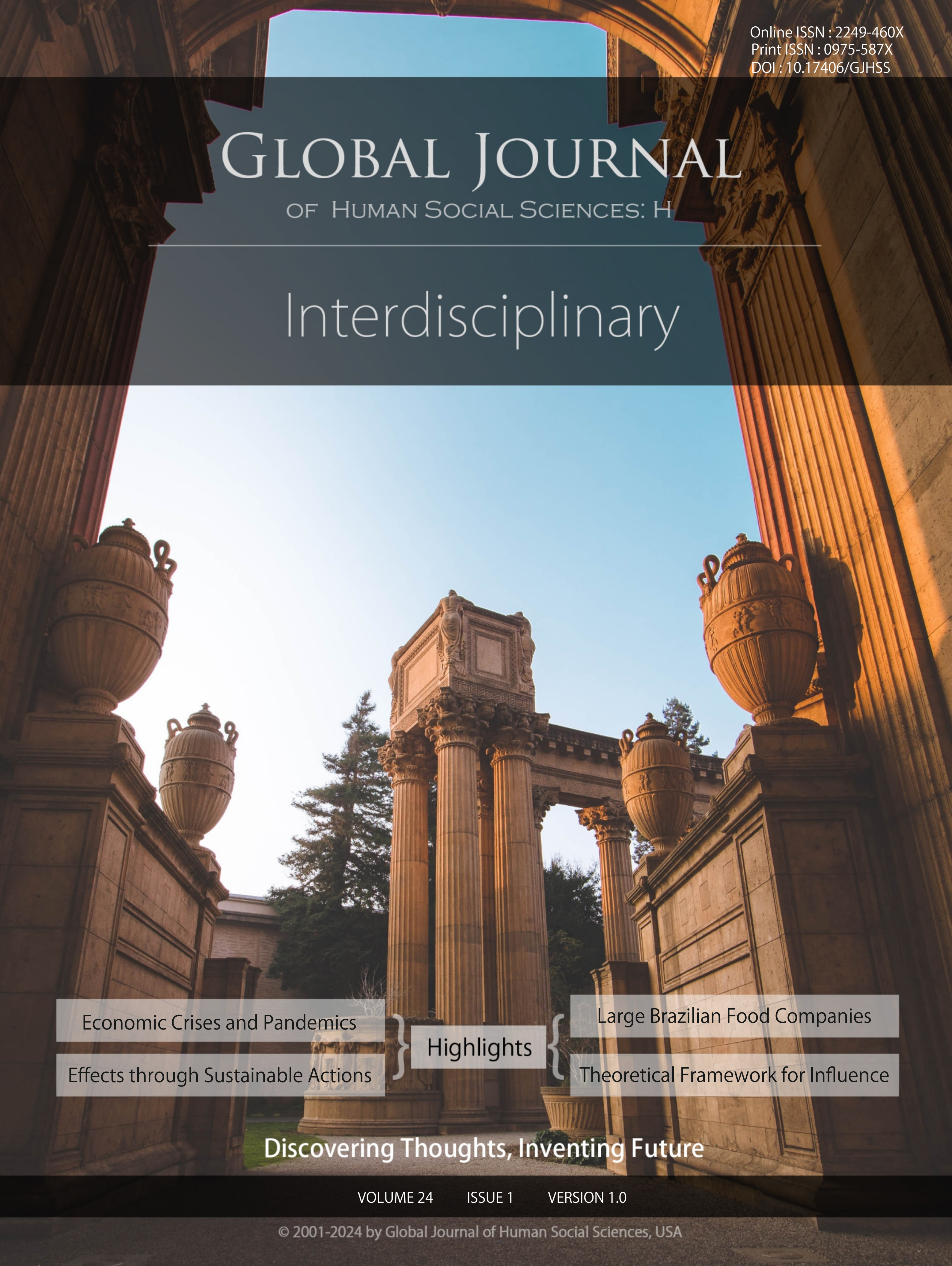

Economic Crises and Pandemics

Effects through Sustainable Actions

Highlights

Large Brazilian Food Companies

Theoretical Framework for Influence

Discovering Thoughts, Inventing Future

VOLUME 24 ISSUE 1 VERSION 1.0

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Environmental Sustainability Practices in Large Brazilian Food Companies in Light of the 2030 Agenda Goals

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Abstract- The study aims to identify and discuss practices aimed at environmental sustainability in large Brazilian food companies in light of the 2030 Agenda goals and of the commitments made by the Brazilian Food Industry Association (ABIA) at Rio+20. The survey is of an applied, qualitative, exploratory nature and descriptive design, with documentary data collection anchored in the sustainability reports of sizeable Brazilian food companies selected for the study. Unlike the studies carried out in Brazil and other parts of the world, in this study, management for environmental sustainability was assessed in the light of the goals and targets set out in the 2030 Agenda. The results indicate that there has been progress in the Brazilian Food Industry about the commitments made in favor of sustainable development. Many measures adopted satisfactorily meet the objectives of the 20230 Agenda. However, intensifying of these practices is still necessary so that the industry effectively contributes to achieving a legitimate and acceptable level of sustainable development, especially in a country like Brazil, where the food and agriculture industry compete for space with biomes and sensitive ecosystems the activity economic.

Keywords: *sustainability; sustainable development; agenda 2030; RIO+20; food companies.*

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Environmental Sustainability Practices in Large Brazilian Food Companies in Light of the 2030 Agenda Goals

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I. Introduction

Companies contribute to the development social and economic of a country or a region. Through their products, they become present in the homes and lives of their consumers. Consequently, sustainability has become important for organizations and corporate businesses (Castro, Campos & Trevisan, 2018). Therefore, Nguyen and Kanbach (2023) highlight that in recent years, the integration of sustainability strategies in companies has shown significant growth.

The concept of sustainable development, understood as "that which meets the needs of the present without compromising the possibility of future generations meeting their needs" (United Nations, 1987), requires society to have a continuous relationship with the environment, considering the conservation of its characteristics for the essential development of life as we know it on Earth. The corporate world is not oblivious to this perspective. Soon, it began to rethink its way of producing and reproducing, considering the environmental, social, and economic impacts, preferably in that order of importance, given the climate emergency and the socio-environmental factors linked to it and arising from it (Silva et al., 2022; Nguyen & Kanbach, 2023).

At this juncture, the companies are awer that their activities have significant impacts on natural ecosystems, on the well-being of societies, and the maintenance of the conditions necessary for human prosperity, with preservation of the planet for future generations (Silveira et al., 2022). Goés et al. (2023) argue that companies have sought to become more sustainable from an environmental point of view, prioritizing management oriented towards their different stakeholders in the search to mitigate adverse impacts on the environment.

Moçato et al. (2019) explain that the change in business consciousness is the result of post-industrial society, in which the improvement in the quality of life, the appreciation of human beings, respect for the environment, the business organization of multiple targets, and the valorization of social actions are sought to the detriment of the industrial period, where profit and economic success appeared as the only objectives to be achieved. Lu et al. (2020) understands that

Global Journal of Human-Social Science (H) Volume XXIV Issue I Version I Year 2024

companies have sought to reduce their negative impacts while at the same time prioritizing actions to maximize their positive environment impacts. Regarding this issue, Dias (2019, p. 83) states that companies "are indirectly responsible for the growth of interest in the environment, as they were the causes of the main environmental disasters of the 20th century that, in some way, awakened collective consciousness to these problems."

To succeed and update the set of sustainable development perspectives for the 21st century on a global scale, took place at the United Nations in New York, between September 25 and 27, 2015, the most important conference on sustainability, called the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit, where were defined that Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) - with 17 objectives, 169 targets and more than 500 indicators - that must be achieved by the year 2030, taking into account what is foreseen in the document "Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" (Lu et al., 2020).

Marked by constant and systematic negative impacts on the environment after the Industrial Revolution, society has recently begun to review its practices that are harmful to the ecological balance, becoming aware of the need for more sustainable measures. In this regard, "sustainable development has become the central concept of the current generation" (Sachs, 2015, p. 1). In 2020 the so-called "Decade of Action" with the aim intending to intensify actions based on the SDGs, aiming to meet the goals within deadlines respective pre-determined. To achieve the goals, efforts were put in such as the SDG Action Manager, a methodology available in five languages that "empowers companies of all sizes, worldwide, to adopt meaningful measures and track their progress towards global goals" (Nações Unidas Brasil, 2020). Pizzi et al. (2020) demonstrated that the involvement and contribution of the business sector to the SDGs is increasing.

In this context, the vocation of companies to incorporate socio-environmental issues into their management practices, with the purpose of benefiting but society as a whole, was reinforced, supported by a reorientation of organizational values (Lara & Oliveira, 2017). Rosati and Faria (2019a) emphasize that companies can play a significant role in sustainable development. It is clear, therefore, that business continuity is directly linked to the inclusion of sustainability in business practice, adopting systems oriented towards stakeholders and with greater transparency in reporting results (Rosati & Faria, 2019a; Martins et al., 2021; Goés et al., 2023).

As a result, companies are invited to invest in a sustainable culture, driven by commitment to environmental issues, going beyond simple, strictly superficial advertising (Silva Filho et al., 2019). Therefore, by promoting innovation policies, reverse logistics, circular economy, use of clean and renewable energy and fighting climate change, the companies contribute to change of paradigms, in response to the main challenges of this century (Rossi et al., 2020).

Therefore, the aim of this research is to find the fundamentals sustainability management in the Brazilian food industry, in the light of the objectives and targets set out in the 2030 Agenda, in the light of the commitments made at Rio+20. Given its environmental impact, the food industry can make a significantly contribute to more sustainable development.

II. Literature Review

a) *Environmental dimension of sustainability*

Although not synonymous, sustainability and sustainable development are treated as equivalent terms in some studies (Sartori, Latrônico & Campos, 2014). Still, "these views are frequently at odds, depending on the social group that defends them, bringing to the surface crucial questions such as what exactly is being supported, on what scale, by whom, for whom, and with what mechanisms" (Machado & Matos, 2020, p. 22).

According to Dovers and Handmer (1992), sustainability is the ability of a human system, natural or mixed, to resist or adapt to endogenous or exogenous change for an indefinite period. On the other hand, sustainable development is a path of intentional change and improvement that maintains or increases this system attribute when responding to the needs of the present population. The authors, then, argue that sustainable development is the way to achieve sustainability, characterizing it as a goal, not a means.

On the other hand, Elkington (2012) argues that sustainable development will only be achieved through a balance between the three pillars of the Triple Bottom Line: environmental, economic, and social. For him, sustainable development is the objective to be achieved, and sustainability – translated into sustainable actions – is the means, that is, the process to achieve it. Adding an ecological vision, environmental sustainability is the ability of something or someone to sustain itself over some time without the resources necessary to do so – especially non-renewable natural ones – being exhausted. Therefore, for a company to be considered sustainable, it is essential to plan to reduce raw materials (Santos & Baptista, 2016). It is important to highlight that sustainability is not limited to the environmental dimension. However, to meet the purposes of this study, ecological practices based on sustainability adopted by companies were considered.

The environmental dimension is related to the impact of human activities on the environment. Moldan, Janoušková and Hák (2012) emphasize that environmental sustainability studies biogeophysical aspects, aiming to maintain or improve the integrity of life support systems on Earth. Likewise and Barbieri (2016) argues that the environment is everything that involves or surrounds living beings, and environmental problems are intrinsically linked to the use of the environment to have the resources necessary for the production of goods and services.

b) 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals

In the quest to promote sustainable development, the negotiations contained in the document "Transforming Our World:" were concluded in August 2015. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development". The SDGs were adopted as part of a new "action plan for people, the planet and prosperity" (Nações Unidas Brasil, 2015, s. p.). All of this formed part of a new sustainable development agenda, based on the dimensions People, Planet, Peace, Prosperity and Partnerships, completing the work of the old Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), without "leaving anyone behind" (Nações Unidas Brasil, 2017).

The 2030 Agenda recognizes that private business activity, investment and innovation are the main drivers of productivity, inclusive economic development and job creation. Therefore, companies appear as fundamental actors for sustainable development, not only for their financing but also for guaranteeing the capillarity of actions, given the strong predisposition of the private sector to establish dialogue with employees and the community (Silva et al., 2022).

Van Zanten and Van Tulder (2021) highlight that companies play a decisive role in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The authors argue that the challenges for sustainable development are interconnected, requiring that business strategies have a systemic approach to promoting sustainability, instead through the integration of the different SDGs, instead of treating them as isolated silos.

Therefore, it is possible to say that, currently, not relating sustainability to the organizational context and business performance has become something inconceivable. Even though some companies disagree with this scenario, it is certain that the failure to apply sustainability in their operations certainly causes several problems – including, it threatens the continuity of the company's activities and its performance in the market (Dias & Marques, 2017). Thus, it appears that there is a necessary relationship of interdependence between the prosperity of organizations and the good of the planet and its inhabitants.

Sustainability should not be understood by business sectors only as an opportunity to increase business profits since the efficiency in the use of natural resources, the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, the diversification of agricultural production, the valorization of production that keeps the forest standing, the preservation of rivers and biodiversity could become the key to economic competitiveness in the future (Mello & Toni, 2013). Furthermore, companies' systemic understanding of sustainability can help them avoid greenwashing practices (Van Zanten & Van Tulder, 2021).

Toussaint, Cabanela and Muñoz-Dueñas (2022) understand that the SDGs are a good starting point for analyzing the challenges and problems of the food production chain, among other things, as they involve the various levels of government, different stakeholders, and the food industry. This work, it should be noted that the food industry, as argued by Chaurasia et al. (2021), who studied the nutraceutical industry – that is, products that, in addition to nutrition, are also used as medicines – plays a relevant role in creating a world with zero hunger, thus being fundamental for health and well-being of the population, and, equally, for an environmentally and socially sustainable world.

Forsman-Hugg et al. (2013) showed growing concern about the social and environmental conditions of food production, especially in Europe. According to Luhmann and Theuvsen (2016), discussions about food availability gave way to concerns centered on according quality and ethical aspects of food production. Gider and Hamm (2019) stated that European food companies were required to disclose information about their activities related to environmental, social, and employee issues, mainly because food production can impact climate change and biodiversity. Hence, the concern with sustainable consumption and production priority themes for global action plans, such as the SDGs. Therefore, it is a fact that food companies seeking continuity must have initiatives aimed at achieving these goals.

c) Sustainability in the global food industry

Palazzo and Vollero (2022) state that the number of articles dealing with sustainable food supply chain management has grown, probably due to increased awareness of environmental problems and the need to reduce global hunger, increased food risks, understanding of the benefits of reducing food waste, health management and the well-being of people in all geographical areas. However, few studies combine the various sustainability constructs with the main elements of sustainable food supply chain management.

Rajiic et al. (2022) studied the companies' involvement of the food food sector with sustainability based on the environmental dimension. The results showed that companies are trying to reduce energy consumption, greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, water withdrawal, and total waste. Schwarz et al. (2016) compared the local Belgian and global Peruvian asparagus value chains and explore their sustainability performance, and found that neither supply chain invariably performs better in terms of sustainability.

Adams, Donovan and Topple (2023) showed that the lack of a governmental regulatory and environmental framework is a significant barrier to sustainability in the company. Commitment to sustainability depends fundamentally on top management, which is seen as an essential internal factor. Donner and de Vries (2023) point out that company values, practical actions of social responsibility, the collaborative approach, the involvement and cooperation of stakeholders, are possible paths to sustainability.

It is therefore clear that many companies around the world are adopting sustainable practices in their operations to minimize their environmental impact and promote social responsibility. In addition, companies are investing in innovation and technology to develop new products and processes that are more sustainable. However, it should be made clear that there are few studies evaluating sustainability management in the food industry in terms of its environmental dimension, based on the goals and targets set out in the 2030 Agenda.

d) The Brazilian food industry

The Brazilian Food Industry Association (ABIA) represents 38 thousand large, medium, and small companies, of which 86 large companies are members. In 2022, the industry had revenues of US$157.5 billion. The Brazilian food industry also generated, in 2022, 1.8 million direct employment, accounting for 24.2% of jobs in the Brazilian manufacturing industry; that is, it is representing the largest generator of employment in the manufacturing industry in Brazil (ABIA, 2023).

ABIA's current survey points out that, in 2022, the Brazilian food industry recorded a 16.56% growth in revenue compared to 2021, different a drop of 8.2% seen in the COVID-19 pandemic period of 2020/2021. This result indicates that, in 2022, there was a 28.8% share of the sector's total sales, that is, export + domestic sales. In 2022, the Brazilian food industry contributed with 85.5% Brazil's trade balance, that is, around US$ 52.83 billion, and represented 17.9% of total Brazilian exports. Therefore, it is a result that represents 10.8% of the national GDP. The Brazil is the second largest exporter of processed foods in the world in volume and the 5th in value, with its foods available in more than 190 countries. Therefore, the numbers express the sector´s relevance of the national scene (ABIA, 2023).

In 2012, ABIA prepared a document to integrate the discussions at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio+20. In the document, ABIA (2012, p. 9) points out that the food industry in Brazil "has been demonstrating clear efforts to become more sustainable" and that "since the Rio-92 Conference, the industry has been engaged in international debates on sustainable development and strives to design and adopt best practices."

According to ABIA (2012. p. 9), global projections "of population growth and an increase in the pattern of food consumption," especially in developing countries, "further elevate the importance of best social and environmental practices in the production of food and beverage for everyone." Given this reality, "Brazil, being a major global producer and supplier of food, should play a central role in defining the direction of sustainable development."

ABIA (2012. p. 9) emphasizes that "the relationship between the food industry and sustainable development" occurs "much beyond the gates of food factories across the country." According to the institution, "interactions with the value chain, from farmers to consumers, are fundamental to sustainability this industry."

In light of the 2030 Agenda, organizations' commitment to the SDGs is not restricted to just a few priority actions, according to their convenience. These global objectives and goals have intertwined elements that require a total commitment from organizations to achieve them.

Regarding environmental sustainability, the ABIA document (2012) points out that its actions encompass the following elements: i) Search for energy efficiency and clean energy sources; ii) Energy generation from burning waste from industry itself (sugar cane bagasse, rice husk, animal waste, among others); iii) Reduction of water consumption and reuse; iv) Fighting deforestation, preserving and defending biodiversity; v) Agricultural exploration in areas free from devastation; vi) Use of raw materials from renewable sources; vii) Concrete actions to minimize the causes and effects of climate change; viii) Creation of carbon credit projects (by 2020 projects would remove from the atmosphere or avoid the emission of 34.8 million tons of carbon dioxide, which is equivalent to planting and conserving 2,654 square kilometers of native cerrado for 20 years); ix) Control the use of agricultural and animal pesticides, etc., to avoid damage to health and contamination of soil and water; x) Use of renewable and environmentally friendly packaging; xi) Minimization of waste generation; xii) Establishment of reverse logistics and correct disposal of waste throughout the production chain; xiii) Fighting food waste; xiv) Development of new sustainable technologies for the production chain; and, xv) Work to raise awareness and train actors in the chain to act in a sustainably manner.

Given, it is clear that there is a movement in the Brazilian food industry in favor of sustainable development. However, few scientific studies allow us to identify the measures adopted by the food industries, making this a significant gap for our survey.

Based on the assumption that food companies are fundamental to the development of society, the following questions are posed as survey problems: Given the commitments made in 2012 by the Brazilian Food Industry Association (ABIA) at Rio+20, what advances have been made in environmental sustainability? And what are the environmental sustainability practices in large Brazilian food companies in light of the 2030 Agenda goals?

The present study sought to identify and discuss practices aimed at environmental sustainability in large Brazilian food companies in light of the 2030 Agenda goals, and the commitments made by the Brazilian Food Industry Association (ABIA) at Rio+20.

The work is justified due to the growing importance of studies that contribute to analyzing of the environmental impacts of business management. Even though there is already a range of indicators available to measure sustainability in organizations (Souza, De Benedicto & Silva, 2021), Almeida Filho and Lauar (2021) and Rosati and Faria (2019b) state that the applicability of the Sustainable Development Goals in the context of companies still lacks academic evaluations.

It is known that the responsibility for fulfilling the SDGs lies with Nation-States. However, many topics involve local challenges, which require specific actions by companies and other actors. As a result, the need for a global governance for sustainability, from public policies, to companies and civil society (Silva, 2021). Roma (2019, p. 39) endorses this idea by arguing that achieving the goals and objectives of the 2030 Agenda "requires a coordinated effort not only at the level of government spheres but also of the private sector, NGOs and the entire Brazilian society," to allow the potential of this global agenda to induce sustainable development to materialize and produce the desired benefits for society. Ardekani et al. (2023), in turn, argue that the Covid-19 pandemic may have negatively impacted the adoption of sustainable initiatives by agribusiness. Hence the relevance of identifying and discussing practices aimed at the environmental sustainability of Brazilian food companies in light of the objectives of the 2030 Agenda.

Djekic et al. (2021) highlight that the food supply chain is fundamental to achieving the SDGs, mainly because it is a global chain and plays a crucial role in feeding the world. In this regard, the large food companies are essential stakeholder in this chain, influencing farmers, food processors, traders, and consumers.

In the case of the Brazilian food industry, its involvement in favor of sustainable development is expected. However, there are few studies on the current scenario of the Brazilian food industry in terms of its practices around sustainable development and environmental sustainability based on the goals and targets set out in the 2030 Agenda. Considering the commitment made by ABIA at Rio+20, as well as its influence in the consolidation of the 2030 Agenda, there is a need for more in-depth studies, and comparisons regarding measures in favor of the SDGs.

III. Survey Methods and Procedures

Based on studies by Chizzotti (2018) and Gil (2019), this survey has an applied nature, a qualitative approach and a descriptive and exploratory objective.

Regarding the procedures for data collection, the survey was characterized as documentary and bibliographic. According to Gil (2019), documentary survey uses primary sources, that is, data and information that have not yet been study in a scientific way, while bibliographic survey uses sources made up of material that has already been published.

We sought to identify, based on sustainability reports from Brazilian companies in the food industry, the leading practices aimed at environmental sustainability, and discussing the results found based on the SDGs. It is worth noting that, in 2012, ABIA made commitments in favor of environmental sustainability from the discussions held at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio+20. Such obligations are explained in institution documents (ABIA, 2012, 2013).

Among the 38,000 large, medium, and small companies represented by the Brazilian Food Industry Association (ABIA), 86 large companies stand out for being members (ABIA, 2023). Initially, filtering was carried out to identify, among the 86 associated companies, which ones demonstrated the obligations made by ABIA at the Rio+20 Conference in favor of environmental sustainability. Of this total, 77 of them do not explain the commitments assumed by ABIA, despite the fact that even though sustainability report also highlights sustainable actions. Nine associated companies highlight the pledges made by ABIA at the Rio+20 Conference in favor of environmental sustainability. Namely: Ambev, Bunge, Carrefour, Coca-Cola, JBS, Nestlé, PepsiCo, TetraPak, Unilever.

To select the actions that are related to the commitments assumed by ABIA, the proposal made by Caralli et al. (2004) on critical success factors (CSFs). In the case of this survey, to apply the method, the information was collected from the sources already mentioned and was grouped to represent the main activities that are carried out in the companies. This information was organized and analyzed into affinity groups so that critical factors could be identified. To apply the critical success factors (CSFs) method, the following script was followed: 1. Scope definition; 2. Data collection; 3. Data analysis; 4. Identification of critical factors; 5. Analysis of critical success factors.

Data analysis for this survey took place using a technique called content analysis. For Silva and Fossá (2015), content analysis must follow the following steps: (i) General reading of the collected material; (ii) Coding

Global Journal of Human-Social Science (H) Volume XXIV Issue I Version I Year 2024

for formulating analysis categories using the theoretical framework and the indications brought by the general reading; (iii) Cutting the material into comparable recording units (words, sentences, paragraphs) with the same semantic content; (iv) Establishment of categories that differ thematically in the recording units (transfer from raw data to organized data). To facilitate the identification and understanding of the actions promoted over the last ten years, analysis categories were created according to a list of commitments assumed by ABIA. From a temporal perspective, the survey was carried out in 2023.

Therefore, unlike other research on the food industry, this research assessed the management for sustainability of the Brazilian food industry, considering the commitment made by ABIA at Rio+20, but in the light of the objectives and targets set out in the 2030 Agenda.

IV. Results

a) Presentation of collected data

Data collection was carried out based on 15 categories of analysis were considered, as shown in Table 1. These categories were selected based on commitment made by ABIA at Rio+20. Only companies were studied ABIA member companies that develop sustainability policies. The companies studied are listed in table 1.

Table 1: Analysis categories according to a list of commitments assumed by ABIA

Analysis category 1: Search for energy efficiency and clean energy sources	
Company	**Actions**
JBS	Biolins Cogeneration Unit (thermoelectric and steam energy from biomass). (JBS, 2019).
	JBS Biodiesel (from beef tallow). (JBS, 2019).
	Friendly Oil Project (JBS, 2019).
	Replacement of conventional lamps with LED models (JBS, 2019).
Ambev	Wind Farm (AMBEV, 2020).
	Solar plants to supply Ambev distribution centers (AMBEV, 2020).
	SAVEe platform (sharing information and guidance on reducing consumption and improving energy management). (AMBEV, 2021).
	Partial replacement of fossil fuels and electricity with renewable sources, such as vegetable oil, biomass and biogas (AMBEV, 2020).
	Acquisition of boilers to generate steam and work with sources such as biomass and biogas (AMBEV, 2020).
Bunge	Sugar and bioenergy joint venture (generation of renewable energy from sugar cane bagasse). (Decker, 2019).
Analysis category 2: Generation of energy from burning waste from the industry itself	
JBS	Burning poultry fat in boilers, replacing fossil fuel, no longer consuming natural resources and disposing of fat as waste, minimizing greenhouse gas emissions for steam generation by 98% (JBS, 2021).
Analysis category 3: Reducing consumption and reusing water	
Coke	Elimination of waste points; conscious and efficient use of water resources; construction of pipes to distribute treated water to production lines; inclusion of an additional Hi-flow polishing filter; increasing water distribution capacity; modernization of bathrooms generating water savings of 60 m^3 per day or 21,900 m^3 per year; recovery of sand and coal backwash water (FIESP, 2016).
Ambev	Water availability and quality in 100% of communities in areas of water stress (AMBEV, 2021).
	Reuse of water in irrigation of pasture areas on farms in Anápolis and Uberlândia, increasing productivity per area (AMBEV, 2021).
	Water reuse in an aluminum industry in São Luis (MA). (AMBEV, 2021).
	Reuse of water for irrigation of productive areas for a small community of farmers in Água Claras (SE). (AMBEV, 2021).
	Use of effluents to generate electrical energy through a microturbine in Santa Catarina,
	Ponta Grossa (PR) and Sete Lagoas (MG). (AMBEV, 2021).
	Água AMA, in partnership with Yunus Social Business. Ambev reverts 100% of the profits from its AMA sales to drinking water distribution projects (AMBEV, 2021).
	Reuse of internal effluent (AMBEV, 2020).
	Use for fertigation in rice cultivation, in Viamão (RS). (AMBEV, 2020).
Analysis category 4: Fighting deforestation, preserving and defending biodiversity	
Nestlé	Nescafé Colmeia, produced by bees that pollinated coffee trees, allowing the preservation of biodiversity, reduces the impact of farming on the environment, reduces the amount of water used, supporting regenerative farms (NESTLE, 2022).
Analysis category 5: Agricultural exploration in areas free from devastation	

PepsiCo	Potato cultivation with producers consistent with the Sustainable Agriculture Program, partially using an aeroponic system (PEPSICO, 2021).
Analysis category 6: Use of raw materials from renewable sources	
TetraPak	Use of recycled polymers in packaging (TETRAPAK, 2022).
Analysis category 7: Concrete actions to minimize the causes and effects of climate change	
Ambev	Replacement of traditional truck fleets with electric trucks (Estigarribia, 2020).
Analysis category 8: Creation of carbon credit projects	
JBS	Net Zero 2040: project that aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through projects that aim to balance the impact of emissions through the recovery of degraded areas, increasing carbon stocks in the soil, regenerative agriculture and promoting innovation (JBS, 2021).
Ambev	Acquisition of a fleet of Volkswagen electric trucks, powered 100% by electrical energy from clean sources (Estigarribia, 2020).
Analysis category 9: Control of the use of agricultural and animal pesticides, etc., in order to avoid damage to health and contamination of soil and water	
	Among ABIA member companies, the survey carried out for this study was not conclusive in this category.
Analysis category 10: Use of renewable and environmentally friendly packaging	
Tetrapak	Forest Stewardship Council sustainability standard, in which the forests where raw materials are obtained are managed in a way that protects biodiversity and ensures renewability (TETRAPAK, 2021).
	The polymers used in the lids are made from a mix of recycled and non-recycled materials, but the corresponding mass of recycled materials has been tracked throughout Tetra Pak's supply chain (TETRAPAK, 2021).
	Tetra Top packaging: top and lid are made with high-density polyethylene (HDPE), produced from Brazilian sugar cane (TETRAPAK, 2016).
Ambev	PET bottle made with 100% recycled material (AMBEV, 2022).
	Ambev Vidros produces glass bottles by recycling shards and uses them as raw material for 47% of the packaging made at the unit (AMBEV, 2022).
Analysis category 11: Minimizing waste generation	
Nestlé	Its goal is to make 100% of its packaging reusable or recyclable by 2025: candy boxes without the outer plastic film, reducing 450 tons/year of plastic (NESTLE, 2021).
	RE Initiative (REduce, REthink, REcreate). (NESTLE, 2021).
Analysis category 12: Establishment of reverse logistics and correct waste disposal throughout the production chain	
Nestlé	Reverse logistics, enabling the recycling of packaging that is destined for partner cooperatives. The raw material obtained is transformed into new items such as plant pots, buckets, trash cans, shovels, traffic cones and benches, among others (NESTLE, 2021).
Ambev	Zero Plastic Pollution: elimination and replacement; returnable and recycled packaging; Innovation and partnerships (AMBEV, 2021).
	Ambev Vidros: production of glass bottles from recycled shards (AMBEV, 2021).
	Reciclo Bees: integrates reverse logistics into the urban distribution logistics of products destined for bars and restaurants. Through distribution centers, it offers a free collection and disposal service for post-consumer packaging. Partnership with Startup Green Mining to recycle glass and empty plastic packaging (ABERJE, 2021).
Carrefour	Partnership with Startup Green Mining to recycle glass and empty plastic packaging (ABERJE, 2021).
Analysis category 13: Fighting food waste	
Unilever	Unidos Pela Comida (United for Food): ensuring that food that would otherwise be wasted in the food production chain country will be transformed into meals for people in vulnerable situations (UNILEVER, 2021).
Analysis category 14: Development of new sustainable technologies for the production chain	
PepsiCo	100% sustainable potato cultivation, part of which is produced using an aeroponic system, increasing productivity per hectare by 30 to 37% and reducing the cost per ton produced by 25%; soil regeneration through the use of forage plants and crop rotation in potato production; 60% reduction in the use of clean water in the washing stage (PEPSICO, 2021).
Ambev	Partnership with Lemon, which aims to expand the use of renewable sources in bars and restaurants (ABIR, 2020).
	Partnership with Luming Intelligence Energetics in order to generate energy from biogas, reducing carbon emissions (ABIR, 2020).
Analysis category 15: Work to raise awareness and train actors in the chain to act in a sustainable way	
Ambev and Coca-Cola	Recycle for Brazil: aims to develop waste picker cooperatives in Brazil, aiming to increase the income of waste pickers, with management guidance, donation of equipment and encouragement of networking with other cooperatives (AMBEV, 2020; Coca Cola, 2018).

Source: survey data.

Global Journal of Human-Social Science (H) Volume XXIV Issue I Version I Year 2024

b) Analysis and discussion of results

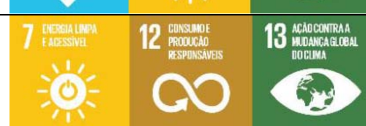
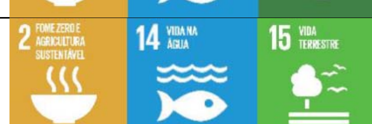
The results reveal that the food industry has directed efforts towards the development of sustainability practices. Table 1 lists the actions of food companies in favor of sustainability. As observed by Ardekani et al. (2023), who studied Brazilian agribusiness, the Brazilian food industry, despite COVID-19, maintained its commitments to a more sustainable world. Barbosa et al. (2022) demonstrated that collaboration is fundamental to the sustainable performance of companies in the agri-food industry, especially those companies oriented towards internationalization. Companies in the sector that adopt sustainable practices promote, among other things, efficient use of resources and preservation of the environment.

The environmental pillar reflects the impact of human activities on the environment, being directly related to the food industry, the destination of 58% of agricultural production on the national scene, as stated in the 2023 ABIA annual report and, in parallel, responsible for 10.8 % of Brazil's Gross Domestic Product (ABIA, 2023).

This data demonstrates the industry's relevance as a driver of measures that favor environmental sustainability and therefore justify the categories of analysis listed by ABIA (2012). However, the same data cited may raise questions about the relatively small number of companies analyzed. It is essential to highlight, in this context, that were studies only companies associated with ABIA (Brazilian Food Industry Association).

Considering the categories listed by ABIA, sources for analysis in this work, the first aspect considered was their respective correlation with the SDGs. It should be noted that in the perception of Toussaint, Cabanela, and Muñoz-Dueñas (2022), the SDGs defined by the United Nations are an exciting starting point for sustainability in the food industry, as they suggest challenges that encompass social issues and challenges related to food. If business activity is considered in a generalized way, it is expected that SDGs 8, 9, and 12 actions above be a source of the aforementioned actions, therefore, with sustainable and inclusive economic growth. Based on the effectiveness of these SDGs, decent work is promoted, and built resilient and innovative infrastructures, with sustainable production and consumption patterns. These are aspects that guide subsequent decision-making, considering the power and influence that organizations exert over the community (Dias & Marques, 2017). Furthermore, the aspects that make up the 15 categories of analysis must also consider the other SDGs, based on the assumption that the commitment should not be restricted to just a few measures (Menezes, 2019). Table 2 establishes an interface between the analysis categories listed by ABIA and the Sustainable Development 2030 Agenda Goals.

Table 2: Interface between the analysis categories listed by ABIA and the Sustainable Development Goals

Analysis Category	SDG linked to the topic
Search for energy efficiency and clean energy sources	
Generation of energy from burning waste from the industry itself	
Reducing consumption and reusing water	
Fighting deforestation, preserving and defending biodiversity	
Agricultural exploration in areas free from devastation	
Use of raw materials from renewable sources	

Concrete actions to minimize the causes and effects of climate change	2 FOME ZERO E AGRICULTURA SUSTENTÁVEL; 13 AÇÃO CONTRA A MUDANÇA GLOBAL DO CLIMA
Creation of carbon credit projects	7 ENERGIA LIMPA E ACESSÍVEL; 13 AÇÃO CONTRA A MUDANÇA GLOBAL DO CLIMA; 15 VIDA TERRESTRE
Control of the use of agricultural and animal pesticides, in order to avoid damage to health and contamination of soil and water	2 FOME ZERO E AGRICULTURA SUSTENTÁVEL; 6 ÁGUA POTÁVEL E SANEAMENTO
Use of renewable and environmentally friendly packaging	7 ENERGIA LIMPA E ACESSÍVEL; 12 CONSUMO E PRODUÇÃO RESPONSÁVEIS
Minimizing waste generation	11 CIDADES E COMUNIDADES SUSTENTÁVEIS; 12 CONSUMO E PRODUÇÃO RESPONSÁVEIS
Establishment of reverse logistics and correct waste disposal throughout the production chain	1 ERRADICAÇÃO DA POBREZA; 8 TRABALHO DECENTE E CRESCIMENTO ECONÔMICO; 9 INDÚSTRIA, INOVAÇÃO E INFRAESTRUTURA; 10 REDUÇÃO DAS DESIGUALDADES; 11 CIDADES E COMUNIDADES SUSTENTÁVEIS; 12 CONSUMO E PRODUÇÃO RESPONSÁVEIS; 13 AÇÃO CONTRA A MUDANÇA GLOBAL DO CLIMA; 14 VIDA NA ÁGUA; 15 VIDA TERRESTRE
Fighting food waste	1 ERRADICAÇÃO DA POBREZA; 2 FOME ZERO E AGRICULTURA SUSTENTÁVEL; 3 SAÚDE E BEM-ESTAR
Development of new sustainable technologies for the production chain	2 FOME ZERO E AGRICULTURA SUSTENTÁVEL; 6 ÁGUA POTÁVEL E SANEAMENTO; 7 ENERGIA LIMPA E ACESSÍVEL; 9 INDÚSTRIA, INOVAÇÃO E INFRAESTRUTURA; 12 CONSUMO E PRODUÇÃO RESPONSÁVEIS; 13 AÇÃO CONTRA A MUDANÇA GLOBAL DO CLIMA; 17 PARCERIAS E MEIOS DE IMPLEMENTAÇÃO
Work to raise awareness and train actors in the chain to act in a sustainable way	1 ERRADICAÇÃO DA POBREZA; 2 FOME ZERO E AGRICULTURA SUSTENTÁVEL; 4 EDUCAÇÃO DE QUALIDADE; 6 ÁGUA POTÁVEL E SANEAMENTO; 13 AÇÃO CONTRA A MUDANÇA GLOBAL DO CLIMA; 17 PARCERIAS E MEIOS DE IMPLEMENTAÇÃO

Source: Prepared by the authors based on survey data.

Correlating the analysis categories to the SDGs, the industry's commitment to complying with many points discussed in the 2030 Agenda is clear. Some measures satisfactorily meet the Goals, especially those in the "Planet" pillar. Topics 5 (Gender Equality), and 16 (Peace, Justice and Effective Institutions) are the only ones not listed in the foreground.

However, it is essential to note that for category 9, control of the use of agricultural and animal pesticides, to avoid damage to health and contamination of soil and water, no concrete or well-designed actions were found, which implies a possible gap in favor of compliance with the agreement reached, a factor of concern, considering that Brazil is a country in evidence in the problematic pesticides market (Friedrich et al., 2021).

Furthermore, few actions were detected for categories 2 – Energy Generation from the Burning of Industry's Own Waste; 4 – Fighting Deforestation, Preservation and Defense of Biodiversity; 5 – Agricultural exploration in areas free from devastation; 6 – Use of raw materials from renewable sources; and 7 – Concrete actions to minimize the causes and effects of climate change. It is essential to highlight the interconnection between some points mentioned, such as, for example, the actions that promote the generation of energy from the burning of waste also imply the use of raw materials from renewable sources and, consequently, contribute to the minimization of climate changes.

It is also essential to highlight sustainability practices have to the use of renewable packaging (category 10). In the fight against the generation of plastic waste, initiatives promoting alternatives are promising. For example, they imply the minimization of waste generated, and to favoring the reverse logistics. Another happy advance concerns the development of new technologies and the promotion of training in favor of sustainability, enabling the propensity of an industry that is increasingly attentive to the real needs of the environment. Pizzi et al. (2020) demonstrated the business sector's involvement with the SDGs, with innovation for sustainability being one of the main survey axes. Venturelli et al. (2022) showed, through a case study, that sustainable innovation is essential for incorporating the Global Goals and for companies in the food sector to achieve competitive advantages.

V. Final Considerations

Undoubtedly, large companies relate to issues that have a global impact. In this context, sustainability has been a topic of great relevance in national and international debates, given demand for a sustainable stance from organizations due to the urgency to maintain the conditions necessary for quality life on Planet Earth.

The Brazilian food industry is an integral part of this scenario. This arises not only from its participation in the national GDP but considering that it is directly related by agriculture, it a decisive and vital sector for environmental sustainability, especially in a country like Brazil, where this industry competes for space with sensitive biomes and ecosystems, unique throughout the world, and threatened by economic activities.

However, the dimension of the term sustainability needs to be organized so that the sustainable actions of food companies are technically based and not just work to maintain a production model that sees environmental sustainability only as a competitive advantage, characterizing greenwashing actions when Marketing strategies deceive consumers and erode the elements that can attribute sustainability to something or someone.

On the context of the food sector and the companies studied, the commitment of companies associated with ABIA seems evident sustainable and environmentally positive practices. In addition, guiding a company's actions based on the objectives and goals that make up the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development can constitute a strategic parameter to be achieved, as an action plan drawn up based on the SDGs has the potential to contribute to the prosperity of organizations, the planet and the people who live on it, endorsing other frameworks designed to achieve sustainable development, with the difference that this is a global agenda widely accepted by the various types of organizations.

Although there are still many gaps, without the full achievement of some goals by the niche addressed in this survey, it is recommended that good environmental sustainability practices be further disseminated. For future studies, it is suggested that the theoretical contributions discussed in this work can be effectively applied in the context of companies.

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Economic Crises and Pandemics: Mitigating the Effects through Sustainable Actions and Elements of Competitive Advantage

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Abstract- The COVID-19 pandemic brought with it a serious economic crisis in 2020, affecting several sectors of the economy and companies extensively, especially Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). History shows the recurrence of economic crises with global impacts, such as the Great Depression of 1929 and the 2008 subprime crisis, as well as localized impacts, like the 2014 crisis in Brazil. Faced with the potential repetition of similar events in the future and the need to identify risk mitigation strategies for SMEs, this work aims to provide a set of guidelines based on actions related to sustainability and elements of competitive advantage that SMEs can employ to face economic crises or pandemics. Regarding the methodological aspects, this is an exploratory and descriptive research with a qualitative approach. Data were collected through documentary and bibliographical research in the scientific literature, focusing on sustainability actions and competitive advantages employable by SMEs to mitigate risks arising from economic crises and pandemics.

Keywords: economic crises, pandemics, sustainability, competitive advantage, small and medium-sized enterprises, risk mitigation, resilience, business strategy.

GJHSS-H Classification: *LCC Code: HC79.E5*

ECONOMICCRISESANDPANDEMICSMITIGATINGTHEEFFECTSTHROUGHSUSTAINABLEACTIONSANDELEMENTSOFCOMPETITIVEADVANTAGE

Strictly as per the compliance and regulations of:

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Sivaldo Donizetti Teodoro [α], Orandi Mina Falsarella[σ], Duarcides Ferreira Mariosa[ρ], Bruna Angela Branchi [ρ], Diego de Melo Conti [Ѡ], Samuel Carvalho de Benedicto [¥] & Juan Fernando Alvarez [§]

Abstract- The COVID-19 pandemic brought with it a serious economic crisis in 2020, affecting several sectors of the economy and companies extensively, especially Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). History shows the recurrence of economic crises with global impacts, such as the Great Depression of 1929 and the 2008 subprime crisis, as well as localized impacts, like the 2014 crisis in Brazil. Faced with the potential repetition of similar events in the future and the need to identify risk mitigation strategies for SMEs, this work aims to provide a set of guidelines based on actions related to sustainability and elements of competitive advantage that SMEs can employ to face economic crises or pandemics. Regarding the methodological aspects, this is an exploratory and descriptive research with a qualitative approach. Data were collected through documentary and bibliographical research in the scientific literature, focusing on sustainability actions and competitive advantages employable by SMEs to mitigate risks arising from economic crises and pandemics. As a result, a set of guidelines is proposed, enabling SMEs to face fragile economic conditions, survive in scenarios of global economic paralysis, mitigate the reduction in employment levels, and cope with impacts related to reduced demand. In conclusion, SMEs that embrace elements of competitive advantage and sustainable practices stand a better chance of surviving the impacts and vulnerabilities caused by economic crises and pandemics.

Keywords: economic crises, pandemics, sustainability, competitive advantage, small and medium-sized enterprises, risk mitigation, resilience, business strategy.

I. Introduction

The year 2020 will be marked in history, mainly by the effects of the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) especially small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). In Brazil, as reported by Rodriguez-Morales et al. (2020), the first case of COVID-19 was registered on February 21, 2020, and showed rapid growth. For this reason, social isolation measures were taken throughout the country, following what had already been done in many other countries, as a means of containing the spread of the virus and the increase in the number of deaths, which caused major economic impacts.

In a survey carried out by Sebrae (2020), approximately 90% of individual microentrepreneurs (MEI) reported that there had been a reduction in revenue in the same period. 78% of those interviewed had their activities suspended due to state or municipal decrees; more than 60% reported needing temporary assistance to support their families; and 51% reported needing loans to avoid closing their businesses.

In the same way as the COVID-19 pandemic, the first major economic crisis of the era of capitalism, which gave rise to the beginning of "The Great Depression", according to Piketty (2014), occurred in 1929, lasting more than ten years, hitting rich countries with unprecedented brutality, with unemployment reaching 25% of the active population in the United States, United Kingdom, France, and Germany in 1932.

With the intensification of globalization and technology in recent decades, the economic crises of the new millennium have been overwhelming and have affected all continents on the planet. Stiglitz (2009) makes a scathing critique of the 2008 crisis, stating that it seemed evident that the economic growth of the United States of America was not sustainable, as when the real estate bubble burst, Americans withdrew hundreds of billions of dollars applied to mortgages, starting the economic crisis in the United States, which spread to Europe and quickly became global.

Given the historically recurring fact that pandemics and economic crises happen and will probably continue to happen, affecting the economy and the lives of thousands of people and companies, especially SMEs, the challenge is to face these contexts. A sustainable company can have a differentiator, which can be expanded if it also has elements related to the concept of competitive advantage.

In this context, the search for sustainability as a fundamental concept to be adopted by companies appears as an alternative for balancing economic objectives and socio-environmental practices. According to Laville (2009), business's people must develop a long-term vision for the planet and companies. Almeida (2007) adds that sustainable development goes beyond purely economic aspects, as its paradigm includes social and environmental dimensions and must be considered from the planning stage to the operation and evaluation of the enterprise or development policy.

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In this sense, a company can be a source of competitive advantage, according to Barney (1991), when it has the following attributes: i) Being valuable in terms of exploring opportunities and neutralizing threats; ii) Being rare, through a value creation strategy that competitors cannot implement; iii) Being difficult for competitors to imitate; iv) Having the ability to implement strategies to replace resources from other competitors.

Thus, in situations of crises and pandemics that affect SMEs economically and cause serious social problems and environmental consequences, the following questions arises: How can strategies in the context of sustainability and competitive advantage be established to favor the development of a sustainable basis for SMEs in the face of the impacts caused by economic crises or pandemics? In addition, could SMEs adopt guidelines resulting from sustainable actions and elements of competitive advantage to mitigate the effects of economic crises and pandemics?

a) *Objectives*

To answer this question, this work aims to present a set of guidelines for sustainable strategic management to identify risk mitigation alternatives so that SMEs face situations of economic crises or pandemics in the future based on actions related to sustainability and elements of competitive advantage.

b) *Methodological Approach*

The present study is characterized as exploratory and descriptive research utilizing a qualitative approach, as the "[...] chosen theme is little explored [...]" (Gil, 2002, p. 43) since it is current and there are no references that jointly address the topics of sustainability and sustainable development, economic and health crises, such as those arising from the COVID-19 pandemic and similar issues, competitive advantages and resilience, in the context of SMEs.

According to Silveira and Córdova (2009), this type of research also provides more familiarity with the topic, helping to make it better known. For Richardson (2017), qualitative research is a means to explore and understand a social or human problem. The analysis is based on the interpretations made by the researcher about the meaning of the data collected. Gil (2019) adds that exploratory research aims to provide greater familiarity with the problem and explain it or outline hypotheses.

The data for this study were obtained through documentary and bibliographical research on the CAPES Periodicals Portal, Scielo, Web of Science, Google Scholar, books, and publications from institutions such as Sebrae.

On the topic of sustainability and sustainable development, we sought to discuss the main concepts and use them to develop a set of sustainable guidelines (Table 1). Concerning the second theme, we sought to discuss the concepts of competitiveness and competitive advantage, focusing on SMEs. Moreover, the main elements arising from the concept of competitiveness that can help SMEs to be more competitive are summarized in Table 2.

The focus on the theme "economic crises and pandemics" was based on the concepts of crisis, some of which had a global impact and others at a national level. Still, to meet the study's objective, they were presented in Table 3, constructed from the study by Teodoro et al. (2023), the vulnerabilities, impacts, and consequences of economic crises and pandemics.

The characterization of the research object has, at its core, SMEs. This focus is explained by the representativeness of SMEs in terms of job creation and the driving force of the economy of many countries, being responsible for a good share of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), both in Brazil (SEBRAE, 2018), as well as in North America (LOVINS & COHEN, 2013).

For Koirala (2019), the technical or legal definition of SMEs, as it represents a broad and heterogeneous class of companies, does not follow a standard and varies by country. In Brazil, SMEs are classified according to Gross Operating Revenue (GOR). While a small company has an annual income of between R$360,000 and R$4.8 million, a medium-sized company has an annual income of between R$4.8 million and R$300 million (BNDES, 2023). Koirala (2019) emphasizes that, in Europe, SMEs are defined as companies with less than 250 employees and turnover of less than 50 million Euros, while in the United States, SMEs are broadly defined as having less than 500 employees. Emerging countries also have variations in the definitions of SMEs. Therefore, the criteria vary according to the type of company and the defining government body.

Guidelines will be proposed below so that SMEs can mitigate the vulnerabilities, impacts, and consequences described by Teodoro et al. (2023) in the future based on sustainable actions and elements of competitive advantage.

II. Sustainability in Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises

a) *Definitions of sustainability*

Society is sending out signals that it urgently awaits the implementation of a new perspective on the responsible use of resources involving social and environmental issues so that the next generations do not perish. Thus, since the end of the 20th century, the topic of sustainable development and sustainability has been gaining ground in various sectors of society, in addition to being part of intense debates at various events on climate change worldwide.

The term "Sustainable Development" began to be assimilated by the international community when, in

1987, the Brundtland Commission (WCED, 1987) defined sustainable development as "the ambition that humanity will meet its current needs without compromising the possibility that future generations can also do so" (VEIGA, 2015, p. 9). Subsequently, in the various agreements on the impacts of climate change established within the scope of the United Nations, signatory countries were set as targets for the Millennium Goals for the period 2000–2015 and the Sustainable Development Goals for 2015–2030 (VEIGA, 2015).

In turn, the term sustainability has provoked many discussions without, however, there being a consensus. The word "sustainable" comes from the Latin vivere, a verb that symbolizes the action of defending, favoring, supporting, conserving, or caring. In dictionaries, sustainability is conceptualized as the ability to sustain or withstand one or more conditions (OLIVEIRA et al., 2017). Some studies consider sustainability and sustainable development synonymous, while others consider them different (FEIL & SCHREIBER, 2017).

b) Role of SMEs in sustainable development

In the context of organizations, there is the world-renowned TBL, or Tripod of Sustainability, coined by John Elkington in the 1990s, which refers to the three basic pillars of Sustainability: Environmental (Planet), Economic (Profit), and Social (People). Its central idea is that for a business to be considered sustainable, it must be economically viable, socially fair, and environmentally correct (ELKINGTON, 2012).

According to Barbosa (2018), more and more companies are implementing sustainability-oriented strategies, seeking business practices aligned with socio-environmental values to meet society's desires. Munck and Souza (2010) highlight that organizational sustainability is related to the ability of companies to maintain their performance in the long term within the context of economic, social, and environmental dimensions.

Boszczowski and Teixeira (2012) cite a new concept called "sustainable entrepreneurship," which aims to solve society's problems as it explores the opportunity to create social and environmental value through the generation of economic value, enabling the introduction of new goods and services that aim to solve society's social, environmental and economic problems.

Munck et al. (2016) emphasize that the evolving discussions about sustainability and sustainable development have started to be incorporated into the businesses of organizations, which, due to consuming environmental resources in an unruly, unequal, and harmful way with social consequences, has become essential to rethink its production processes.

Furtado (2005) argues that the definition of "sustainable development", used in the business area, requires that companies consider, in their business strategies, the inclusion of objectives related to the protection, improvement, and maintenance of natural and human resources that will be needed in the future.

Berlato et al. (2016) argue that, due to the great influence that companies impose on human, social, and environmental resources, it is essential that a long-term strategic vision adopts sustainable development. Despite its central objective still being profit, they also add that the company's success will depend on its broader social participation, involving social and environmental aspects.

In the context of the social dimension, Sachs (2008) argues that growth, driven by employment, should be better explored, covering all spheres of production of non-tradable goods through labor-intensive methods; that is, it is necessary to investigate how far you can get this way.

Yunus (2014) argues that it is necessary to introduce another type of company that recognizes the multidimensional nature of human beings: the social enterprise, which not only has profit as its objective but is focused on solving social and environmental problems.

This scenario does not only occur in Brazil. According to Lovins and Cohen (2013), SMEs are the new economic engine of any country since, in North America, more than half of non-agricultural GDP is generated by small companies and, in addition, they employ almost 60 million people, generating between 60 and 80% of new job openings per year. Therefore, business cannot be directed solely from an economic perspective with a profit-focused objective; it is necessary to integrate social and environmental issues into the companies' identity. Table 1 summarizes the discussion found in the literature on sustainability in SMEs.

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Table 1: Sustainable actions that SMEs can apply.

Sustainable Actions	Authors
Create and distribute goods and services that will help raise the quality of life of individuals.	Bansal (2005)
Focus the company's activities on solving social and environmental problems. Integrate social and environmental issues as part of the company's identity.	Berlato, Saussen and Gomez (2016) Boszczowski and Teixeira (2012) Yunus (2014)
Rethink production processes and incorporate sustainable development as an integral part of organizations' business.	Munck, Bansi, and Galleli (2016)
Adopt a long-term strategic vision seeking sustainable development.	Barbosa (2018) Berlato, Saussen and Gomez (2016)
Include objectives to protect and improve human and natural resources that will be needed in the future in the business strategies.	Furtado (2005)
Ensure that activities do not erode land, air, and water resources.	Bansal (2005)
Generate jobs	Lovins and Cohen (2013) Sachs (2008) Sebrae (2018)
Maintain its performance in the economic, social, and environmental spheres in the long term.	Elkington (2012) Munck and Souza (2010)

Source: Prepared by the authors.

Given that the global scenario for SMEs has become increasingly complex and competitive, considering sustainable actions, such as those listed in Table 1, can lead to obtaining competitive advantages, the concept of which will be explored further.

III. Competitive Advantage in Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises

According to Porter (1990), to obtain a competitive advantage, the long-term challenge for any company is to place itself in a position where it can perceive opportunities to expose itself to new markets, prepare for change, update and expand employee skills, improve the company's scientific and knowledge base, and overcome inertia and complacency to act on new opportunities.

Galav (2020) makes an important contribution about why some organizations perform well while others fail. Among the possible answers, an important aspect to highlight is that high performance is based on the competitive advantages that the organization has and effectively capitalizes on when planning and implementing current and profitable strategies and policies. According to the author, competitiveness is an important mechanism in a market economy. Its foundation is effectiveness, that is, how the company capitalizes on its competitive advantages by using financial, material, natural, and human resources more efficiently.

According to Roman et al. (2012), the company must have diverse capabilities to compete and remain active in the market. These capabilities are related to people, methods, and planning. Porter (1990) also adds that companies gain a competitive position when they perceive possibilities for new strategies, position themselves more actively to see signs of change before their competitors, and respond to new demands. The author advocates that improvement and innovation are at the heart of competitive advantage.

Olave and Amato Neto (2001) consider the applicability of cooperation networks as a form of competitive advantage for small companies, as they can compete on a global scale without individually bearing the costs and uncertainties involved in this type of operation. The association of small businesses can complement their competencies by combining differentiators, that is, core competencies, with the reduced cost resulting from sharing common resources, such as process technology, supplies, and personal and organizational skills, and add value as a result to the final client.

For Lloret (2016), the production capacity of a plant is an economic limitation. Individual preferences for goods and services represent social limitations. Scarce inputs such as energy, water, or waste management processes represent environmental limitations. When not considered in the strategy, these restrictions can limit the company's competitiveness and, therefore, its performance.

According to Kossyva et al. (2015), for companies to increase their competitiveness and innovation in this global market, cooperation between independent organizations to achieve common objectives has become a prerequisite in the current context of a networked and knowledge-based economy.

According to Lloret (2016), a company's competitiveness is reflected in its long-term performance and relationships within the industry and with competitors. A competitive company is always aware of the conditions required to generate value, particularly understanding how to create sustainable value through a strategy that meets organizational objectives. The author also highlights that the emphasis on the long term is significant, as sustainability implies continuity. However, to achieve this objective, it is necessary to include environmental sustainability, social resistance, and economic stability, as sustainable competitive advantage implies permanence amid the restrictions imposed by economic, social, and environmental systems.

For Smith (1995), companies can respond quickly to market opportunities when they master the disciplines of lean thinking, as they would have precision and speed with little waste and, most importantly, without the inertia that normally accompanies change. They can readily adapt their offering to face new markets and safely experiment and reinvent how they deliver their service.

Yadav et al. (2019) argue that the lean philosophy is not limited to large companies. Lean principles such as delivering value and customer satisfaction, eliminating waste, and continuous improvement are applicable to SMEs, as they have high flexibility, fast decision-making processes, and the ability to respond at the speed customers need, that is, a positive environment for the implementation of the lean philosophy.

In addition to the lean concept, Bhattacharya, Nand, and Castka (2019) highlight the importance of adopting the green concept in an integrated manner (green-lean). For Dües et al. (2013), green lean is a strategic approach to managing organizations and their supply chains to improve organizational performance.

Duarte and Cruz-Machado (2013) state that the lean paradigm is a management philosophy aimed at improving quality and productivity, focusing on eliminating waste throughout the supply chain. The green strategy, in essence, means helping organizations seek positive impact in the environmental dimension; that is, it is an opportunity to obtain positive results by reducing the impact on the environment by eliminating environmental waste such as waste in the form of water, energy, solid and hazardous waste.

Siegel et al. (2019) add that the concepts of lean and green have become known in recent years and have a certain synergy, as both focus on reducing waste and efficient use of resources, which means they adhere to the concept of sustainability.

Caldera et al. (2019) state that sustainable business practice is an aspiration for a growing number of SMEs worldwide, promoting profitability, resilience, and positive impacts regarding social and environmental dimensions. Lean thinking has evolved as a business strategy for SMEs to achieve sustainable business practices to meet the need for production efficiency and waste reduction.

In line with the goals of optimizing processes, reducing costs, and offering better-added value to the customer, the role of technology has been fundamental. According to Prates and Ospina (2004), companies invest in new information technology tools for strategic objectives to increase continuity. This approach involves functional integration, intensified automation, rapid response; improved levels of control such as precision, accuracy, predictability, consistency, and certainty; and a greater understanding of productive functions such as visibility, analysis, and synthesis.

In many cases, SMEs struggle to increase their competitiveness and internationalization ability. However, Lecerf and Omrani (2019) state that the internationalization strategy must be aligned with the implementation of Information Technology (IT) so that knowledge is managed and used to guarantee the quality of services with the best use of each company resource.

One of the most urgent aspects to be addressed by companies, especially small and medium-sized ones, involves considering sustainability and its dimensions, sustainability and its dimensions as a competitive advantage and as a matter of survival. According to Silva et al. (2022), companies will increasingly be required to ensure that their products and services are in harmony with social and environmental issues, going beyond the economic sphere. Lovins and Cohen (2013) argue that companies will lose competitiveness if they do not implement sustainable processes and procedures, as established business habits are constantly changing.

According to Silva and Assis (2012), the idea of sustainable development, treated as a strategy to guarantee the preservation of resources necessary for production, should provide organizations with a competitive advantage over their competitors. To this end, investments must be made in sustainable methods and practices to enhance the efficiency of the resources used, guaranteeing value generation for the companies and communities in which they operate.

For Santos and Porto (2013), the sustainable development strategy concerns the company's ability to engage and commit to facing society's socio-environmental problems and challenges. In addition to serving as a reference for other companies, this marks the intention of business continuity by avoiding the generation of short-term profits through irresponsible exploitation of the environment.

According to Evangelista (2010), sustainability has become an inevitable priority for managers in any country. Governments, activists, and the media hold companies responsible for the social consequences of their activities. Although companies face certain competitive disadvantages in producing and supplying their goods and services, the difference will be in those that quickly realize how much sustainability can add value by transforming socio-environmental responsibility into a strong competitive advantage.

Falsarella and Jannuzzi (2020) state that business sustainability can be achieved through a management model that balances economic, social, and environmental dimensions. They also add that the competitiveness of companies can improve as they adopt practices of extracting only the minimum necessary resources from the environment for their consumption. Primarily, they must invest in social and environmental areas to obtain an immediate financial return and build a positively sustainable institutional image to gain a competitive advantage.

According to Cantele and Zardini (2018), a company's contribution to sustainable development largely depends on its perceptions of the advantages of sustainability strategies and, consequently, its practices. By analyzing a set of 348 small and medium-sized Italian companies, the authors identified that the social–economic dimensions and formal practices of sustainability positively affect competitive advantage, mediated by corporate reputation, customer and organizational satisfaction, and commitment, contributing to good financial performance.

When dealing with the dimensions of sustainability in organizations, Galav (2020) maintains that the social and ecological aspects are closely related to economic performance, taking the form of eco-efficiency or social productivity. In this turbulent business environment, it is necessary to move from reactive to proactive behavior and consider social and environmental dimensions not as costs but as opportunities to capitalize on new sources of competitive advantage. Thus, companies that come first in the new sustainability logic will have notable image successes that will lead to tangible long-term advantages, placing them in a better position than their competitors. Table 2 presents the main elements that can give an SME a competitive advantage.

Table 2: Elements that provide a competitive advantage

Elements that provide a competitive advantage	Authors
Have the ability to perceive and respond to new demands through improving innovation. Adapt your offer to face new markets by reinventing how you provide your service.	Porter (1990) Smith (1995)
Compete globally without individually bearing the costs and uncertainties through cooperation networks.	Kossyva et al. (2015) Olave and Amato Neto (2001)
Add value to the production and supply of your goods and services through sustainability and corporate social responsibility.	Evangelista (2010)
Emphasize the long term to ensure permanence or continuity	Lloret (2016) Prates and Ospina (2004)
Consider economic, social, and environmental limitations in the company's strategy.	Lloret (2016)
Adopt highly flexible processes, be quick in decision-making, and have the ability to respond quickly to demands.	Yadav et al. (2019)
Establish lean thinking as a business strategy to respond to market opportunities quickly.	Caldera et al. (2019) Smith (1995)
Adopt the concepts of lean and green as a strategy to reduce waste and efficiently use resources.	Bhattacharya et al. (2019) Duarte and Cruz-Machado (2013) Siegel et al. (2019)
Invest in new information technology tools to achieve strategic, operational, and internationalization objectives.	Lecerf and Omrani (2019) Prates and Ospina (2004)
Adopt sustainable methods and practices to enhance the efficiency of resources and commit to solving society's socio-environmental problems and challenges.	Lovins and Cohen (2013) Santos and Porto (2013) Silva and Assis (2012)
Invest in social and environmental areas, making the institutional image positively sustainable.	Cantele and Zardini (2018) Falsarella and Jannuzzi (2020) Galav (2020)
Adopt critical competitiveness factors: strategic alliance, human capital, knowledge, and innovation.	Roman et al. (2012)

Source: Prepared by the authors.

IV. Economic Crises and Pandemics

For Schumpeter (1997), collapses and crises always appear as forms of a peculiar phenomenon. However, most crises affect individuals and the economic system in the form of external and internal disturbances in the economic life of society. In essence, crises belong to the economic sphere, and, therefore, a crisis is established in the form of a simple process, which requires a new adaptation of economic life to new conditions.

Booth (2017) defines a crisis as a situation faced by an individual, group, or organization in which they cannot deal with employing normal routine procedures, leading them to improvise. According to the author, there are three types of crises: gradual threat, periodic threat, and sudden threat.

According to Fabeil et al. (2020), the COVID-19 crisis can visibly be considered a sudden threat, as it developed suddenly and affected the entire organization and sectors of the economy.

Among the major economic crises, we can mention i) the great global economic crisis of 1929, known as the "great depression," ii) the 2008 crisis that started in the United States and affected other countries, and iii) the 2014 crisis that occurred in Brazil.

Bruner and Miller (2019) state that the boom of the 1920s coincided with the beginning of the second great industrial revolution, electrification, the automobile, and new technologies. The first major economic crisis of the capitalist era that gave rise to the "great depression" occurred in 1929 and lasted for more than ten years. Cano (2009) adds that Europe had barely recovered from the negative effects of the First World War and was already facing a global financial catastrophe.

For Kirman (2010), the 2008 crisis was essentially a liquidity crisis, as banks could not sell the assets necessary to cover the losses they had made and to avoid the collapse of the global banking system. The solution adopted, which may or may not have eliminated or reduced the problem, was to inject huge amounts of money into the system to increase liquidity. Even so, private banks were nationalized in the US and Europe, and insurance companies like AIG were rescued to avoid insolvency.

Mazzucchelli (2008) maintains that there is a clear similarity regarding the origin of the disturbances that caused the "great depression" of 1929 and those that gave rise to the 2008 crisis. In both situations, the collapse was preceded by the vulnerability of regulation and the loosening of risk perception, resulting in disastrous consequences.

For Cervo and Lessa (2014), the lack of internal investment and technological progress, combined with the absence of an international trade policy, stimulated a reduction in growth, product exports and competitiveness, starting in 2014, the economic crisis in Brazil.

Likewise, the 1918 (Spanish Flu) and 2020 (COVID-19) pandemics have similar characteristics and impacts in the economic and social context. For Souza (2005), the Spanish flu epidemic occurred in 1918 (from August to December) amid the movement of troops involved in the First World War, traveling across all continents, intensely infecting communities, and condemning thousands of people to death.

Asquith (2020) adds that, historically, pandemics share two common side effects: i) there is significant long-term health damage in the surviving population, which can reduce labor force participation during recovery, and ii) returns on stocks, bonds, and other assets are generally reduced as a result.

Gössling et al. (2020) assert that the world has experienced a series of major epidemics in recent decades, but none have had as many similar consequences for the global economy as the COVID-19 pandemic. For Asquith (2020), the COVID-19 pandemic has revealed how deforestation, density, urbanization, travel, and international trade are all vectors that act as catalysts for outbreaks to begin again.

Regardless of the causes that permeate economic crises, whether arising from conflicts between people, nations, internal or external, or even caused by social issues of global scope, the immediate and, in many cases, irreversible effects that fall on SMEs. Such causes point to the need for a more forceful and planned approach in the context of the fundamental principles of sustainable development to avoid an escalation of unprecedented consequences in the social and economic sphere.

Table 3 presents a list of vulnerabilities, their impacts, and consequences generated by economic crises and pandemics that could be minimized, given the occurrence of this type of event.

Table 3: Impacts and vulnerabilities generated by economic crises and pandemics

Vulnerabilities	Impacts and Consequences	Authors
Fragile economic conditions	Cash flow difficulty	Kossyva et al. (2015)
	Decline in financing options	Alves et al. (2020)
	Resource Constraints	Geloso and Pavlik (2020)
	Inability to fulfill contracts	Oreiro (2017)
	Acceleration of inflation	Eggers (2020)
	Business bankruptcy	Mazzucchelli (2008)
	Greater dependence on local government/ agencies	Gregurec et al. (2021)
Global economic shutdown	Vulnerable to external and internal circumstances	Eggers (2020)
	International supply chains	Alves et al. (2020)
	Fear and uncertainty about the future	Leal Filho et al. (2020)
	Sudden change in the business environment	Blundell et al. (2020) Gregurec et al. (2021)
	Digital vulnerability	Robinson et al. (2020)
Employment level	Loss and reduction of employees	Eggers (2020)
	Increase in unemployment	Vieira (2016)
	Disengagement from the workforce	Alves et al. (2020)
	Worsening social and health conditions	Leal Filho et al. (2020) Gutiérrez-Barbarrusa (2016)
Demand reduction	Reduction in household consumption	Eggers (2020)
	Drop in revenue	Oreiro (2017)
	Reduction in trade due to business closures	Gregurec et al. (2021)
	Low level of preparation and confidence	Sebrae (2020) Leal Filho et al. (2020)

Source: Adapted from Teodoro et al. (2023).

V. Proposal for Guidelines for Sustainable Strategic Management (SSM) in Times of Economic Crises and Pandemics

The survival of SMEs in times of economic crises and pandemics, such as COVID-19 and others similar to those presented in this work, will increasingly depend on preparation, planning, and strategies that objectively seek: 1) be aligned with the concepts of sustainability, in particular, with the responsible use of natural resources and the continuous search for solutions to social problems; 2) be competitive in an increasingly competitive market and, above all, be prepared for the technological challenges brought about by the demand for more sustainable products that are less harmful to the environment.

In this way, the proposal for guidelines originates with the impacts and vulnerabilities identified and recorded in Table 3 presented by Teodoro et al. (2023) as a basis for achieving this objective, which is characterized into four blocks, namely: i) fragile economic conditions; ii) global economic shutdown; iii) reduction in the level of employment, and; iv) reduction of demands.

The application of the guidelines proposed here should not only be used in times of economic crises and pandemics, but in day-to-day activities, during the existence of the SME, so that when these events occur, the company will have better conditions to survive.

a) *Strategic guidelines to mitigate situations of fragile economic conditions*

One of the main vulnerabilities SMEs faces in crises is fragile economic conditions. The importance of *focusing on long-term strategies, as described in the two strategies arising from sustainable actions* is notable. Resilience can be built gradually to allow SMEs to reestablish the level of balance if they adopt the pursuit of sustainable development as a premise, being proactive in managing threats and the reality of extreme events, in addition to emphasizing their efforts to ensure the continuity and permanence of your business.

As Porter (1990) argues, the long-term challenge for any company is associated with perceiving opportunities to expose itself to new markets and prepare for changes. Alternatively, as Lloret (2016) states, a competitive company must be aware of the conditions required to generate value, especially sustainable value, as sustainability implies continuity.

By adopting the strategic guideline *Place emphasis on the long term, to guarantee permanence or continuity,* a condition that occurs even in times of calm due to the competitive environment experienced by SMEs, it is expected that they will be better prepared than the competition to face adverse situations such as those that occur in times of crisis.

By considering such guidelines in their strategic planning, SMEs will be able to become more solid over time, with a more consolidated image with a significant number of customers, enabling them to mitigate certain risks of cash flow difficulties, inability to fulfill contracts, decline in financing options, fear and uncertainty about the future, as well as the sudden change in the business environment.

b) *Strategic guidelines to survive in scenarios of global economic standstill*

If, on the one hand, situations of fragile economic conditions are already a nightmare for SMEs, even in normal times, the scenario gets even worse when extreme events occur, such as a global economic shutdown like the one experienced in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which requires strategies to face it.

One of the fundamental aspects to avoid mishaps in the supply of goods and services in times of economic storm, which can be better addressed, is the human and natural resources necessary to guarantee operations. In this sense, adopting the strategic guideline *Include in your business strategies objectives to protect and improve human and natural resources that will be needed in the future* allows SMEs to prepare better to face global supply crises and/or resource shortages.

In line with the objective of protecting the use of resources, another fundamental point refers to *investment in information technology tools to achieve strategic and operational objectives.* During the pandemic, this point was highlighted as a way out for the survival of SMEs. Many of them had to resort to this action to keep their operations running during the economic crisis generated by the COVID-19 pandemic, such as the implementation of online shopping and delivery.

In this sense, adopting investment in information technology tools as a strategic guideline to achieve strategic and operational objectives can mitigate the exposure of SMEs to competitiveness risks, mainly due to their digital vulnerability.

It is also worth highlighting that "competing on a global scale without bearing, individually, the costs and uncertainties, through cooperation networks" (Author, Year, p. XX) could function as an antidote to facing vulnerable situations such as impacts on international supply chains or sudden change in the business environment. This strategy, once adopted, can allow SMEs to share certain costs with other companies and thus remain competitive in their local or regional businesses.

Another important factor that can help small and medium-sized businesses deal with the challenges of a global economic shutdown is related to the efficient use of resources in their business operations. To this end, a strategy that enables a change of direction in management is to "establish lean thinking to respond quickly to the market", as it can help companies do more with fewer resources. Furthermore, as one of the pillars of lean management is eliminating waste, it also contributes to improving the sustainable company image of SMEs.

c) *Strategic guidelines to mitigate the reduction in employment levels*

The resulting impacts of the 2020 crisis were seen in several negative consequences. In line with this premise, it should be noted that by including in its strategy the guideline *Focusing the company's activities on solving social and environmental problems,* it will certainly make SMEs contribute to mitigating the related impacts, not only in the drop in the workforce in its operations, as well as enabling the creation of jobs in the communities where they operate. Furthermore, *integrating social and environmental issues as part of the company's identity* could positively affect the image of the SMEs. As Berlato et al. (2016) argue, the company's success, despite its central objective still being profit, will depend on its broader social participation, involving social and environmental aspects.

In line with the strategic guideline listed above, by *Adopting sustainable methods and practices to enhance the efficiency of the resources used*" and "*committing to solving society's socio-environmental problems and challenges,* SMEs will be able to increase their chances of competitiveness by adopting policies for the efficient use of its resources to fulfill its socio-environmental responsibility in the correct application of all resources in its production processes.

d) *Strategic guidelines to face impacts due to reduced demand*

Economic crises cause a series of changes in the business environment, and one of the impacts most felt by companies refers to the drop in revenue due to reduced demand. One of the biggest challenges for companies, especially small businesses, is dealing with the sudden reduction in demand, as it directly impacts revenue and, consequently, the ability to honor financial commitments.

During situations of severe impact on demand, SMEs must consider in their management process the strategic guidelines *rethink production processes and incorporate sustainable development as an integral part of the organizations' business and have the ability to perceive and respond to new demands through improving innovation and adapt your offer to face new markets by reinventing the way you provide your service.* When approached jointly by SMEs, they can contribute to increasing competitiveness with their competitors by offering innovative products and services.

The guideline *create and distribute goods and services that will help raise the quality of life of individuals* focuses on pursuing economic prosperity, as argued by Bansal (2005). By integrating characteristics such as innovation, efficiency, and wealth creation, they can generate incentives to increase demand by meeting customer needs in open and competitive markets.

Furthermore, *adopt highly flexible processes, be quick in decision-making and have the ability to provide quick responses* is a strategic differentiator that allows SMEs to be better prepared in the search for alternatives to survive periods of economic turmoil and adjust their operations to the new low-demand scenario.

VI. Conclusions

In an increasingly troubled global scenario due to economic crises and worldwide pandemics, such as the coronavirus (COVID-19), the severity of its consequences increases, especially concerning the survival and sustainability of SMEs.

The great challenge for SMEs has been to mitigate the impacts caused by previously thoughtless situations, such as social isolation and market closures, decreed by governments in Brazil and several nations on all continents.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the consequences faced by SME managers worldwide were devastating, affecting the longevity of their businesses. This situation occurred due to their fragile economic situation, low capacity to create alternatives for survival, and the need for new investments such as logistics and technology. In addition, there is also the social issue that is greatly aggravated by being unable to keep its employees, having to make layoffs or suffering impacts in meeting customer demand, or its absence due to the worsening of the COVID-19 pandemic crisis.

There is a need to adopt a strategic approach to mitigate the effects of these extreme events to face the challenge of maintaining your business and avoiding the loss of competitiveness in the chaotic market that has befallen SMEs in economic crises or pandemics. To this end, strategic guideline attributes such as elements of competitiveness or sustainable actions were sought in the theoretical foundation to mitigate the impacts and vulnerabilities caused by crises.

As seen in Tables 1 and 2, the sustainable actions and elements of competitiveness identified can serve as encouragement for SMEs in the search for better preparation to face crises that will certainly arise in the future.

In times of turbulence caused by economic crises and pandemics such as COVID-19, it is essential to establish strategies to create a virtuous sustainability cycle for SMEs. It is also important to guide the reconciliation of sustainable practices that, added to the elements of competitiveness, can prepare them to face adverse situations and the consequent impacts and vulnerabilities surrounding their business environment.

Although this study has limitations, it certainly allows one to delve deeper into the scope of survival strategies or mechanisms that can alleviate the vulnerabilities surrounding SMEs' competitive environment. Therefore, the following additional studies are proposed: i) Field research that can identify which strategic guidelines proposed in this work were adopted by some SMEs and, thus, highlight how some of the impacts caused by the economic crisis were mitigated; ii) Analyze whether the applicability of the proposed strategic guidelines can be effective during crises that arise in the future.

The elements of competitive advantage associated with sustainable actions as a way of mitigating impacts and vulnerabilities do not present themselves as a unique or definitive solution for SMEs to develop their business projects successfully. However, it proposes a way to face other crises that will certainly arise in the future.

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The Meanings of the Right to Memory and the Right to Forget and the (In)Understandings of the Brazilian Supreme Court

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Abstract- The present study analyzes the meanings that the Brazilian Constitutional Court attributes to memory and forgetting, as a way of understanding the meanings of the right to memory and the right to be forgotten in Brazilian law. The research problem consists of verifying how the Brazilian Constitutional Court understands the similarities between the right to memory and the right to forget. The study is based on bibliographic research and adopts the phenomenological method in its approach. The study carries out a phenomenological analysis of memory and forgetting, investigates how forgetting can be elaborated in the information society and examines the Brazilian Constitutional Court's understanding of the right to forget and the right to memory. The study argues that the right to memory is intended to protect political memories, while the right to be forgotten is linked to the protection of personality rights. The research criticizes the position adopted by the Brazilian Constitutional Court, for not having adequately understood the phenomenological dimension of memory and forgetting.

Keywords: right to memory. right to be forgotten. human rights. phenomenology. brazilian federal supreme court.

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THEMEANINGSOFTHERIGHTTOMEMORYANDTHERIGHTTOFORGETANDTHEINUNDERSTANDINGSOFTHEBRAZILIANSUPREMECOURT

The Meanings of the Right to Memory and the Right to Forget and the (In)Understandings of the Brazilian Supreme Court

Os Sentidos do Direito à Memória e do Direito ao Esquecimento e as (In)Compreensões da Suprema Corte Brasileira

Dailor Dos Santos [α] & Giullia Eckert Nunes [σ]

Abstract- The present study analyzes the meanings that the Brazilian Constitutional Court attributes to memory and forgetting, as a way of understanding the meanings of the right to memory and the right to be forgotten in Brazilian law. The research problem consists of verifying how the Brazilian Constitutional Court understands the similarities between the right to memory and the right to forget. The study is based on bibliographic research and adopts the phenomenological method in its approach. The study carries out a phenomenological analysis of memory and forgetting, investigates how forgetting can be elaborated in the information society and examines the Brazilian Constitutional Court's understanding of the right to forget and the right to memory. The study argues that the right to memory is intended to protect political memories, while the right to be forgotten is linked to the protection of personality rights. The research criticizes the position adopted by the Brazilian Constitutional Court, for not having adequately understood the phenomenological dimension of memory and forgetting.

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Introdução

Memória e esquecimento são fenômenos relacionados à passagem do tempo, mas significados a partir de perspectivas sociais e culturais. A correlação entre esquecer e lembrar traz à tona a evidência de que o passado só existe no tempo presente, seja como memória seja como esquecimento. Essa correlação, contudo, adquire novos sentidos na sociedade da informação, isto é, uma sociedade globalizada e interconectada, com diversos meios de comunicação que permitem a conexão de pessoas através de novas tecnologias que independem de fronteiras territoriais e temporais. Esse novo formato da sociedade pós-moderna faz com que a informação se torne fonte de poder, aguçando a importância de lembrar e de esquecer. A simples oposição entre esses fenômenos aponta os incontáveis conflitos que podem surgir quando memória e esquecimento são transportados para o âmbito público.

Nesse contexto, o presente estudo analisa os significados que o Tribunal Constitucional brasileiro atribui à memória e ao esquecimento, como forma de compreender os sentidos do direito à memória e do direito ao esquecimento no direito brasileiro.

Dessarte, o problema de pesquisa consiste em verificar como o Tribunal Constitucional brasileiro compreende as semelhanças e as distinções entre o direito à memória e o direito ao esquecimento. O estudo alicerça-se em pesquisas bibliográficas e adota o método fenomenológico na abordagem proposta.

Parte-se de uma análise fenomenológica da memória e do esquecimento para, então, analisar-se o novo formato de organização social baseado na sociedade da informação, assim como sobre as perspectivas envolvendo o esquecimento na sociedade pós-moderna. Em continuidade, examina-se a compreensão do Tribunal Constitucional brasileiro sobre o direito ao esquecimento e o direito à memória.

Ao final, são apresentas as conclusões obtidas na pesquisa, com uma análise crítica dos entendimentos do Tribunal Constitucional brasileiro, particularmente em relação à sua (in)adequada compreensão dos fenômenos da memória e do esquecimento quando alçados à categoria de direitos.

I. Memória e Esquecimento: Uma Aproximação Fenomenológica

Memória e esquecimento constituem faces complementares de um mesmo processo de significação do tempo. Apesar disso, é possível situá-los, enquanto fenômenos, em suas particularidades – e, aqui, interessam os sentidos que o direito confere a ambos.

Um questionamento inicial pode ser desde logo apresentado: "Há uma memória individual em oposição a uma memória coletiva ou ambas compõem o mesmo

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espaço dialógico, reafirmado continuamente na dialética de recuperação do passado?" (DOS SANTOS, 2021). Essa interrogação se torna necessária para compreender o espaço ocupado pela memória e, em contrapartida, aquele pertencente ao esquecimento.

Trata-se de um processo indissociável da atribuição de sentidos à memória e ao esquecimento, principalmente quando ambos os fenômenos são situados em sentidos complementares ou opositivos. Afinal, como alertou Ricoeur (2007), não há outra possibilidade de referência ao passado que não seja pela própria memória. Mas de qual memória falamos? Em contrapartida, o que não é rememorado foi esquecido? Ainda: o fato que um dia ocorreu poderá, no futuro, ser esquecido?

Há, evidentemente, uma conexão entre tempo, memória e esquecimento. O que é lembrado revela-se no tempo presente, precisamente naquele em que a lembrança surge. Assim, os sentidos do passado continuamente se refazem, não porque existam verdades além da verdade, mas porque a narrativa que recupera o passado é sempre atualizada, no exato instante em que é elaborada. O que é esquecido – ou o que foi imposto como esquecimento (o exemplo de crimes cometidos por ditaduras é elucidativo a esse respeito) – pode se tornar memória quando conjunturas políticas, culturais e sociais permitirem. O que definiu o passado também pode, eventualmente, perder o seu aspecto público e migrar para o espaço incerto do esquecimento, por interessar prioritariamente a um indivíduo ou a um grupo de pessoas, referindo-se apenas a essa singularidade de interessados. Contudo (eis aqui o paradoxo que permeia os sentidos da memória e do esquecimento na pós-modernidade), na sociedade informacional, em que os armazenamentos de dados são ilimitados, é possível que se esqueça?

Embora o esquecimento absoluto – o apagar dos rastros em sua totalidade – seja aparentemente impossível, não haveria ao menos a possibilidade de situar o esquecimento como um dos aspectos da personalidade humana para, então, admitir que, se o fato ocorrido não pode ser apagado, ao menos seja limitado em sua extensão temporal ou em seus efeitos? Analisar os espaços que a memória e o esquecimento tem (ou podem ter) no direito ajudará a delinear uma resposta possível a esse questionamento.

A partir da compartimentação fenomenológica da memória de Ricoeur (2007) – hábito, memória, evocação e busca – é possível afirmar que a memória desvela-se em sua face política. Há, obviamente, memórias que pertencem ao indivíduo, ao grupo, ao Estado; por outro lado, há memórias que excedem ao indivíduo e que, no espaço da busca (o evento que será apreendido pela memória), apresentam episódios que repercutem na própria definição do tempo presente e de seu correlato âmbito de pertencimento (eventos políticos pretéritos que importam à consolidação democrática e à proteção dos direitos humanos). Será dessas, e não daquelas memórias, que se ocupará o direito à memória.

Desde Ricoeur (2007) não há como conceber a memória em seu viés meramente subjetivo, dada a sua correlação com o mundo: "A significação da memória, nessa perspectiva, não se dirige a uma visão epistemológica (saber como a memória é, ou não, possível), mas de que modo ela se define na intersubjetividade, já que o ser humano é, em si, um ser histórico" (DOS SANTOS, 2021). Consequentemente, a oposição do subjetivo ao coletivo impede – já que não há memórias exclusivamente individuais na composição do espaço público – que se afirme, na mesma medida, a existência de uma memória unicamente coletiva.

A definição do espaço compartilhado da memória, precisamente por isso, não permite situá-la como individual ou como coletiva. São âmbitos conexos do mesmo fenômeno, como observou Halbwachs (2004), em perspectiva pouco assimilada de seu estudo sobre a memória[1]: "Memórias coletivas poderiam, segundo ele, auxiliar na (re)definição de memórias individuais, corrigir desvios da narrativa pessoal do passado ou legitimar o discurso subjetivo sobre o passado" (DOS SANTOS, 2021).

Além disso, memórias coletivas carregam consigo um peso poucas vezes considerado por quem as propaga como *a* memória: elas podem eventualmente apontar a face opressora dos usos da memória, já que a retomada de eventos pretéritos pode ser ditada por narrativas uniformizadoras, supostamente oficializadas. Não à toa, Pollack (1989) aponta que a memória igualmente se revela em espaços em contínua disputa: memórias subterrâneas (de culpa, de vergonha ou de dominação sofrida), que são igualmente memórias e que desafiam o anseio unificador, nacional ou oficial de outras memórias coletivas. Desse encontro de múltiplas memórias define-se o âmbito político da memória e circunscreve-se, então, o apelo ético da própria rememoração, refratária a adulterações do passado e compromissada, no espaço público, com o relato dos vencidos da história sem, contudo, ignorar um passado comum (DOS SANTOS, 2021).

Em síntese: O direito à memória atrela-se a uma memória política e outras compartimentações da rememoração (memória coletiva, memória individual, memória oficial, memória nacional, memória comum, memórias subterrâneas, entre outras) são insuficientes

[1] Nesse equívoco incidiu a Corte Constitucional brasileira quando definiu que não há um direito ao esquecimento a partir, entre outros fatores, de uma pretensa oposição entre memórias individuais (ou esquecimentos postulados por um indivíduo) e memórias coletivas (SUPREMO TRIBUNAL FEDERAL, 2021).

para, isoladamente, conferir os reais contornos desse fenômeno[2].

Afirmar que o direito à memória ocupa-se da memória política não significa dizer que não existam memórias individuais. Será essa sutil compreensão que justificará a crítica ao esquecimento daquilo que se reveste de interesse público e a aceitação do esquecimento de episódios passados que interessam apenas ao indivíduo, precisamente porque ou não possuem conotação pública ou política ou, sendo acontecimentos íntimos ou privados, escapam ao interesse alheio, sem que a mera curiosidade de terceiros ou o apelo midiático, por si sós, possibilitem atenuar o âmbito protetivo dos direitos de personalidade.

O esquecimento, é certo, não se limita ao que não é rememorado. Memórias impedidas (proibição de acessar o passado), manipuladas (direcionamento da memória a partir de sentidos previamente admitidos) e obrigadas (imposição de uma contínua rememoração)[3] podem culminar em esquecimento, que transparece, então, na distância de pretensões veritativas.

Memórias impedidas, não há dúvidas, equivalem a um esquecimento comandado e, na maioria das vezes, absoluto (não porque o passado não seja conhecido, ao menos por alguém, mas porque referi-lo não é aceito e, portanto, ele não se revela no tempo presente). Memórias manipuladas geram um esquecimento passivo, em que será lembrado – e esquecido – o que narrativas predominantes desejam. Memórias obrigadas, por sua vez, conduziriam a um aprisionamento ao passado, em que eventos pretéritos ganhariam uma exposição ilimitada.

Na aproximação entre memória e esquecimento aqui proposta, a perspectiva das memórias obrigadas possui grande repercussão. A super-exposição de um episódio passado adulteraria, em última análise, os próprios sentidos do que deve ser rememorado, paradoxalmente porque, ao rememorar algo sem limites já não haveria espaço para o esquecimento ou, se assim se preferir, para a definição do que pertence ao tempo passado.

A memória deixaria de ser do indivíduo ou do grupo – que revivem nessa recuperação do passado sentimentos de vergonha, tristeza ou de dor – e passaria ao controle de outrem, titular de uma memória que não é sua (mas que também não é uma memória política). Tratando-se de memórias individuais, essa transferência do controle da memória ignoraria aspectos inerentes da privacidade, perspectiva que também se define em desejados distanciamentos. Em outras palavras, o âmbito protetivo da privacidade não se limita a assegurar que o indivíduo guarde para si o que é de seu próprio interesse, mas também que assuntos que lhe são exclusivos não sejam divulgados quando não houver, na rememoração desejada, qualquer interesse público além da curiosidade ou do apelo midiático:

> O desejo de desaparecer às vezes corresponde ao desejo de afastar-se de uma rede de sociabilidade para reiniciar de outra forma a própria existência.
> [...]
> Desaparecer reenvia à tentativa de livrar-se de uma versão de si já desgastada, difícil de ser assumida ou excessivamente rotineira. (LE BRETON, 2018).

Assim, se a memória – como um direito – ocupa-se de memórias políticas, o esquecimento – enquanto pretensão tipicamente individual – liga-se ao âmbito protetivo dos direitos da personalidade. Consequentemente, equiparações entre memória e esquecimento devem, necessariamente, compreender que o direito à memória não se destina, em sua construção histórica e política, a desafiar a esfera protetiva da privacidade; ao mesmo tempo, o esquecimento, postulado como um direito, não alcança qualquer memória política e se limita, unicamente, a episódios passados de cunho pessoal (íntimo ou privado) cuja revelação, embora tenha feito sentido no passado, já não interessa ao tempo presente.

II. O Esquecimento na Sociedade da Informação

A sociedade pós-moderna situa-se em um processo histórico de amplas revoluções tecnológicas que modificam a organização social e as relações interpessoais, gerando uma sociedade globalizada e interconectada, por intermédio de variados meios de comunicação e fontes de informações que transcendem as fronteiras territoriais e temporais (RUARO; MACHADO, 2017, p. 206). Os processos históricos, na mesma medida, deixaram de ser apropriações lineares: a pretendida estabilidade – típica da modernidade – define-se, paradoxalmente, em períodos de transformações, sejam políticas, econômicas, culturais ou sociais (SOUZA, 2014, p. 431).

O novo formato de comunicação e de compartilhamento de informações no meio digital se utiliza de um conjunto de sinais e formas de linguagens que permitem uma interação global, cujas possibilidades tecnológicas conectam pessoas independentemente do tempo e do lugar em que se encontram. As novas tecnologias integram a humanidade de maneira mundial e em rede, sendo a informação o ponto central da aproximação pós-moderna (MOREIRA; MEDEIROS, 2016). A sociedade da informação representa um novo arranjo

[2] Sobre a temática da memória política e seus sentidos para o direito à memória e à verdade, veja-se a pesquisa *Direito à Memória e à Verdade: uma análise crítica a partir das práticas transicionais* (DOS SANTOS, 2021).

[3] A tríade de sentidos complementares entre memória e esquecimento é de Paul Ricoeur (RICOEUR, 2007).

comunicacional da sociedade e corresponde ao espaço de pertencimento (ELIAS, 1994) ligado, agora, a contínuas inovações, produções tecnológicas e difusão de conhecimento (ARAÚJO, 2018), uma vez que se tem uma relevante expansão das comunicações e de informações (TEFFÉ; BARLETTA, 2016).

A globalização e a informacionalização proporcionaram melhorias na capacidade produtiva, na criatividade cultural e no potencial de comunicação humana. No entanto, a informação também se tornou sinônimo de poder, sendo um instrumento de controle e moeda de troca, que é empregada em função de objetivos particulares, o que gera conflitos entre direitos (MARTINI; BERGSTEIN, 2019).

Uma das respostas a esses impasses que surgem da correlação entre informação e poder foi, no direito brasileiro, a Lei nº 12.965/2014, o Marco Civil da Internet (LUZ; LOUREIRO, 2018). Ela traz princípios, garantias, direitos e deveres para o uso da internet e determina as diretrizes para atuação dos entes federados em relação à matéria (BRASIL, 2014).

Na mesma medida, em 2018, foi sancionada a Lei nº 13.709, conhecida como Lei Geral de Proteção de Dados Pessoais - LGPD (SANTOS; TALIBA, 2019), que dispõe sobre o tratamento de dados pessoais, inclusive nos meios digitais, por pessoa natural ou por pessoa jurídica de direito público ou privado, com o objetivo de proteger os direitos fundamentais de liberdade e de privacidade e o livre desenvolvimento da personalidade da pessoa natural (BRASIL, 2018). A referida lei teve como inspiração o Regulamento Geral de Proteção de Dados europeu e se situa no âmbito das alterações normativas, com *status* regulatório, exigidas pela sociedade da informação.

A LGPD brasileira busca tutelar a proteção de dados, bem como a privacidade, a intimidade, a dignidade, a imagem, a honra e a liberdade dos indivíduos no tocante à coleta, tratamento, processamento, armazenamento e transferência de dados pessoais, estabelecendo princípios norteadores e sanções para as hipóteses de violação legal (SANTOS, 2020).

O advento da internet e o desenvolvimento das novas tecnologias modificaram de forma significativa a capacidade de armazenamento de informações. Torna-se perceptível, a partir disso, as aproximações que memória e esquecimento possuem na sociedade da informação.

A busca de um "direito ao esquecimento" encontra como obstáculo inicial a disseminação de dados na sociedade da informação e a dificuldade em seu rastreio e controle; ao mesmo tempo, o arcabouço tecnológico que aparentemente impede um esquecimento não é, paradoxalmente, garantia da rememoração ou de um "direito à memória", pois reféns do tempo – em sua perspectiva fenomenológica – a memória, tanto quanto o esquecimento, somente se manifestam quando fatores históricos, culturais e sociais assim permitem: seja porque um fato não reflete um apelo social (esquecimento) seja porque um episódio possui repercussão histórica (memória).

As dimensões do esquecimento e da memória, portanto, são distintas, mas não opositivas. Enquanto o Direito à Memória e à Verdade liga-se a fatos históricos de importância política, relevantes à proteção de Direitos Humanos e da Democracia, transpondo interesses privados, o Direito ao Esquecimento vincula-se, preponderantemente, a um âmbito protetivo mais restrito – embora igualmente importante: a proteção da intimidade, da vida privada, da honra e da imagem (direitos da personalidade) de quem tem os seus dados pessoais disseminados na sociedade informacional e, ao mesmo tempo, deseja evitar essa exposição. Não há, portanto, efetiva oposição entre o Direito à Memória e à Verdade e o Direito ao Esquecimento; ao contrário, o que ambas as dimensões protetivas almejam se traduz no resguardo de Direitos Humanos de âmbitos distintos.

No atual cenário, especificamente quanto à possibilidade de alcançar um "esquecimento", é preciso atentar ao fato de que armazenar informações torna-se cada vez mais fácil e barato, sendo possível resgatá-las em qualquer local em que se encontre o indivíduo. Isso gera um efeito coletivo de "não-esquecimento", criando novos conflitos sociais e jurídicos e fazendo com que a lembrança – de episódios eminentemente pessoais ou privados – torne-se a regra, e o esquecimento, a exceção (SARLET; FERREIRA NETO, 2019).

Tem-se uma nova roupagem em relação ao conflito entre o público e o privado, dado que há "a inundação do espaço público com questões estritamente privadas" decorrente da "expropriação da intimidade/privacidade por terceiros, mas também da voluntária entrega desses bens à arena pública", sendo mais grave "sua expropriação contra a vontade do titular do direito, por vezes um anônimo que pretende assim permanecer" (SUPERIOR TRIBUNAL DE JUSTIÇA, 2013). Por essa razão, o direito ao esquecimento é invocado em situações em que há, em tese, uma indesejada exposição pública do passado de uma pessoa (LIMA, 2013).

Embora as discussões sobre o direito ao esquecimento tenham se intensificado nos últimos anos, tendo em vista a acentuação da utilização da Internet e a facilidade de acesso a informações, há referências sobre a invocação desse direito ao longo do século XX, mesmo que não explicitamente, em casos emblemáticos julgados pelo Tribunal Constitucional Alemão e pelo Tribunal de Apelação da Califórnia, nos Estados Unidos da América (TEFFÉ; BARLETTA, 2016).

O direito ao esquecimento traduz-se, em síntese, como um direito humano, encontrando fundamentação no princípio da dignidade da pessoa humana e nos direitos fundamentais da privacidade, da honra, da imagem, entre outros, protegendo e promovendo, assim, a personalidade em suas múltiplas dimensões (SARLET, 2015). Está conectado com a tutela da privacidade, pois busca impedir que aspectos da vida pessoal de certo indivíduo sejam objeto de conhecimento alheio. Liga-se ao direito à honra, uma vez que pretende impossibilitar a divulgação ou exploração de fatos depreciativos de um indivíduo, incluindo seu passado criminal. Vincula-se ao direito à imagem, visto que intenta possibilitar ao sujeito o controle do uso de sua imagem (MOREIRA; MEDEIROS, 2016).

Apesar das dificuldades em sua concretização, inerentes à própria sociedade informacional, revela-se o direito a esquecimento como um direito humano que busca tutelar a autodeterminação informativa (ARAÚJO, 2018), com o intuito de impedir que fatos ocorridos no passado voltem a público, resguardando-se, por conseguinte, a intimidade e a vida privada do indivíduo. Assim sendo, o fator estruturante do direito ao esquecimento é a busca de proteção do indivíduo contra a exposição de fatos pretéritos (SÁ, 2020). Ressalte-se, entretanto, que o esquecimento pretendido deve estar atrelado a fatos privados ou íntimos, que o indivíduo busca resguardar do conhecimento público. Fatos de natureza pública, ligados à proteção de outros Direitos Humanos ou à preservação democrática, dado o anteparo político de que se reveste o direito à memória e à verdade, dificilmente – e somente em caráter excepcional – podem ser suscitados como fundamento de um pretendido esquecimento.

Também é perceptível que o direito ao esquecimento pode, em determinadas situações, colocar-se em disputa com outros direitos (liberdade de expressão e de imprensa, preponderantemente). Não haverá, por certo, soluções *a priori* para essas hipóteses; paradoxalmente, será unicamente o exame do caso concreto que permitirá estabelecer a prevalência da memória, notadamente em situações que se revestem de caráter público – ainda que seja de extrema dificuldade, ainda hoje, definir o que é o interesse público – ou, então, a necessidade do esquecimento, particularmente em hipóteses envolvendo informações particulares que não possuem interesse público.

Desse modo, a tutela do direito ao esquecimento, quando em confronto com outros direitos fundamentais, como as liberdades de imprensa, de expressão e de informação, deve ocorrer mediante a avaliação do caso concreto, realizando-se a ponderação dos direitos a fim de se verificar eventual critério de prevalência (SARLET; FERREIRA NETO, 2019).

III. A Memória e o Esquecimento na Visão da Suprema Corte Brasileira

Embora pontuado que o direito ao esquecimento seja um típico direito humano, mesmo que a dificuldade de sua conceituação e proteção seja evidente, o posicionamento jurisprudencial no direito brasileiro parece adotar rumo diverso.

Em fevereiro do ano de 2021, o Tribunal Pleno do Supremo Tribunal Federal (STF) apreciou o tema do direito ao esquecimento no julgamento do Recurso Extraordinário nº 1.010.606, com reconhecimento de repercussão geral, restando formada maioria para aprovar a tese que concluiu que o direito ao esquecimento – entendido pela Corte Constitucional brasileira como o poder de obstar, em razão da passagem do tempo, a divulgação de fatos ou dados verídicos e licitamente obtidos e publicados em meios de comunicação social – não é compatível com a Constituição Federal e que eventuais excessos ou abusos no exercício da liberdade de expressão e de informação devem ser analisados caso a caso, a partir dos parâmetros constitucionais, especialmente os relativos à proteção da honra, da imagem, da privacidade e da personalidade em geral, e as expressas e específicas previsões legais nos âmbitos penal e cível (SUPREMO TRIBUNAL FEDERAL, 2021).

O julgamento envolvia o *Caso Aída Curi*, no qual familiares da vítima buscavam reparação em razão do uso não autorizado da imagem da falecida, Aída Curi, em programa de televisão que noticiava o crime que a vitimou, ocorrido nos anos 1950 na cidade do Rio de Janeiro. A Suprema Corte entendeu que "não cabe a aplicação do direito ao esquecimento a esse caso, tendo em vista que a exibição do referido programa não incorreu em afronta ao nome, à imagem, à vida privada da vítima ou de seus familiares" (SUPREMO TRIBUNAL FEDERAL, 2021).

O entendimento da Corte Constitucional brasileira pode ser dividido em duas linhas de entendimento: de um lado, o voto do Ministro Dias Toffoli, relator e responsável pelo voto condutor do Acórdão e, de outro, o voto divergente do Ministro Edson Fachin, que pontuou a existência do direito ao esquecimento.

O relator afirmou que há uma constante invocação do direito ao esquecimento por diferentes indivíduos em variados âmbitos da vida, sendo que seu conceito e sua formação estão inseridos num contexto de elevada exposição das pessoas, revelando a necessidade de delimitação do tema de modo preciso. Para ele – em entendimento adotado pela Corte Constitucional brasileira – o direito ao esquecimento vincula-se à licitude da informação e à passagem do tempo, entendida, esta última, como o "decurso temporal suficiente para descontextualizar a informação

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relativamente ao momento de sua coleta" (SUPREMO TRIBUNAL FEDERAL, 2021).

A partir disso, entendeu a Corte Constitucional brasileira que o direito ao esquecimento se caracteriza como "a pretensão apta a impedir a divulgação, seja em plataformas tradicionais ou virtual, de fatos ou dados verídicos e licitamente obtidos, mas que, em razão da passagem do tempo, teriam se tornado descontextualizados ou destituídos de interesse público" (BRASIL, 2021).

O relator igualmente apreciou a aceitação ou não do direito em análise pelo ordenamento jurídico brasileiro. Para ele, a ponderação do direito ao esquecimento em relação às liberdades comunicativas, consagradas em diversos diplomas nacionais e internacionais, não envolve apenas o interesse do comunicante e do indivíduo titular dos fatos ou dados, mas também interesses coletivos. Desse modo, não se poderia considerar a existência de um direito ao esquecimento, tendo em vista que a sua afirmação, ao pretender que se ocultem elementos pessoais de informações verdadeiras em publicações lícitas, conduziria à incompletude da notícia, privando os seus destinatários de conhecer, na integralidade, os elementos do contexto informado, restringindo, por consequência, outros direitos que merecem posição de destaque.

Os ministros que acompanharam o relator, em síntese, sustentaram que o ordenamento jurídico brasileiro não comporta a existência do direito ao esquecimento, não podendo as liberdades de expressão, pensamento e informação e o direito à memória coletiva sofrerem restrições, salvo as já estabelecidas nos diplomas legais pátrios, em especial, na Constituição Federal, sob pena de se cair em um obscurantismo, que daria espaço para a censura.

Em sentido contrário, o Ministro Edson Fachin divergiu do Relator reconhecendo a existência do direito ao esquecimento no ordenamento jurídico brasileiro (BRASIL, 2021). Afirmou que o direito brasileiro alberga o direito ao esquecimento e que a Constituição Federal contém pilares que o fundamentam; apesar de não estar assegurado expressamente, há previsão de proteção da dignidade da pessoa humana, do direito à privacidade e do direito à autodeterminação informativa. Ainda, destacou que, no Brasil, houve a aprovação de Enunciado nº 531 na IV Jornada de Direito Civil, organizada pelo Conselho da Justiça Federal em 2014. Assim, haveria um direito ao esquecimento no ordenamento constitucional brasileiro, cuja aplicação demandaria a análise, no caso concreto, de qual direito deve prevalecer por meio do sopesamento dos princípios conflitantes (SUPREMO TRIBUNAL FEDERAL, 2021).

Observa-se que a decisão do Superior Tribunal Federal (STF) de fevereiro de 2021 diverge do entendimento do Superior Tribunal de Justiça (STJ) nos julgamentos realizados em 2013. Na apreciação dos Recursos Especiais nº 1.334.097/RJ (Chacina da Candelária[4]) e nº 1.335.153/RJ (envolvendo o já citado Caso Aída Curi), o STJ analisou a aplicação do direito ao esquecimento, assim como o seu confronto com as liberdades de expressão e de imprensa. Dos aludidos julgados, extrai-se que, para o Supremo Tribunal de Justiça, existiria o direito ao esquecimento, que incidiria no primeiro caso[5], mas não no segundo, sob o argumento de que o esquecimento não se traduz como direito na hipótese de o fato analisado envolver interesse público, social e histórico (SÁ, 2020).

Verifica-se, a partir disso, que (1) divergem, em maior ou menor medida, as Cortes brasileiras – Supremo Tribunal Federal e Superior Tribunal de Justiça – sobre a (in)existência do direito ao esquecimento; (2) a negação do direito ao esquecimento equivale, em última análise, à mitigação de um direito humano que possui destaque na sociedade informacional e (3) o entendimento do Supremo Tribunal Federal vincula eventuais pretensões de esquecimento (embora afirme que não há um direito ao esquecimento) à ilicitude da informação e à passagem do tempo.

Apesar da síntese apresentada, há um elemento final no posicionamento do Supremo Tribunal Federal que merece reflexão: trata-se da correlação com o direito à memória:

> [...] compreendo relevante rememorar que, entre os fundamentos desta Corte para declarar a constitucionalidade da chamada Lei da Anistia (Lei nº 6.683/79), esteve, nas palavras do Relator, Ministro Cezar Peluso, a compreensão de que a norma não "impede o acesso a informações atinentes à atuação dos agentes da repressão.
> [...]
> Quando esta Corte, portanto, julgou constitucional a Lei de Anistia, assim o fez porque o estudo, a análise, a apuração dos fatos foram preservados. A decisão política pela anistia dos graves delitos praticados foi uma opção realizada pela mudança de contexto sociopolítico – foi fruto de um acordo,

[4] "Em 1993, perto da igreja da Candelária, no Rio de Janeiro, oito jovens moradores de rua foram assassinados. Em 2006, o programa Linha Direta – Justiça, da TV Globo, apresentou um documentário sobre o caso e expôs o nome e a imagem do serralheiro, que ajuizou ação indenizatória. O STJ manteve a condenação da emissora a pagar R$ 50 mil como reparação pela ofensa à sua dignidade." (SUPERIOR TRIBUNAL DE JUSTIÇA, 2021)

[5] Importa assinalar que após a decisão do STF, o STJ voltou a discutir o tema (reexame da decisão). Entendeu o Superior Tribunal de Justiça que persistiria o entendimento inicial: "a análise do STF sobre o aparente choque entre os direitos de informação e de intimidade resultou na identificação de duas situações distintas. Em uma delas, há apenas o descontentamento do sujeito com a informação que não lhe é conveniente, e nesse caso o direito à informação e a liberdade de imprensa assumem posição preponderante em relação à intimidade, à imagem e à vida privada. A outra situação (...) é o exercício irresponsável e abusivo dos direitos de informação, de expressão e de liberdade de imprensa, diante do qual o controle judicial deverá ser imperativo, sempre considerando as peculiaridades de cada caso" (SUPERIOR TRIBUNAL DE JUSTIÇA, 2021).

destacou o Ministro Cezar Peluso, de quem tinha legitimidade naquele momento histórico para celebrá-lo. Entretanto, a verdade dos fatos e, no mesmo sentido, a busca por ela, nunca esteve sob o jugo do tempo. São coisas distintas.

Não há, assim, que se confundir o cumprimento da ordem penal – do qual pode decorrer eventual punibilidade, prescrição, anistia ou qualquer outro meio de atendimento a suas normas -– com o intuito de divulgação dos fatos (SUPREMO TRIBUNAL FEDERAL, 2021).

O questionamento que advém dessa perspectiva é: o direito à memória opõe-se ao direito ao esquecimento? Essa indagação se torna ainda mais relevante quando se verifica que a Corte Constitucional brasileira, ao definir que não há um direito ao esquecimento, estabeleceu, para esse fim, que as liberdades de expressão, pensamento e informação – "e o direito à memória coletiva" – não podem sofrer restrições alicerçadas em um desejado esquecimento.

Ressalta-se, com isso, a importância em compreender adequadamente, então, o que a Corte Constitucional brasileira entende sobre "memória", já que adotada em sentido opositivo ao "esquecimento".

A análise do entendimento da Corte Suprema brasileira sobre o fenômeno da rememoração e do enfoque político da memória retoma, invariavelmente, o julgamento da Arguição de Descumprimento de Preceito Fundamental - ADPF 153 (Supremo Tribunal Federal, 2010), em que foi reconhecida a recepção constitucional da lei da anistia de 1979 pela Constituição Federal de 1988.

Ignorou a Suprema Corte, nesse julgamento, precisamente o caráter político da memória, admitindo compartimentações do fenômeno da rememoração (*v.g.* memória coletiva, memória histórica, memória individual) que limitam a própria memória e obscurecem a sua importância na proteção democrática. Não houve, contrariamente ao que afirmou a Corte Constitucional ao julgar a ADPF 153, uma anistia nacional fundada em uma composição política (DOS SANTOS, 2021):

Não há como ignorar, a partir, principalmente, dos citados *Casos Volkswagen* e *Kissinger*, que as narrativas históricas continuamente se atualizam, indicando espaços de discurso em aberto que paulatinamente são ocupados por ramificações da memória aparentemente inexistentes. Se antes a memória permanecia oculta, tem ela o singular potencial de emergir quando permitem as confluências políticas e sociais. Isso é aguçado pela fragmentação discursiva admitida pelas narrativas pós-modernas. Por essa razão, é improvável que um único instante congregue, em si, a totalidade dos relatos e testemunhos sobre o passado. A memória política, portanto, desafia os discursos sobre a própria verdade – que não se subsume à *adequatio* – e acena com a disputa sobre a significação do passado. O desafio, contudo, desenha-se dentro do espaço ético que define o âmbito de elaboração da própria memória.

Isso constitui outra face da composição política da memória, indicativa da necessidade de uma contínua "revisão (auto)crítica do passado" pelos dirigentes políticos. Embora não tenha explicitamente vedado a retomada do passado, a Lei da Anistia de 1979 traz nas entrelinhas a compreensão de que o seu texto contempla um acordo nacional, sendo ela necessária à pacificação social. O anúncio da anistia foi incapaz de perceber, todavia, que apesar do acordo projetado, memórias subterrâneas continuamente colocariam (e seguem colocando) à prova os limites da própria anistia e dos discursos oficiais sobre o passado.

Incide a Corte Constitucional, assim, em verdadeiro paradoxo: ao julgar a recepção constitucional da lei da anistia de 1979, o Supremo Tribunal Federal mitiga a dimensão fenomenológica da memória, precisamente ao admitir "uma anistia que intenta deixar o passado para trás, ignorando que ele somente (e continuamente) se manifesta no tempo presente" (DOS SANTOS, 2021); por outro lado, ao estabelecer o (inexistente) âmbito protetivo do direito ao esquecimento, a Corte Constitucional afirma exatamente o que negou em sua compreensão da memória: ao retomar o clássico estudo de Ricoeur (2007) – "o passado emerge como referência do presente, seja como modelo do que se busca resgatar, seja como projeção do que se quer evitar" (SUPREMO TRIBUNAL FEDERAL, 2011) – almeja constituir o passado em sua inequívoca e contínua abertura e novas ressignificações. Assim, o passado, que circunscreve a memória e o esquecimento, foi assumido em um rumo antagônico pelo STF: ele jamais se fecharia ao que não pode ser esquecido (o esquecimento em sua dimensão privada) mas não possui a mesma força em relação ao que deve ser rememorado (o dever ético de uma memória política).

Em síntese: O Supremo Tribunal Federal acerta ao fixar o esquecimento em sua dimensão fenomenológica (fenômeno que se desvela no tempo, compreendido a partir do tempo presente e não a partir de um olhar limitado ao tempo passado) mas equivoca-se quando simplesmente admite a sua oposição a uma memória coletiva.

O direito à memória encontra os seus sentidos em uma composição política, ao passo que o direito ao esquecimento vincula-se à proteção de interesses privados, já que busca circunscrever a (im)pertinência de memórias individuais e não a (im)prescindibilidade de episódios históricos na composição da memória, agora ligada ao qualificativo "política". Assim, são diversos os âmbitos protetivos do direito à memória e do direito ao esquecimento, razão pela qual é equivocada a aproximação admitida pelo Supremo Tribunal Federal ao referir que o direito à memória coletiva (que, fenomenologicamente, representa uma frágil categorização) não poderia sofrer restrições a partir de um alegado direito ao esquecimento.

Precisamente por isso, a memória, em sua composição política (que excede a relatos individuais e escapa de versões ditas oficiais), possui –

contrariamente ao direito ao esquecimento postulado por um indivíduo – um anteparo ético:

> Limitar a anistia a fatos não pode servir como embaraço à ideia de que as circunstâncias anistiadas geraram vítimas e foram levadas a efeito por quem violou Direitos Humanos. Retorna-se ao anteparo ético que define o curso de qualquer pretensão de recuperação do passado. Esse ponto do percurso da memória – e da anistia – impede políticas anistiantes que englobem crimes de lesa-humanidade. O âmbito de anistias estende-se somente a crimes políticos, vinculados à própria redefinição do regime político. Crimes comuns ou crimes de lesa-humanidade não compõem o âmbito de deliberação política, mesmo em casos de rupturas democráticas, e anistiá-los indicaria uma proteção constitucional deficiente das vítimas de regimes de exceção. Logo, também a anistia encontra limites que não podem ser menosprezados; os principais: a ordem constitucional democraticamente estabelecida e o direito internacional dos Direitos Humanos. (DOS SANTOS, 2021)

A composição desse cenário indica que o Supremo Tribunal Federal equivocou-se duplamente, seja ao admitir sentidos incompletos sobre o âmbito da memória política seja ao opor ao esquecimento uma memória coletiva. O erro se alicerça tanto na deficitária compreensão fenomenológica da memória política como na indevida percepção dos âmbitos protetivos da memória e do esquecimento.

A evolução dos estudos e pesquisas atinentes ao direito ao esquecimento – que o próprio Supremo Tribunal Federal referiu em seu julgamento – indica uma inequívoca aproximação, principalmente em face dos dilemas da sociedade informacional e aos registros infinitos de dados – entre o direito ao esquecimento e os direitos humanos. Ao mesmo tempo, também o direito à memória é um direito humano, em face de sua importância para a superação de passados violentos, para a punição de violadores de direitos humanos e para a preservação democrática.

Para a Corte Constitucional brasileira, contudo, nem o esquecimento nem a memória podem ser catalogados como efetivos direitos humanos: em relação a esta, prevaleceria – para o Supremo Tribunal, sublinhe-se – a anistia de 1979 que equiparou crimes políticos e crimes comuns, além de mitigar as perspectivas de uma memória política; em relação àquele, haveria um *a priori* de sentidos, uma vez que, apesar dos dilemas apresentados pela sociedade informacional, não haveria um direito ao esquecimento, mesmo que o passado questionado seja individual e mesmo que ele, eventualmente, já não interesse ao tempo presente.

IV. Conclusão

Memória e esquecimento são faces complementares de um mesmo processo de significação do tempo, mas não são simples faces opostas da mesma moeda. Há evidente conexão entre tempo, memória e esquecimento. O que é lembrado revela-se no tempo presente. O que é esquecido pode se tornar memória, a depender do somatório de conjunturas políticas, culturais e sociais.

Há memórias que pertencem ao indivíduo, ao grupo, ao Estado. Apesar disso, há memórias que excedem ao indivíduo e repercutem episódios pretéritos – desvelando uma face política – que importam à consolidação democrática e à proteção dos direitos humanos. Nesse ponto, se apresenta, pois, o direito à memória. A evidência do direito à memória, no entanto, não impede a existência de memórias individuais, cujo esquecimento é aceito na medida em que não são revestidas de interesse público, ou seja, pertencentes apenas ao indivíduo, já que se relacionam com acontecimentos íntimos ou privados e não possuem, além de apelo midiático, qualquer outra função na narrativa histórica.

Nessa perspectiva, na aproximação entre memória e esquecimento proposta, tem-se que o direito à memória visa proteger as memórias políticas, enquanto o direito ao esquecimento está ligado à proteção dos direitos da personalidade.

O paradoxo que permeia os sentidos da memória e do esquecimento ganha novos contornos na pós-modernidade, em que se desvela a sociedade da informação, caracterizada por (r)evoluções tecnológicas que modificam a organização social e as relações interpessoais e geram uma sociedade globalizada e interconectada, cujas informações transcendem as fronteiras territoriais e temporais.

O advento da internet e o desenvolvimento das novas tecnologias ocasionam o aparecimento de conflitos, aguçando a dinâmica entre os atos de lembrar e esquecer. Armazenar informações torna-se cada vez mais fácil e barato, sendo possível resgatá-las a qualquer tempo e em qualquer local em que se encontre o indivíduo, gerando um efeito coletivo de "não-esquecimento", baseado na dificuldade de rastreio e controle das informações. Assim, lembrar vira a regra, e o esquecimento, a exceção. Nesse contexto, tem-se uma nova roupagem em relação ao conflito entre o público e o privado.

As dimensões do esquecimento e da memória são distintas, mas não opositivas. O Direito à Memória e à Verdade liga-se a fatos históricos de importância política, relevantes à proteção de Direitos Humanos e da Democracia, transpondo interesses privados. O Direito ao Esquecimento, por sua vez, vincula-se, preponderantemente, a um âmbito protetivo mais restrito: os direitos de personalidade (intimidade, vida privada, honra e imagem) de quem tem os seus dados pessoais disseminados na sociedade informacional e, ao mesmo tempo, deseja evitar essa exposição. Não há, portanto, efetiva oposição entre o Direito à Memória e à Verdade e o Direito ao Esquecimento; ao contrário, o que ambas as dimensões protetivas almejam se traduz no resguardo de Direitos Humanos de âmbitos distintos.

Com efeito, é perceptível que o direito ao esquecimento pode, em determinadas situações, colocar-se em disputa com outros direitos fundamentais, em especial, as liberdades de expressão, de imprensa e de informação. Não há, entretanto, soluções definidas para essas hipóteses, sendo necessária a análise do caso concreto, por intermédio do instituto da ponderação, para que se possa verificar eventual critério de prevalência entre os direitos postos em conflito – apesar do entendimento em sentido contrário adotado pela Corte Constitucional brasileira de que não há um direito ao esquecimento.

É equivocado, assim, o entendimento que afirma que o direito ao esquecimento não é compatível com a Constituição Federal. Há, ao menos, uma possível saída: admitiu o Supremo Tribunal Federal que eventuais excessos ou abusos no exercício da liberdade de expressão e de informação devem ser analisados caso a caso, a partir dos parâmetros constitucionais e previsões legais dos âmbitos penal e cível.

A Corte Constitucional brasileira invoca a “memória” em sentido opositivo ao “esquecimento”. Nisso talvez se situe a principal razão do equívoco interpretativo do Supremo Tribunal Federal, evidenciando a deficitária compreensão em seus julgamentos sobre a memória e sobre o esquecimento. Ao definir a recepção constitucional da lei da anistia de 1979 pela Constituição Federal de 1988, a Suprema Corte, desprezou o caráter político da memória e mitigou a dimensão fenomenológica da memória ao admitir uma anistia que objetiva deixar o passado para trás, ignorando sua contínua manifestação no tempo presente. Paradoxalmente, ao estabelecer o (inexistente) âmbito protetivo do direito esquecimento, a Corte Constitucional afirmou exatamente o que negou em sua compreensão da memória: que os sentidos do passado são conferidos no tempo presente.

Contudo, ao opor o esquecimento à necessidade de uma “memória coletiva”, o Supremo Tribunal Federal igualmente ignorou que memórias coletivas não se opõem a memórias individuais. Logo, esquecer não é, necessariamente, uma afronta a supostas memórias coletivas, já que os âmbitos da rememoração e do esquecimento são distintos.

O direito à memória não se destina, em sua construção histórica e política, a desafiar a esfera protetiva da privacidade; ao mesmo tempo, o esquecimento, postulado como um direito, não alcança qualquer memória política e se limita, unicamente, a episódios passados de cunho pessoal (íntimo ou privado) cuja revelação, embora tenha feito sentido no passado, já não interessa ao tempo presente.

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Global Journal of Human-Social Science (H) Volume XXIV Issue I Version I Year 2024

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Beyond Reality: An Integrative Theoretical Framework for Influence Marketing in the Metaverse

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Keywords: metaverse marketing; virtual influencers; consumer engagement; artificial intelligence; digital interaction.

GJHSS-H Classification: LCC: HF5415.1265

BEYONDREALITYANINTEGRATIVETHEORETICALFRAMEWORKFORINFLUENCEMARKETINGINTHEMETAVERSE

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Keywords: metaverse marketing; virtual influencers; consumer engagement; artificial intelligence; digital interaction.

I. Introduction

The emergence of the metaverse as a new digital frontier represents a revolution in influence marketing, introducing new paradigms of interaction, immersion, and influence that challenge traditional approaches. With technological advancements, the integration of artificial intelligence, meta-humans, and virtual influencers in the metaverse opens unprecedented paths for brands to engage their consumers in digital environments that are both highly interactive and immersive (Narin, 2021; Tlili et al., 2022). This evolution prompts a critical investigation into how influence marketing adapts and operates within the metaverse, especially regarding the mechanisms by which virtual influencers and meta-humans, mediated by artificial intelligence, can affect consumer engagement and brand perception. This paper aims to develop an integrative theoretical framework that explores these nuances, outlining the specific mechanisms of influence and dynamics of interaction between brands, virtual influencers/meta-humans, and consumers in the metaverse (Tlili et al., 2022; Abbate et al., 2022).

A gap in the existing literature was identified, as previous studies on influence marketing have predominantly focused on the traditional digital environment, neglecting the growing influence of the metaverse and artificial intelligence technologies in redefining these interaction dynamics (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2020; Lou & Yuan, 2019). To address this gap, the present work relies on fundamentals of communication, social psychology, and media studies, adapting them to the unique context of the metaverse, an approach that recognizes immersion, presence, and interactivity as amplifying characteristics of influence mechanisms, while positing that artificial intelligence promotes a new form of personalization and authenticity in the interaction between influencers and consumers (Bailenson, 2018; Gartner, 2021).

This study contributes to the literature on influence marketing by providing a detailed understanding and a theoretical model to unravel the complexities of influence marketing within the metaverse. Integrating perspectives from various disciplines, it allows a comprehensive view of the challenges and opportunities presented by this new frontier of digital marketing.

Structured cohesively, this paper begins with a review of the literature on influence marketing, emphasizing its evolution and the rise of the metaverse as an innovative arena for digital influence. This is followed by an analysis of the role played by artificial intelligence, meta-humans, and virtual influencers in redefining brand-consumer interactions within this new environment. An integrative theoretical framework is then proposed that captures the specific mechanisms of influence unique to the metaverse, culminating in a discussion on the practical implications of this model for marketing strategists and academics. It concludes with recommendations for future research, underlining how this study advances the understanding of influence marketing in the metaverse and provides valuable insights for navigating this emerging digital context.

II. Evolution of Influence: From Digital to Metahumans

The evolution of digital influence, from the rise of traditional opinion leaders to the emergence of virtual influencers and meta-humans, reflects constant innovation in the field of influence marketing. This development has not only transformed marketing strategies but also redefined brand-consumer interactions, introducing new dimensions of authenticity, personalization, and ethics (Narin, 2021; Buhalis et al., 2022).

Initially, opinion leaders were central figures in disseminating information and trends, acting primarily in local communities or through traditional media channels. With the advent of the internet and social media, celebrities and digital influencers began to exert significant impact, leveraging their vast audiences to shape opinions and consumer behaviors. These influencers, with their ability to generate personal connections and direct engagement with followers, marked the first major evolution in the landscape of influence marketing (Arsenyan & Mirowska, 2021).

The introduction of virtual influencers, such as Lil Miquela and Lu do Magalu, represented the next innovative leap. These digital entities, created with advanced technologies, offer a new layer of personalization and adaptability, capable of engaging with global audiences without human physical or temporal limitations (Arsenyan & Mirowska, 2021). The "manufactured authenticity" of these influencers (Khamis, Ang & Welling, 2017), highlights how they can effectively engage audiences despite their non-organic nature.

The emergence of meta-humans, driven by advancements in AI and computer graphics, has taken the notion of authenticity to a new level. These ultra-realistic avatars, capable of expressing emotions and conducting complex interactions, promise to further revolutionize marketing campaigns, creating immersive and personalized experiences on an unprecedented scale (Sands et al., 2022). However, this evolution brings with it significant ethical concerns related to transparency, privacy, and the potential erosion of the distinction between real and artificial.

The introduction of a new element in this discussion, collective artificial intelligence (CAI), suggests a fusion between computational capacity and mass human knowledge, enhancing the creation of digital influencers who not only simulate human behaviors but also learn and evolve from collective interaction with users (Arsenyan & Mirowska, 2021). This represents an unexplored frontier in influence marketing, where personalization and authenticity can reach even more sophisticated levels. Nonetheless, this approach amplifies ethical issues, especially in relation to consumer autonomy and the responsible use of collected data (Lou et al., 2023).

As we analyze the elements composing the digital influence process, there is a need to systematize the components that constitute influence in hyper-connected environments. Thus, Table 1 below indicates the Typology of Influencers in Digital Marketing, bringing their definitions, environments, capabilities, limitations, and Ethical Considerations. It outlines a spectrum of influencers, from traditional figures to cutting-edge digital entities, each with its distinct nuances of interaction, impact, and ethics.

Table 1: Typologies of Influencers in Digital Marketing: Definitions, Influence Environments, Capabilities, Limitations, and Ethical Considerations

Type of Influencer	Definition	Influence Environment	Capabilities	Limitations	Impacton Brand Perception	Ethical Considerations
Opinion Leaders	Individuals recognized for their specialized knowledge in certain areas.	Traditional media, online communities, events.	High credibility; Direct influence on behaviors and opinions.	Limited reach to specific niches; May be perceived as biased.	Elevates brand authority and trust; Associated with expertise.	Transparency about paid partn-erships; Maintain editorial integrity.
Celebrities	Famous individuals who use their public visibility to influence opinions and behaviors.	Traditional media, social networks, public events.	Wide reach and recognition; Strong emotional appeal.	Risks associated with personal image; High costs.	Increases recognition and emotional association; Risks of negative endorsement	Responsibility for the exerted influence; Authenticity in endorsements.
Digital Influencers	Individuals who use digital plat-forms to influence opinions and behaviors.	Social networks, blogs, video platforms.	Direct engagement with the audience; High targeting capability.	Dependence on digital platforms; Market saturation.	Humanizes the brand; Increases trust and loyalty.	Transparency about sponsored content; Ethics in promoting products/services.
Virtual Influencers	Digitally created characters that simulate human presence online.	Social networks, digital marketing campaigns.	Extreme personalization; Total control over image.	Lack of real emotional depth; Authenticity issues.	Innovation and modernity; Questions about genuineness.	Clarity about artificial nature; Considerations on psychological impact.
Meta humans	Ultra-realistic AI-driven avatars that can interact in real-time.	Digital platforms, immersive experiences in the metaverse.	Realisticre presentations; Immersive experiences.	High development cost; Challenges in replicating human nuances.	Strengthened emotional connection; Perception of technological forefront.	Ethics in design; Avoiding unattainable standards of perfection.
Autonomous Intelligent Entities (AIE)	AI systems that operate autonomously, without direct human superision.	Digital environments, automated interactions, virtual assistants.	Real-time responses; Adaptability to varied contexts.	Challenges in understanding cultural and emotional nuances; Risks of misunderstandi ngs.	Potential for personalization and efficiency; Reliability issues.	Transparency in operation; Responsibility in the use of personal data.

The detailed understanding of the influence ecosystem, as outlined in Table 1, provides a foundation for advancing theoretical and managerial discussions on influence marketing. This overview highlights the need for marketing strategies that not only explore the diversity and capabilities of influencers in different environments but also seriously consider the ethical implications and impact on brand perception (Lou et al., 2023). As the discussion of the next topic approaches, it is crucial to recognize how technological evolution, especially the emergence of Collective Artificial Intelligence (CAI), redefines human interaction and influence within these digital spaces.

The subsequent topic will explore how theories of communication and social psychology adapt or are transformed in the context of the metaverse, providing a deeper understanding of how influence is constructed, perceived, and managed in advanced virtual environments like this new and complex ecosystem of influence presented.

III. Fundamental Theories Revisited: Communication and Social Psychology in the Metaverse

The metaverse, with its convergence of virtual spaces accessible through augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) technologies, is revolutionizing the landscape of digital marketing and consumer engagement. This emerging domain, distinguished by its capacity to provide immersive, interactive, and presence-filled experiences, opens new avenues for brands and digital influencers to connect with audiences in unprecedented and profoundly meaningful ways (Tlili et. al., 2022). Integrating fundamental theories of communication and social psychology in this context not only broadens our understanding of consumer engagement and digital influence in this innovative territory but also establishes a dialogue between the old and the new, demonstrating the potential to enrich digital marketing practices in an ever-evolving environment.

Within this scenario, the theory of social presence, as proposed by Short, Williams, and Christie (1976), originally focused on the ability of technologically mediated communication media to convey a sense of social presence, in the metaverse, this presence is extraordinarily intensified. Avatars and virtual objects begin to have a tangible and perceptible presence, creating an environment rich in potential for brand communication and influence (Narin. 2021). This natural evolution of the theory underscores the importance of developing virtual spaces that foster rich and meaningful interactions, capable of simulating the intimacy and proximity of face-to-face encounters, and how these experiences can be leveraged to transcend traditional expectations of consumer engagement.

The evolution continues to the theory of social identity by Tajfel and Turner (1979), where the possibility of reconfiguration and expression of complex identities through avatars and digital representations expands the scope of this theory, introducing new dynamics in how group identities influence behaviors, perceptions, and self-esteem. This context offers brands a unique opportunity to facilitate spaces where consumers can explore and express their virtual identities, enhancing brand affinity and loyalty.

The theory of the extended self by Belk (1988), which focuses on the incorporation of avatars and virtual goods as extensions of users' selves, opens a range of opportunities for brands. Marketing strategies that use these virtual elements as tools for identity expression can strengthen consumers' connections with brands, promoting a more personal and profound engagement experience.

Transitioning to the fundamental principles of persuasion by Cialdini (2001) reveals the complexity of applying these ideas in the immersive context of the metaverse. The engaging nature and interactive possibilities of this digital space require brands and influencers to rethink and adapt persuasion strategies to effectively capture consumers' attention and interest. Utilizing immersiveness to create more compelling experiences, brands can explore these fundamental principles in innovative ways, aligning with users' expectations and desires (Abbate et. al., 2022).

On the other hand, the uses and gratifications theory (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1973) and the self-categorization theory (Turner et. al., 1987) find a particularly resonant echo in the metaverse. Understanding the motivations behind user engagement in this new environment is crucial for developing marketing strategies aligned with the public's desires and needs. Additionally, the possibility of forming new group identifications that transcend geographical and physical barriers highlights the importance of marketing strategies that recognize and nurture the formation of global brand communities. These theories together underline the need for innovative approaches in digital marketing, which not only recognize the uniqueness of the metaverse as a consumer engagement space but also leverage its unique features to create engaging and memorable brand experiences (Tlili et. al., 2022).

The theory of cognitive dissonance, conceived by Festinger (1957), provides a solid foundation for understanding human behavior in the face of internal conflicts. This theory suggests that individuals seek harmony in their beliefs, values, and actions, and when faced with inconsistencies, may experience psychological tension known as cognitive dissonance. This dissonance can lead to changes in beliefs, justifications of behavior, or adaptations of actions to restore consonance. This concept is particularly relevant in the metaverse, an environment where perceptions and interactions are largely mediated by technology (Narin. 2021). For example, a user might encounter a divergence between a brand's representation in the metaverse and their prior real-world experiences, provoking cognitive dissonance. This highlights the importance for brands to ensure that their virtual identities are aligned with their real values and promises, to avoid cognitive conflicts and foster positive relationships with consumers (Narin. 2021; Abbate et. al., 2022; Tlili et. al., 2022).

Advancing to the theory of the social construction of reality, developed by Berger and Luckmann (1966), we observe how perceptions of reality are collectively constructed through our social interactions. This theory argues that the knowledge of the world is formed and consolidated by shared experiences, language, and cultural practices, revealing how different social groups may have distinct views of reality based on their common interactions. In the vast and diversified environment of the metaverse, this theory finds fertile ground for application (Suh & Ahn, 2022). Brands have the unique ability to influence and participate in the social construction of reality within this digital space. By creating immersive and engaging brand experiences, they not only shape consumers' perceptions of their products and values but also contribute to the formation of new social and cultural consensuses. The metaverse offers a stage where physical and cultural boundaries are transcended, allowing brands to create and explore new social realities in collaboration with users (Suh & Ahn, 2022).

This transition from understanding cognitive dissonance to the social construction of reality highlights an evolution in thinking about how brands can effectively communicate and relate to consumers in the metaverse.

By recognizing and applying these theories, brands can more successfully navigate the complex digital environment, promoting authentic and constructive experiences that resonate with users' values and identities, while also contributing to the construction of new shared realities (Narin. 2021).

Adapting fundamental theories of communication and social psychology to the innovative context of the metaverse, as observed in the following Table 2, not only revitalizes their premises but also opens new horizons for the literature on influence marketing, challenging professionals to rethink strategies in an environment where the boundaries between the real and the virtual become increasingly blurred. For instance, the theory of social presence, in the metaverse, suggests that the depth and richness of interactions can be significantly expanded, creating unprecedented opportunities for brands seeking to establish stronger emotional and psychological connections with their audience. Companies like Nike and Gucci are already exploring these possibilities, creating immersive experiences that allow consumers to interact with products in a three-dimensional and socially connected way, redefining the notion of brand engagement.

Table 2: Application of Sociopsychological Theories in the Metaverse: Implications for Marketing Strategies and Brand Engagement

Theory	Authors	Definition and Importance	Application in the Metaverse
Social Presence	Short, Williams, and Christie (1976)	Proposes that technology-mediated communication varies in its ability to convey the sense of social presence.	Enhanced in the metaverse through interactions in three-dimensional spaces, allowing avatars and virtual objects to have a tangible presence, increasing the effectiveness of communication and brand influence.
Social Identity	Tajfeland Turner (1979)	Explains how group identity influences self-esteem, behavior, and perception of others.	Facilitates the reconfiguration of identities through avatars, influencing brand affinity and allowing for the expression of diverse identities within digital spaces, promoting deeper engagement with brands.
Expanded Self	Belk (1988)	Discusses how individuals incorporate possessions into their sense of identity.	In the metaverse, avatars and virtual goods become extensions of the self, opening new avenues for identity expression and personalized marketing strategies, aiming for a deeper connection with consumers.
Psychology of Persuasion	Cialdini (2001)	Identifies fundamental principles for influencing decisions, including reciprocity, scarcity, authority, consistency, liking, and social proof.	The applicability of these principles can vary in the metaverse, requiring adaptations given the immersiveness and complexity of interactions, but offers unique opportunities to apply these tactics in innovative engagement contexts.
Uses and Gratifications	Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch (1973)	Explores how people use media to satisfy specific needs and desires.	Understanding motivations for engagement in the metaverse is crucial for developing effective marketing strategies that leverage the unique opportunities of immersion and interactivity to meet user needs.
Self-Categorization	Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell (1987)	Details how individuals identify with social groups and categories.	The metaverse can facilitate new forms of group identification, transcending geographical and physical limitations, allowing for the cultivation of global fan communities with strong identity ties and meaningful engagement.
Cognitive Dissonance	Festinger (1957)	Illuminates how internal conflicts or dissonances arise when there is inconsistency between beliefs and behaviors.	In the metaverse, exploring different identities and experiences can lead to internal conflicts, highlighting the importance of creating brand experiences congruent with consumer values for engagement and loyalty.
Social Construction of Reality	Berger and Luckmann (1966)	Suggests that knowledge and understanding of the world are shaped through social interactions.	Offers brands in the metaverse a unique opportunity to actively participate in the social construction of reality, influencing perceptions of products, services, and cultural values, and shaping consumption experiences significantly.

Similarly, the theory of the extended self finds fertile ground in the metaverse, where personalization and identity expression through avatars and virtual goods can be used for highly targeted marketing strategies, transforming the way consumers perceive and relate to brands. This new paradigm requires a theoretical and managerial approach that considers the complexities and nuances of consumer behavior in this emerging digital space, emphasizing the need for ongoing research that explores the unique dynamics of the metaverse.

As we conclude discussing fundamental theories of communication and social psychology in the metaverse, the need to fully understand the impact of

Global Journal of Human-Social Science (H) Volume XXIV Issue I Version I Year 2024

this new domain on human interactions and marketing becomes clear. Thus, it is essential to comprehend how immersion and interactivity elevate the user experience, transforming not just the perception of presence but also the very essence of consumer engagement and brand influence. The metaverse, therefore, represents not only a shift in the technological landscape but also a profound evolution in the way brands and consumers interact, highlighting the importance of adapting and evolving traditional theories to remain relevant in this new digital frontier.

IV. Enhanced Immersion: Interactivity and Presence in the Metaverse

The preceding discussion has laid a solid foundation for understanding how theories of communication and social psychology apply to the metaverse, setting the stage for a deeper exploration of the dynamics of immersion, interactivity, and presence. These features are central to the metaverse experience and have significant implications for influence marketing, redefining how brands engage with their consumers.

Immersion is a defining characteristic of the metaverse, augmented by virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) technology, creating a sense of physical and psychological presence in digital environments. Slater and Wilbur (1997) conceptualize immersion as the sensation of being present in a non-physical environment, which amplifies the influence and efficacy of communication within the metaverse. The sense of presence, as discussed by Biocca and Delaney (1995), is crucial for consumer engagement, as it deepens the influence of virtual narratives and interactions. Ryan's (2015) research on narrative immersion complements this view, suggesting that immersion facilitates deeper emotional and cognitive connections with content, enhancing persuasion and message retention.

Interactivity in the metaverse refers to the users' ability to influence and be influenced by the virtual environment in real-time. Steuer (1992) defines interactivity as the degree of control users have over the content and form of mediated communication in a medium. The bidirectional and multidimensional nature of interactivity in the metaverse allows for a range of complex interactions, increasing the potential for personalized and contextualized engagement. Sundar (2004) expands on this concept by introducing the Source Interactivity Theory, which suggests that interactivity enhances the user's perception of control, personalization, and agency, key elements for effective engagement in influence marketing.

Presence, or the sense of "being there" in the metaverse, is intensified by visual and auditory immersion, coupled with the ability to interact meaningfully with the environment. Lombard and Ditton (1997) define presence as the illusion of non-mediation, where the user feels directly involved in the environment, without perceiving technology as an intermediary. Presence strengthens the user experience, influencing perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors towards brands and products. Gamberini et al. (2008) argue that presence increases persuasion, making brand experiences more impactful and memorable.

Csikszentmihalyi's (1990) flow theory is particularly relevant to the metaverse, describing a state of total immersion and enjoyment in the activity at hand. This flow experience can be facilitated by the metaverse's deep immersion, enhancing consumer engagement with brand content or virtual influencers. Nakamura and Csikszentmihalyi's (2002) research on the psychology of flow reinforces the idea that environments supporting flow experiences can significantly improve engagement and influence.

Additionally, Horton and Wohl's (1956) parasocial interaction theory offers a valuable perspective on how consumers form relationships with characters and influencers in the metaverse. The advanced interactivity of the metaverse allows interactions that transcend traditional parasocial relationships, creating more compelling and influential social bonds due to the metaverse's immersive and participatory nature. Cole and Leets' (1999) research on parasocial relationships in virtual environments suggests that these relationships can be especially potent for engagement in immersive digital contexts.

To clearly and robustly illustrate the main elements discussed, the following Table 3 synthesizes the concepts of immersion, interactivity, and presence, along with their implications for influence marketing in the metaverse:

Table 3: Elements of Influence Marketing in the Metaverse: Theories and Implications for Building Engagement and Brand Perception

Element	Description	Implications for Influence Marketing	Relevant Theories	Principal Authors
Immersion	The sensation of being physically present in a virtual environment, promoting deep engagement.	Increases receptiveness to brand messages and streng-thens positive perceptions.	Flow Theory	Csikszentmihalyi (1990)
Interactivity	The ability to influence and be influenced by the environment and other users in real time.	Facilitates more meaningful and personalized relation-ships with consumers.	Interactivity Theory	Steuer (1992)
Presence	The sense of "being there" within the metaverse, enhancing the authenticity of the experience.	Reinforces authenticity and the effectiveness of social influence and brand endorsement.	Social Presence Theory	Short, Williams, & Christie (1976)
Flow	A state of total involvement where the individual is completely immersed in the activity.	Maximizes consumer enga-gement and satisfaction with brand experiences.	Flow Theory	Csikszentmihalyi (1990)
Parasocial Relationships	The formation of relationships similar to social ones with mediated figures, such as virtual influencers.	Enhances brand loyalty and trust through emotional bonds.	Para social Interaction Theory	Horton & Wohl (1956)

The emergence of the metaverse has a significant impact on the application and evolution of classic influence marketing theories, requiring reinterpretation in light of this new digital environment's unique characteristics. Immersion, intrinsic to the metaverse, enhances the sense of physical presence, promoting deep engagement that, as proposed by the Flow Theory (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990), increases receptivity to brand messages and strengthens positive perceptions. Similarly, interactivity, emphasized by the Interactivity Theory (Steuer, 1992), allows for bidirectional influence between brands and consumers, fostering more meaningful and personalized relationships. Likewise, the sense of presence, grounded in the Social Presence Theory (Short, Williams, & Christie, 1976), reinforces the authenticity and efficacy of social influence and brand endorsement, while parasocial relationships (Horton & Wohl, 1956), intensify with virtual influencers, enhancing brand loyalty and trust. This disruptive context of the metaverse not only challenges existing theories but also demands the development of new theoretical models that consider the complex dynamics of interaction and engagement in this expansive universe, marking a turning point in the literature on influence marketing.

As we conclude the discussion on this topic, it becomes evident that these dimensions profoundly redefine influence marketing strategies, paving the way for the discussion of the use and presence of artificial intelligence in the metaverse. This new chapter promises to explore how artificial intelligence (AI) technology can be used to further enhance the personalization of experiences in the metaverse, tailoring content and interactions in a way that uniquely resonates with each user. Thus, we naturally progress from analyzing the theoretical and applied foundations of immersion and interactivity to exploring how emerging technologies like AI can be instrumentalized to optimize and personalize influence in the metaverse, marking an advancement in both the practice and theory of digital marketing.

V. Vartificial Intelligence and the Personalization of Influence

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into influencer marketing, especially within the context of the metaverse, is revolutionizing how brands engage with consumers. This technological evolution, highlighted by Huang and Rust (2018), transforms the traditional influencer marketing paradigm, offering new opportunities for consumer engagement. Personalization, driven by AI, enables brands to deliver highly relevant content and messages to individuals, based on a deep understanding of their behaviors, preferences, and interaction history (Hwang &Chien, 2022). This is particularly effective in the metaverse, where user-generated data can be analyzed in real-time to dynamically tailor experiences, enhancing relevance and engagement.

Moreover, authenticity, a key component in building consumer trust and the effectiveness of influencer marketing, is being redefined by AI. Virtual influencers and metahumans, animated by AI, as discussed by Kaplan (2020), can now exhibit characteristics and behaviors that reflect genuineness and human emotions, thanks to advancements in natural language processing and machine learning. These Autonomous Intelligent Entities (AIE) can respond to inquiries, engage in meaningful dialogues, and even express opinions and feelings, mimicking the complexity of human interactions, which significantly enhances the consumer experience, making interactions more relatable and engaging (Hwang & Chien, 2022).

However, the application of AI in personalization and authenticity in influencer marketing also presents ethical challenges and concerns about privacy, as highlighted by Larsson (2020). The large-scale data collection and analysis needed to fuel these AI systems raise questions about user consent and data security. Furthermore, the growing indistinguishability between human and virtual/metahuman influencers may confuse consumers, creating a need for transparency and regulation in this area (Bordegoni & Ferrise, 2023).

Advanced personalization, made possible by AI, promises to transcend traditional market segmentation boundaries, allowing the creation of user experiences that are truly unique to each individual. Tsuchiya and Motohashi (2020) highlight that this ability to deeply personalize interactions not only improves customer satisfaction but also enhances the efficiency of marketing strategies by ensuring that brand messages are always relevant and timely. A real-world example of this application can be seen in platforms like Spotify, which uses AI to personalize playlists, and Netflix, which adapts content recommendations for each user, demonstrating the efficacy of this approach in improving customer satisfaction and engagement.

Authenticity is amplified by the AI's ability to create virtual influencers and metahumans that can express emotions and react to stimuli in a convincingly human manner. Sundar, Tamul, and Wu (2020) argue that this "almost-human" quality of virtual influencers, combined with the personalization of interactions, can increase the effectiveness of brand communication by establishing an emotional connection with the audience. However, the use of AI to create these personalized and authentic experiences may establish a fine line between personalization and intrusion, as discussed by Wagner, Baccarella, and Voigt (2021), significantly impacting perceptions of privacy and the ethics of marketing influence.

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into influencer marketing, marked especially by the creation of Autonomous Intelligent Entities (AIEs), represents a revolution in how brand-consumer interactions are structured, introducing levels of personalization and authenticity previously unreachable (Hwang &Chien, 2022). This evolution not only redefines consumer expectations and sets new standards for the creation and delivery of influencer content but also highlights the need to address emerging ethical and privacy challenges. As we advance in understanding the capabilities and implications of these technologies, it becomes crucial to explore how they reconfigure the mechanisms of influence on consumer behavior and the need for a theoretical framework that integrates technological dynamics with traditional theories of marketing and consumer behavior (Bordegoni & Ferrise, 2023). This approach will not only provide a deep understanding of the impacts of AI on influencer marketing but also guide the evolution of effective strategies in an increasingly digital and connected environment, while discussing what is expected to consolidate in terms of values, procedures, practices, and behaviors in this new hyper-virtual interaction landscape.

VI. Reconfigured Mechanisms of Influence: An Integrative Theoretical Framework

The reconfiguration of influence mechanisms in the metaverse context, mediated by the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) and the emergence of virtual influencers and metahumans, challenges the development of an advanced integrative theoretical framework. This framework must navigate the intersection of dynamic forces that are redefining engagement and influence strategies within this new digital domain (Bordegoni & Ferrise, 2023). The complexity of this mission reflects the multiplicity of variables at play, such as immersion, personalization, authenticity, and interactivity, uniquely influencing the influence process.

Incorporating the theory of social presence (Short, Williams, & Christie, 1976), which suggests that computer-mediated communication can be almost as rich and personal as face-to-face interaction, and the theory of self-categorization (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987), which discusses how individuals identify with specific groups, influencing their behavior and perceptions, it is proposed that the increased presence and group identification within the metaverse intensify the effects of social influence. Immersion, provided by augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) technologies, amplifies the sense of presence (Slater & Wilbur, 1997), while advanced personalization enabled by AI allows for precise adaptation of influence messages to individual user preferences, increasing the relevance and effectiveness of communication (Huang & Rust, 2018).

Perceived authenticity, essential for the effectiveness of influence according to social influence theory (Cialdini, 2001), is redefined in the metaverse by the presence of virtual influencers and metahumans. These agents, despite being artificial, can be viewed as authentic sources of information and inspiration, thanks to the sophistication of AI technologies that allow for expressions and behaviors that accurately mimic human nuances (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2020).

Interactivity is exacerbated in the metaverse by the users' ability to influence and be influenced in a continuous feedback cycle, creating a dynamic environment where influence can be exercised in a more direct and adaptable manner (Steuer, 1992). This highlights the need to understand how real-time actions and reactions of users shape influence processes.

It is also highlighted that privacy and the potential manipulation of users through hyper-personalization require establishing a sense of respect for user autonomy and ensuring transparency in AI operations are imperatives to preserve the integrity of the influence process, considering the importance of ethics in the design and implementation of AI systems (Lou & Yuan, 2019).

For example, studies might investigate the impact of the sense of immersive presence in the metaverse on persuasion or how real-time interaction with virtual influencers and metahumans alters the dynamics of trust and credibility, a field that could be enriched by Walther's (1996) investigation into computer-mediated interpersonal communication and his theory of hyperpersonalization, suggesting that computer-mediated communication can sometimes be more intimate and personal than face-to-face interactions.

Transparency in the use of these entities, the protection of user data privacy, and ensuring that interactions promote positive values become critical aspects. Brands must, therefore, prioritize not only the effectiveness of influence but also compliance with fundamental ethical principles, reinforcing consumer trust and loyalty – crucial elements for success in the immersive digital environment (Bordegoni & Ferrise, 2023).

To further deepen the understanding of reconfigured influence mechanisms in the metaverse, it is essential to expand the theoretical discussion to include an analysis of how technological advancements, especially in AI, can be utilized to foster more ethical and responsible communication. The inclusion of ethical technology design principles, as discussed by Friedman, Kahn, and Borning (2008), regarding the consideration of human values in the development of interactive systems, can provide vital guidelines for the development of virtual influencers and metahumans that respect user autonomy and privacy.

Moreover, integrating insights from social psychology and behavioral sciences can enrich the understanding of influence processes in the metaverse. The heuristic-systematic processing theory (Chaiken, 1980; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986), for example, can offer a lens through which to understand how messages from virtual influencers are processed by consumers, whether through critical evaluation (systematic processing) or based on superficial cues (heuristic processing).

To deepen our understanding of interactive dynamics in the metaverse, it is crucial to investigate emerging phenomena, such as the co-creation of content between virtual influencers/metahumans and users. This collaboration can play a significant role in the perception of authenticity and the level of user engagement, in addition to exploring the long-term consequences of immersion in the metaverse for aspects of identity and online socialization. Table 4, presented below, summarizes the main axes of these investigations, offering a detailed overview of how these interactions can reshape online experiences and influence both the construction of identity and socialization practices in the virtual environment.

Table 4: Principles and Practices of Engagement in the Metaverse: Immersion, Personalization, Authenticity, Interactivity, and Ethics in Building Brand Experiences

Dimension	Description	Influence Mechanisms	Ethical Considerations	Implications for Practice	Relevant Authors
Immersion	Experience of being present in a virtual environment, facilitated by VR/ AR.	Deepens brand connection through immersive experiences. (Slater & Wilbur, 1997)	Avoid emotional manipulation; ensure positive experiences.	Create immersive content that respects user integrity, promoting experiences that maximize presence.	Slater & Wilbur (1997)
Personalization	Tailoring messages and interactions to individual interests, via AI.	Makes brand communication more relevant and persuasive, increasing relevance through precise adaptation to individual preferences. (Huang & Rust, 2018)	Protect data privacy; be transparent about AI use.	Develop recommend-dation systems that value privacy, using AI ethically to personalize the experience without compromising user privacy.	Huang & Rust (2018)
Authenticity	Capacity of digital influencers to genuinely reflect human qualities.	Strengthens brand trust and credibility, allowing virtual influencers and metahumans to be seen as authentic sources. (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2020)	Prevent unrealistic expectations; promote diversity and inclusion.	Select and create influencers that align with brand values, focusing on creating characters that offer authentic and inclusive representations.	Kaplan & Haenlein (2020)
Interactivity	Ease of reciprocal interaction in the metaverse.	Encourages meaningful relationships, enhancing brand influence through a dynamic environment of continuous feedback. (Steu er, 1992)	Ensure consent in data use; avoid over-personalization.	Encourage interactions that foster an active and engaged community, prioritizing the construction of spaces for ethical and consensual interaction.	Steuer (1992)

Global Journal of Human-Social Science (H) Volume XXIV Issue I Version I Year 2024

Social Presence	Perception of being socially connected with others in the metaverse.	Utilizes social dynamics to amplify brand influence, intensifying the effects of social influence through increased presence and group identification. (Short, Williams, & Christie, 1976; Turner et al., 1987)	Be clear about the artificial nature of virtual influencers.	Foster metaverse spaces that encourage support and authentic interaction, creating environments that promote social connection and community building.	Short, Williams, & Christie (1976); Turner et al. (1987)
Ethics and Transparency	Guiding principles for the implementation of technologies and strategies.	Maintains consumer trust and loyalty in the long term, emphasizing the importance of ethics and transparency in all operations. (Friedman, Kahn, & Borning, 2008)	Essential in all dimensions to pre-vent data misuse.	Establish clear policies and communicate openly about AI practices, ensuring that all actions promote positive values and respect user autonomy.	Friedman, Kahn, & Borning (2008)

The insertion of influence marketing in the metaverse represents an evolution of traditional theories, requiring adaptation to new immersive, personalized, and interactive virtual realities. The dimensions of immersion, personalization, authenticity, interactivity, and social presence, grounded by authors like Slater & Wilbur (1997), Huang & Rust (2018), Kaplan & Haenlein (2020), Steuer (1992), Short, Williams, & Christie (1976), and Turner et al. (1987), emphasize the need to create experiences that not only deeply and meaningfully engage users but also respect their privacy and promote ethics and transparency, as highlighted by Friedman, Kahn, & Borning (2008). In the metaverse, personalization and authenticity gain new layers of complexity, as AI enables increasingly sophisticated interactions, while virtual influencers and metahumans present unique challenges to credibility and trust. Interactivity and social presence, in turn, reconfigure influence dynamics by intensifying the sense of connection and belonging. Real-world examples, such as immersive virtual events conducted by global brands and the adoption of digital influencers that resonate with authentic and inclusive values, illustrate the practical application of these theories in the emerging context of the metaverse, highlighting the importance of an approach that balances technological innovation with ethical and humanistic considerations.

This reconfigured understanding of influence mechanisms in the metaverse serves as a crucial turning point in the literature on influence marketing, paving the way to explore how such dynamics impact not only brand perception but also consumer engagement at unprecedented levels (Hwang & Chien, 2022). The fluid transition to the next stage of research will involve the concrete measurement of these impacts, analyzing how immersion, personalization, authenticity, interactivity, and social presence translate into tangible value for brands and enriching experiences for users.

VII. From Virtual to Value: Measuring the Impact on Engagement and Brand Perception

Measuring the impact of virtual influencers and metahumans on consumer engagement and brand perception represents a multifaceted challenge, necessitating a methodological approach that transcends traditional metrics of views or clicks. While useful, these metrics fail to capture the complexity of human interactions within the metaverse, nor the depth of influence exerted on consumer perception and behavior (Jeon, 2022). Recent academic literature, including authors like Kozinets (2010), underscores the importance of adapting qualitative methodologies, such as netnography, to grasp the underlying social and cultural dynamics influencing these perceptions in the digital realm. Kozinets argues that netnography allows for a rich and contextualized analysis of online communities, an approach that becomes even more relevant when applied to the study of the metaverse, a space where the boundaries between the real and virtual increasingly blur.

To complement this qualitative analysis, sentiment analysis and natural language processing (NLP) offer powerful means of assessing consumer reactions at scale, enabling a precise interpretation of the overall sentiment towards specific brands or campaigns. Authors like Pang & Lee (2008) demonstrate how these technologies can be used to extract valuable insights from large volumes of textual data, providing a comprehensive understanding of consumer attitudes and emotions.

Additionally, the Net Promoter Score (NPS), a metric proposed by Reichheld (2003), stands out for its simplicity and effectiveness in measuring consumer loyalty. Its adaptation to evaluate users' willingness to recommend brands after interactions with virtual influencers or metahumans could provide a direct and powerful measure of the effectiveness of these influences on brand perception over the long term.

However, to capture the essence of engagement in the metaverse, it is crucial to incorporate specific metrics of this environment, such as the duration and frequency of virtual interactions, participation in brand events or experiences, and the creation of user-generated content in response to these initiatives. These metrics, still under development by researchers at the forefront of digital marketing and information science, more accurately reflect the level of consumer immersion and activity, moving beyond traditional engagement indicators (Jeon, 2022; Lee et. al., 2023).

Thus, an integrated approach that combines these diverse methodologies and metrics is proposed, creating a comprehensive framework to assess the impact of virtual influencers and metahumans. This approach must be inherently flexible and adaptable, capable of keeping pace with rapid technological advancements and changes in the interaction dynamics of the metaverse (Lee et. al., 2023). Such an effort not only advances the theoretical corpus of influence marketing literature but also provides practitioners with a robust set of tools to navigate and capitalize on the complexities of this new digital territory.

The inherent complexity of these digital interactions demands a meticulous approach in selecting and applying suitable metrics and methodologies to assess the impact of these influencers on brand perception and consumer decision-making. The following table presents a compilation of contemporary approaches, describing their methodologies, ethical considerations, practical implications, and potential for evolution, reflecting the need for a multifaceted analysis that encompasses both the emotional and behavioral aspects of consumer engagement (Jeon, 2022).

This array of metrics - from Sentiment Analysis to Netnography, through to the Net Promoter Score (NPS), adapted Customer Lifetime Value (CLV), and Metrics of Immersion and Interactivity - illustrates a spectrum of tools that marketing professionals can employ to decipher the complex web of interactions in the metaverse. Each approach, with its specific tools, ethical considerations, and practical implications, contributes to a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the impact of digital influencers. Moreover, the potential for evolution of these metrics indicates a pathway for continuous adaptation and improvement as new technologies and consumer behaviors emerge. Thus, Table 5 serves not only as a guide for current influence marketing practice but also signals future directions for research and development in this rapidly evolving area.

Table 5: Metrics and Approaches for Evaluating Engagement with Influencers in the Metaverse Context

Metric/ Approach	Description	Methodologies and Tools	Ethical Considerations	Implications for Practice	Potential for Evolution
Sentiment Analysis	Assessment of users' emotional reactions to interactions with virtual influencers and metahumans.	Natural Language Processing (NLP) and AI to analyze comments and feedback on social media.	Ensure transparency in data collection and respect user privacy.	Allows for content strategy adjustments based on audience emotional response.	Will evolve with improvements in NLP accuracy and AI techniques.
Netnography	Study of online communities in the metaverse to understand culture and user interactions.	Qualitative observation techniques and content analysis of forums, chats, and virtual social interactions.	Informed consent required for observation and behavior analysis.	Provides deep insights into brand perception and group dynamics.	Adaptation to new virtual platforms and integration of real-time analyses.
Net Promoter Score (NPS)	Measure of users' willingness to recommend the brand after interacting with digital influencers.	Surveys and questionnaires tailored to the metaverse context.	Importance of maintaining user anonymity and ethically interpreting data.	Evaluates the direct impact of metaverse interactions on brand loyalty.	Enhancement with instant feedback and predictive analysis techniques.
Adapted Customer Lifetime Value (CLV)	Estimate of the long-term value of customers engaged by virtual influencers and metahumans.	Analytical models incorporating engagement, conversion, and retention data in the metaverse.	Consider the impact of marketing actions on consumer perception and well-being.	Guides investment strategies in digital influencers based on ROI.	Development of more sophisticated predictive models with AI advancements.

Global Journal of Human-Social Science (H) Volume XXIV Issue I Version I Year 2024

Immersion and Interactivity Metrics	Specific measures of user engagement in the metaverse, such as duration of stay and frequency of interactions.	Behavior tracking technologies and interaction data analysis.	Balance detailed data collection with respect for privacy and user autonomy.	Enables adjustment of environments and content to maximize immersive experience and interactivity.	Expansion with new forms of interaction and sensory feedback in the metaverse.

The transition from classic theories of influence marketing to the disjointed context of the metaverse demands a profound reevaluation of their premises and applicabilities. The metrics and approaches described above, though conceived in a scenario preceding the emergence of the metaverse, find fertile ground for adaptation and evolution in this new digital environment. Sentiment analysis, for example, greatly benefits from the advanced capabilities of Natural Language Processing (NLP) and Artificial Intelligence (AI), allowing for a more nuanced understanding of users' emotional reactions to virtual influencers and metahumans. This methodology, at its core, reflects the theory of affective response within influence marketing, but its application in the metaverse enhances the ability to adjust content strategies in real-time, an evolution that Kozinets (2002) anticipated when exploring netnography in online communities.

Similarly, the adaptation of the Net Promoter Score (NPS) and Customer Lifetime Value (CLV) to the context of the metaverse illustrates a practical application of customer value theory and brand loyalty in a virtual immersive space. These metrics, grounded in the works of Reichheld (2003) and Kumar (2008), respectively, gain a new dimension when applied in environments where interactions are mediated by avatars and virtual experiences, highlighting the importance of engagement strategies that transcend the physical.

Netnography, with its emphasis on qualitative observation techniques, naturally adapts to the metaverse, allowing for a profound understanding of the cultural and social dynamics of virtual communities. This methodological approach, deeply rooted in the studies of Kozinets (2002), finds an expanded field in the metaverse, where social interactions and cultural expressions manifest in complex and multifaceted ways.

Lastly, the metrics of immersion and interactivity highlight the evolution of understanding engagement in the context of influence marketing. These metrics reflect a new era of behavioral analysis that goes beyond traditional web tracking capabilities, delving deep into the sensory and emotional experiences of users in the metaverse. Such approaches are a testament to the continuous evolution of influence marketing theories, adapting to new digital realities in a way that maintains the relevance and efficacy of these theories in increasingly virtual environments.

Thus, the metaverse not only challenges but also enriches the theoretical corpus of influence marketing, offering new insights into consumer behavior and the efficacy of digital influence strategies. This emerging paradigm requires that both academics and marketing professionals not only rethink existing metrics and methodologies but also consider the ethical and managerial implications of these strategies in an increasingly immersive and interactive world (Jeon, 2022).

The meticulous exploration of metrics and approaches to assess the impact of virtual influencers and metahumans on engagement and brand perception reveals a complex landscape where advanced technology and human interactions intertwine in unprecedented ways. This deep dive into the dynamics of the metaverse underlines the potential of these new digital tools to transform how brands connect with their audiences, offering adaptive strategies that leverage the immersive and interactive potential of these virtual environments (Lee et. al., 2023). However, as this digital journey unfolds, critical questions emerge regarding the responsibility and ethics of using these technologies.

The ability to collect, analyze, and act upon vast quantities of user data – often invisibly and in real-time – raises significant concerns about privacy, consent, and the subtle yet powerful influence these virtual environments can exert on individuals' decisions and perceptions. As such discussions advance, it becomes relevant to address these ethical concerns head-on, ensuring that innovation in influence marketing is conducted responsibly and transparently, with users' well-being at the forefront.

VIII. Ethical Challenges and Considerations in the Metaverse era

The integration of these new technologies into digital marketing raises questions about transparency, authenticity, and the digital rights of consumers, forcing marketers to navigate a morally complex environment. Transparency is crucial, especially when considering the use of virtual influencers and metahumans, where clear disclosure of the artificial nature of these entities is essential for maintaining consumer trust. Jean Baudrillard (1994), in his reflections on simulation and hyper-reality, argues that the distinction between the real and the represented becomes increasingly blurred in

Global Journal of Human-Social Science (H) Volume XXIV Issue I Version I Year 2024

digital environments, highlighting the importance of transparency to avoid deception. Marwick and Boyd (2011), on the other hand, discuss authenticity in social media as a critical factor for building meaningful relationships, indicating that the simulation of human behaviors by digital entities can complicate the perception of authenticity.

Furthermore, consumer digital rights, particularly regarding privacy and data use, are fundamental (Zuboff, 2019). The ability of virtual influencers to collect and analyze large volumes of consumer data raises concerns about surveillance and manipulation. Shoshana Zuboff (2019) coined the term “surveillance capitalism” to describe the collection of personal data without explicit consent, which can erode privacy and individual autonomy.

To address these challenges, it is necessary for brands to adopt clear digital ethics policies, establishing guidelines for the responsible use of virtual influencers. This includes transparent disclosure practices, maintaining authenticity in digital interactions, and rigorous protection of consumer privacy and data rights (Bibri & Allam, 2022).

Building an ethical framework for action in the metaverse requires collaboration among industry stakeholders, academics, and regulators, ensuring that technological innovations are used ethically. Nissenbaum (2009) advocates that privacy should be considered in the context of the appropriate flow of information, suggesting that data collection and use practices be guided by clear privacy norms.

Algorithmic fairness also emerges as a challenge, with the increasing use of algorithms to mediate interactions in the metaverse. Eubanks (2018) highlights how automated systems can perpetuate biases, underlining the need to develop transparent and fair AI. Moreover, the sustainability of the metaverse, in terms of its environmental impact, is a growing concern, with Brundtland (1987) defining principles for sustainability that can guide the minimization of the metaverse's ecological footprint.

Educating users about their digital rights and the use of their information is crucial for promoting a culture of transparency and accountability. By balancing technological innovation with ethical responsibility, brands can lead by example, creating marketing experiences that are engaging, fair, and respectful of consumers' rights and well-being, establishing a solid foundation for sustainable growth in the digital ecosystem (Bibri & Allam, 2022).

Thus, Table 6 below presents a detailed ethical framework for action in the metaverse, encompassing ethical components, theoretical elements, the role of stakeholders, technological use, strategies for efficacy, and other relevant elements for the proposed theoretical discussion.

Table 6: Ethical Principles and Strategies for Responsible Engagement in the Metaverse

Ethical Component	Theoretical Elements	Role of Stakeholders	Technological Utilization	Strategy for Effectiveness	Additional Elements
Transparency	Simulation and Hyper-reality (Baudrillard, 1994)	Brands: Adopt transparent practices	Virtual influencers and metahumans	Clear policies on digital ethics	Educating users on digital rights
Authenticity	Authenticity in Social Media (Marwick and Boyd, 2011)	Consumers: Demand authenticity	Simulation of human behaviors	Maintaining authenticity in interactions	Open and collaborative dialogue among stakeholders
Digital Rights of Consumers	Surveillance Capitalism (Zuboff, 2019)	Regulators: Establishprivacy standards	Consumer data collection and analysis	Rigorous protection of privacy rights	Appropriate flow of information (Nissenbaum, 2009)
Privacy	Appropriate Information Flow (Nissenbaum, 2009)	Academics: Research ethical impacts	Personal data management	Clear privacy standards	Development of transparent and fair AI
Algorithmic Justice	Biases in Automated Systems (Eubanks, 2018)	AI Developers: Create fair algorithms	Algorithm stome diateinter actions	Evaluation and correction of algorithmic biases	Sustain ability of the metaverse
Sustainability	Principles for Sustainability (Brundtland, 1987)	Industry: Minimize environmental impact	Technologies for reducing ecological footprint	Sustainable practices in development	Engaging users in sustainable practices

Table 6 represents a comprehensive structure for addressing ethical challenges in the metaverse, incorporating the complexity of new digital environments. It highlights the importance of multidisciplinary collaboration to tackle ethical issues, the need for transparency and authenticity to maintain consumer trust, and the relevance of considering the social and environmental impacts of emerging technologies. Furthermore, it emphasizes the importance of educating and involving users in the process, ensuring they are informed about their rights and the use of their information, thereby promoting a more ethical and sustainable digital ecosystem.

Integrating theories of influence marketing into the innovative context of the metaverse requires a critical reassessment of their applications and implications, both from a managerial and theoretical perspective. While Baudrillard (1994) warned about the erosion of the boundaries between real and simulated, this distinction becomes even more critical in the metaverse, where virtual influencers operate. Brands and marketers must, therefore, navigate this new territory with unprecedented transparency, clarifying the artificial nature of these influencers to maintain consumer trust. Simultaneously, authenticity, as discussed by Marwick and Boyd (2011), acquires a new dimension, challenging us to redefine what we consider genuine in a world where the simulation of human behaviors becomes normative.

The issue of consumer digital rights, amplified by Zuboff's (2019) concept of surveillance capitalism, assumes renewed urgency in the face of the expansive data collection capabilities in the metaverse. Thus, regulators and brands must collaborate to establish a balance between innovation and privacy, ensuring that users are aware of and in control of how their information is used. Moreover, algorithmic fairness, highlighted by Eubanks (2018), and sustainability, according to the principles of Brundtland (1987), call attention to the need to develop technologies and algorithms that not only respect human and social rights but also minimize the environmental impact of this new digital universe.

Therefore, applying these theories requires an adaptation to their disjunctive peculiarities. Real-world examples, such as Gucci's use of digital influencers in virtual campaigns, illustrate the need for transparency and authenticity. Similarly, Meta's (formerly Facebook) implementation of privacy practices on its virtual reality platforms highlights efforts to protect consumer digital rights.

As ethical challenges and considerations inherent in the emerging metaverse era arise, it becomes necessary for brands, regulators, and consumers to adopt a reflective and proactive approach. The complexity of issues such as transparency, authenticity, and consumer digital rights not only underscores the need for robust ethical governance but also paves the way for rethinking engagement and innovation strategies. In this scenario, the natural next step is to explore how brands can operationalize these ethical principles in a way that not only respects users' rights and expectations but also capitalizes on the unique opportunities the metaverse offers (Bibri & Allam, 2022).

This implies a careful transition from theories and ethical guidelines to concrete practices and adaptive strategies, ensuring that technological innovation advances hand in hand with social and environmental responsibility. Such an approach will not only strengthen consumer trust and loyalty but also establish a precedent for sustainable and ethical growth in the vast and still unexplored territory of the metaverse.

IX. Practical and Strategic Implications for Brands in the Metaverse

In this constantly evolving digital environment, marketing strategies must be adaptive, innovative, and, above all, user-centered. In the metaverse, the creation of immersive and interactive experiences stands out as a crucial strategy for consumer engagement. The three-dimensional nature and interactivity of the metaverse offer unique opportunities for brands to develop deeply engaging user experiences. According to Bailenson (2018), immersive virtual environments can enhance social presence and emotional connection among users, which is fundamental for effective consumer engagement in the metaverse. Therefore, brands should focus on creating exclusive metaverse events, such as virtual product launches, personalized brand experiences, and opportunities for consumers to interact with products in innovative ways. Such strategies can not only boost engagement but also enhance brand perception and consumer loyalty.

Authenticity and transparency are crucial for building and maintaining consumer trust in the metaverse. As Edelman (2020) suggests, trust is a key factor influencing consumers' purchasing decisions. In the metaverse, this means brands must be transparent about the use of virtual influencers, data collection policies, and any AI elements mediating interactions with consumers. Moreover, brands should strive to ensure that all interactions and content in the metaverse reflect their authentic values and mission. This may involve co-creating content with consumers, allowing their voices and experiences to influence the brand narrative, as suggested by Schau and Gilly (2003).

Personalization, powered by AI, should be balanced with ethical considerations and respect for user privacy. Rust and Huang (2014) highlight the importance of effective personalization that enhances the consumer's perceived value while maintaining a careful balance between relevance and privacy. Brands should, therefore, employ personalization strategies that use data ethically, ensuring users' preferences and boundaries are respected. This will not only improve the consumer experience but also strengthen trust in the brand.

Brands must also prioritize inclusion and diversity in the metaverse, creating spaces that are welcoming and accessible to all. The use of transparent and auditable AI technologies can help avoid bias and promote algorithmic fairness, as discussed by Binns (2018). By actively promoting inclusion and diversity, brands not only fulfill an ethical responsibility but also expand their reach and resonance with a broader spectrum of consumers.

Global Journal of Human-Social Science (H) Volume XXIV Issue I Version I Year 2024

The environmental impact of the metaverse is an important consideration for brands. Adopting sustainable practices, such as using low-energy technologies and supporting carbon offset initiatives, can demonstrate a brand's commitment to sustainability. Jones, Comfort, and Hillier (2016) emphasize the importance of sustainability in business practices, arguing that brands adopting a proactive stance towards sustainability can enhance their image and attract environmentally conscious consumers.

Exploring the metaverse's potential requires brands to balance innovation with ethical responsibility. By adopting immersive engagement strategies, promoting authenticity and transparency, practicing ethical personalization, ensuring inclusion and diversity, and committing to sustainability, brands can not only thrive in the metaverse but also contribute to a fairer and more sustainable digital ecosystem. These practices not only advance the theoretical corpus of influence marketing literature but also offer guidance for brands looking to successfully navigate the emerging digital domain of the metaverse.

Adopting innovative, user-centered, and ethically responsible approaches prepares users for meaningful engagement in the metaverse but also highlights the need for further academic investigation. This need signals the importance of establishing a solid research agenda that can guide future studies. Such an agenda should explore not only the emerging dynamics between consumers and brands but also assess the social, economic, and environmental impacts of this new digital ecosystem. Therefore, the logical next step is to map out future pathways for research in the metaverse, aiming not only to deepen understanding but also to anticipate the transformations that will define the next era of digital interaction.

X. Future Pathways For Metaverse Research: A Proposed Research Agenda

Building on the prior discussion regarding practical and strategic implications for brands in the metaverse, it is clear that while the metaverse presents unparalleled opportunities for consumer engagement, it also poses challenges that necessitate thorough academic investigation. Thus, a research agenda is outlined to explore future pathways in metaverse studies, addressing critical areas that require deeper understanding and analysis.

The rise of virtual influencers and metahumans in the metaverse introduces new questions regarding their effectiveness compared to human influencers. Future research could examine how perceptions of authenticity and trust differ among these types of influencers and the impact of these perceptions on influence efficacy (Kozinets, 2010; Marwick & Boyd, 2011).

Understanding how immersion in the metaverse affects consumer behavior, including decision-making, attitude formation, and brand loyalty, is crucial. Investigating these aspects may uncover insights into how brands can optimize their strategies to better align with consumer expectations and preferences (Schau & Gilly, 2003).

The complexity of the metaverse and the use of AI raise significant ethical and normative issues, especially regarding privacy, consent, and algorithmic bias. Research in this area can contribute to the development of ethical frameworks and regulatory guidelines that ensure fair and responsible practices in the metaverse (Nissenbaum, 2009; Eubanks, 2018).

Given the growing concern for sustainability, investigating the environmental impact of the technological infrastructure required to support the metaverse is important. Future studies could assess ways to minimize the ecological footprint of these digital technologies and promote sustainable practices within the metaverse (Jones, Comfort, & Hillier, 2016).

Exploring how the metaverse can promote or inhibit inclusion and diversity is essential. Research in this domain may provide insights into how metaverse experiences can be designed to be accessible and representative of a wide range of users, contributing to a more inclusive digital space (Binns, 2018).

Understanding the growth trajectory of the metaverse and its market potential is crucial for strategists and investors. Research employing economic modeling and forecasting can help anticipate future trends, guiding informed strategic decisions for stakeholders across various sectors (Bellman et al., 2011).

A critical area that requires attention is the interoperability among different platforms and environments in the metaverse. The ability to seamlessly transfer data, digital assets, and user experiences across platforms is crucial for the sustainable growth of the metaverse. Research focused on developing and implementing universal technical standards can facilitate interoperability, enhancing user experience and fostering innovation (Werbach, 2018).

With consumer education becoming increasingly important, the educational potential of AR and VR in the metaverse warrants investigation. Studies could explore how these technologies can be used to inform consumers about products, services, and social issues in an engaging and interactive manner, contributing to more informed purchasing decisions (Rauschnabel, Rossmann, & tom Dieck, 2017).

The metaverse also presents new business models and monetization opportunities that significantly differ from the physical world. Research on virtual economy, including value creation, transactions, and digital currencies, can offer valuable insights for businesses looking to capitalize in this emerging space (Castronova, 2007).

Understanding the long-term effects of immersion in the metaverse on users' psychological and social well-being is essential. Studies examining the consequences of time spent in the metaverse, digital identity formation, and virtual social relationships can inform responsible design and usage practices (Yee, Ducheneaut, & Nelson, 2012).

As the metaverse expands, issues of security and governance become increasingly significant. Investigating how to maintain virtual environments safe for users while balancing freedom of expression and innovation is crucial. Research can explore governance frameworks and security mechanisms suitable for the metaverse (Gorwa, 2020).

Assessing how the metaverse can contribute to sustainable development goals and CSR practices is another important research area. Studying how businesses can use the metaverse to promote sustainability, social inclusion, and civic engagement can guide responsible corporate strategies (Visser, 2010).

By exploring these areas, the proposed research agenda for the metaverse not only addresses critical gaps in existing literature but also lays the groundwork for future investigations that can guide the responsible and ethical development of the metaverse. Such a multidisciplinary approach is essential for understanding the complexities of this new digital domain and for maximizing its positive potential for individuals, businesses, and society as a whole. This comprehensive approach ensures that as we navigate and shape the future of the metaverse, we do so with careful consideration of the ethical, social, and environmental implications.

Given the proposed framework, Table 7 is established, which conceptually details the proposed research agenda for the metaverse, adapting the model provided to illustrate critical areas of study.

Table 7: Navigating the Metaverse: A Research Agenda

Research Area	Description	Methodologies and Tools	Challenges/ Questions	Expected Impact	Key References
Efficacy of Virtual and Metahuman Influencers	Investigate how perceptions of authenticity and trust influence the effectiveness of these influencers.	Sentiment analysis, case studies, field experiments.	Differences in perception between virtual and human influencers.	Better understanding of how to engage consumers.	Kozinets, 2010; Marwick and Boyd, 2011
Consumer Behavior in the Metaverse	Study how immersion affects purchasing decisions and brand loyalty.	Netnography, interaction tracking, behavioral analyses.	Measuring the influence of immersion on attitudes and behaviors.	Insights to optimize brand strategies.	Schau and Gilly, 2003
Ethical and Regulatory Challenges	Assess ethical issues and develop guidelines for practices in the metaverse.	Documentary research, legal analysis, discussion forums.	Balancing innovation with consumer protection.	Ethical frameworks to guide brand actions.	Nissenbaum, 2009; Eubanks, 2018
Virtual Economy and Business Models	Explore new business models and monetization in the metaverse.	Economic modeling, market studies, trend analysis.	Identifyingviabl emonetizations trategies.	Guide businesses in capitalizing on the metaverse.	Castronova, 2007
Psychological and Social Impact	Examine the effects of the metaverse on user well-being.	Psychological surveys, longitudinal studies, social network analyses.	Understanding the consequences of prolonged engagement.	Promote healthy and responsible use of the metaverse.	Yee, Ducheneaut, & Nelson, 2012
Security and Governance	Investigate mechanisms to ensure user safety and effective governance.	Case studies, policy analysis, stakeholder workshops.	Developing governance practices that support freedom and safety.	Establish standards for a safe and inclusive metaverse.	Gorwa, 2020
Sustainability and CSR	Assess how the metaverse can contribute to sustainable development and CSR.	Environmental impact analyses, corporate sustainability studies.	Minimizing environmental impact and promoting inclusion.	Direct the metaverse towards sustainable and responsible practices.	Visser, 2010

Global Journal of Human-Social Science (H) Volume XXIV Issue I Version I Year 2024

Table 7 outlines a set of research proposals that, collectively, have the potential to significantly advance the frontier of literature on influencer marketing and digital marketing, particularly in the innovative and challenging context of the metaverse. By investigating topics such as the efficacy of virtual influencers and metahumans, immersive consumer behavior, ethical and normative dilemmas, new economic business models, psychological and social impact, security, governance, sustainability, and corporate social responsibility in the metaverse, these proposals address critical areas that are fundamental to understanding and maximizing the potential of marketing in the metaverse.

The adoption of varied methodologies, from sentiment analysis and netnography to economic modeling and environmental impact analyses, reflects the complexity and multidimensionality of the metaverse. The challenges identified, such as measuring the influence of immersion on consumer attitudes and balancing innovation with consumer protection, highlight the specific nuances of marketing in the metaverse that require innovative and adaptive solutions. It is hoped that by addressing these challenges, the proposed research will not only offer practical insights for optimizing brand strategies and promoting sustainable and responsible practices but will also enrich influencer marketing theory by adapting it to the peculiarities of the metaverse. Thus, these proposals represent a qualitative leap for digital marketing literature, promoting a deeper and more integrated understanding of how brands can navigate and thrive in this new hypervirtual domain.

XI. Conclusion

Through the analysis proposed in this article, the emerging complexity of the metaverse and its impact on influencer marketing were addressed, highlighting the crucial role of virtual influencers and metahumans. The discussion focused on integrating artificial intelligence (AI) to create innovative, personalized, and authentic brand experiences, while raising significant ethical questions about transparency, authenticity, and the digital rights of consumers.

The key findings of this study reveal that, while the metaverse offers unprecedented opportunities for consumer engagement through immersive and personalized experiences, it also introduces complex challenges that require careful consideration of ethical implications. The response to the research question and objectives underscored the need for marketing strategies that not only leverage advanced technological capabilities but are also grounded in responsible and ethical practices.

This work fills an important gap in the literature by providing an integrative theoretical framework that maps the specific mechanisms of influence in the metaverse, operating in conjunction with AI and virtual influencers. The theoretical contributions of this study lie in its holistic approach to understanding the dynamics of influencer marketing in the metaverse, while the practical contributions offer strategic guidance for brands seeking to engage consumers in this new digital domain.

However, this study is not without limitations. The rapid technological evolution of the metaverse and the emerging nature of virtual influencers and metahumans mean that current insights may quickly become outdated. Moreover, the research is based on existing theories and concepts that may not fully capture the unique nuances of interactions in the metaverse.

For future research, it is suggested that empirical methodologies be explored that can capture quantitative and qualitative data on consumer behavior in the metaverse. This includes longitudinal studies that track changes in consumer attitudes and behaviors as they become more immersed and familiar with the metaverse. Additionally, investigations into the long-term psychological and social impacts of engagement in the metaverse may offer valuable insights into user well-being.

Another area of interest for future research is the development of ethical and transparent AI technologies that can support the creation of virtual influencers and metahumans. This includes the enhancement of algorithms to ensure fairness, bias minimization, and the protection of user privacy.

Exploring influencer marketing in the metaverse represents a promising field for academic research and practical innovation. This study sheds light on the opportunities and challenges presented by this new digital domain, outlining a path for future investigations that can enrich our understanding and practice of marketing in the metaverse era. As we move forward, it is essential that we continue to question, experiment, and learn, always with a critical eye toward the ethical and social implications of our digital strategies.

Furthermore, the evolution of the metaverse opens new avenues for exploring how brands can effectively measure the return on investment of their marketing initiatives in this environment. Future research could develop and validate specific analytical models for the metaverse that consider not just traditional performance indicators but also unique virtual environment metrics, such as the quality of immersion, the depth of social interaction, and the impact of virtual experiences on brand loyalty. This approach would help brands to optimize their strategies and resource allocation in the metaverse more effectively.

Another emerging theme that deserves attention is the construction and maintenance of community in the metaverse. The dynamics of community formation, engagement, and member retention in immersive virtual environments offer a rich field for Investigation.

Global Journal of Human-Social Science (H) Volume XXIV Issue I Version I Year 2024

Researchers can explore how brands can foster vibrant and engaged communities in the metaverse, what factors influence active user participation, and how these communities contribute to the perceived value of the brand and consumer advocacy.

The issue of accessibility in the metaverse also represents a significant challenge and opportunity for future research. As this digital space continues to expand, it is vital to ensure that it is inclusive and accessible to a wide range of users, including those with disabilities or technological limitations. Studying how user interfaces (UI) and user experiences (UX) in the metaverse can be designed to be universally accessible will not only increase the reach of marketing initiatives but also promote broader inclusion in the digital space.

The integration of emerging technologies, such as generative AI, blockchain, and non-fungible tokens (NFTs), into influencer marketing in the metaverse, offers fertile ground for research. These technologies can enable new forms of content creation, digital ownership, and consumer engagement, whose practical and ethical implications deserve detailed exploration.

Given the global nature of the metaverse, an intercultural analysis of marketing strategies and consumer behavior in this virtual environment may reveal valuable insights into how brands can tailor their approaches to different audiences around the world. Understanding cultural nuances in digital engagement can help brands create messages and experiences that resonate more effectively with global audiences.

By addressing these areas, future research in the metaverse will not only advance academic knowledge but also provide valuable practical guidance for marketers seeking to innovate and create value in this rapidly evolving digital space. This path for research underscores the importance of a multidisciplinary and collaborative approach, bringing together academics, practitioners, and technology developers, to explore the full potential of the metaverse in a responsible and inclusive manner.

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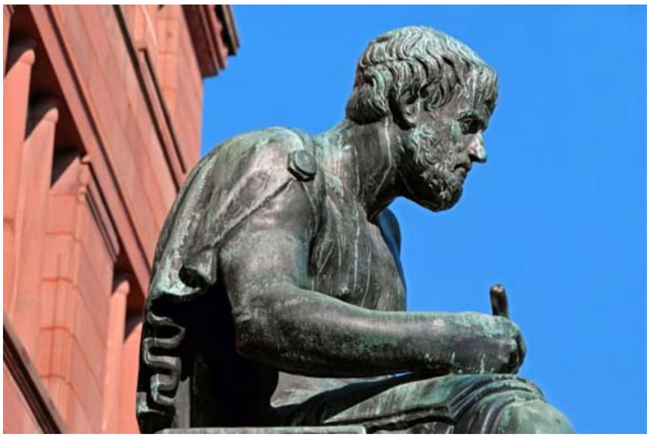

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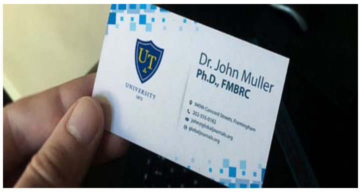


Designation

Get honored title of membership

Fellows can use the honored title of membership. The “FSSRC” is an honored title which is accorded to a person’s name viz. Dr. John E. Hall, Ph.D., FSSRC or William Walldroff, M.S., FSSRC.

Career Credibility Exclusive Reputation

Recognition on the Platform

Better visibility and citation

All the Fellow members of FSSRC get a badge of "Leading Member of Global Journals" on the Research Community that distinguishes them from others. Additionally, the profile is also partially maintained by our team for better visibility and citation. All fellows get a dedicated page on the website with their biography.

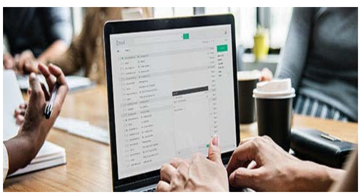
Career Credibility Reputation

Future Work

Get discounts on the future publications

Fellows receive discounts on future publications with Global Journals up to 60%. Through our recommendation programs, members also receive discounts on publications made with OARS affiliated organizations.

Career Financial

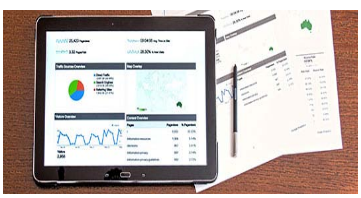


GJ Account

Unlimited forward of Emails

Fellows get secure and fast GJ work emails with unlimited forward of emails that they may use them as their primary email. For example,
john [AT] globaljournals [DOT] org.

Career Credibility Reputation



Premium Tools

Access to all the Premium Tools

To take future researches to the zenith, fellows receive access to all the premium tools that Global Journals have to offer along with the partnership with some of the best marketing leading tools out there.

Financial

Conferences & Events

Organize Seminar/Conference

Fellows are authorized to organize symposium/seminar/conference on behalf of Global Journal Incorporation (USA). They can also participate in the same organized by another institution as representative of Global Journal. In both the cases, it is mandatory for him to discuss with us and obtain our consent. Additionally, they get free research conferences (and others) alerts.

Career Credibility Financial

Early Invitations

Early invitations to all the symposiums, seminars, conferences

All fellows receive the early invitations to all the symposiums, seminars, conferences and webinars hosted by Global Journals in their subject.

Exclusive

Publishing Articles & Books

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Exclusive Financial

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Get a remuneration of 15% of author fees

Fellow members are eligible to join as a paid peer reviewer at Global Journals Incorporation (USA) and can get a remuneration of 15% of author fees, taken from the author of a respective paper.

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Fellows may join as a member of the Editorial Board of Global Journals Incorporation (USA) after successful completion of three years as Fellow and as Peer Reviewer. Additionally, Fellows get a chance to nominate other members for Editorial Board.

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All members get access to 5 selected scientific museums and observatories across the globe. All researches published with Global Journals will be kept under deep archival facilities across regions for future protections and disaster recovery. They get 10 GB free secure cloud access for storing research files.

ASSRC

ASSOCIATE OF SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH COUNCIL

ASSOCIATE OF SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH COUNCIL is the membership of Global Journals awarded to individuals that the Open Association of Research Society judges to have made a 'substantial contribution to the improvement of computer science, technology, and electronics engineering.

> The primary objective is to recognize the leaders in research and scientific fields of the current era with a global perspective and to create a channel between them and other researchers for better exposure and knowledge sharing. Members are most eminent scientists, engineers, and technologists from all across the world. Associate membership can later be promoted to Fellow Membership. Associates are elected for life through a peer review process on the basis of excellence in the respective domain. There is no limit on the number of new nominations made in any year. Each year, the Open Association of Research Society elect up to 12 new Associate Members.

Benefit

To the institution

Get letter of appreciation

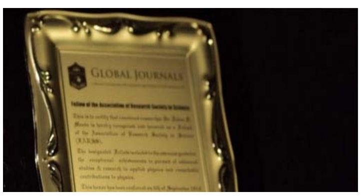
Global Journals sends a letter of appreciation of author to the Dean or CEO of the University or Company of which author is a part, signed by editor in chief or chief author.

Exclusive Network

Get access to a closed network

A ASSRC member gets access to a closed network of Tier 2 researchers and scientists with direct communication channel through our website. Associates can reach out to other members or researchers directly. They should also be open to reaching out by other.

Career | Credibility | Exclusive | Reputation



Certificate

Certificate, LoR and Laser-Momento

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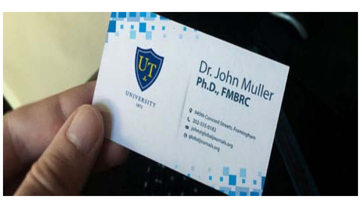
Career | Credibility | Exclusive | Reputation



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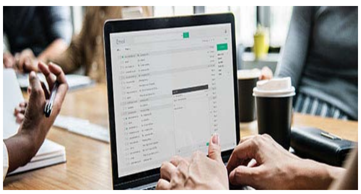

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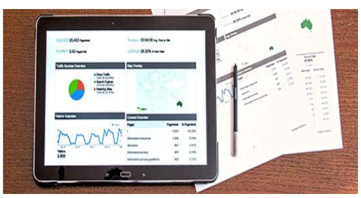

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Organize seminar/conference

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Exclusive

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Earn 60% of sales proceeds

Associates can publish articles (limited) without any fees. Also, they can earn up to 30-40% of sales proceeds from the sale of reference/review books/literature/publishing of research paper.

Exclusive Financial

Reviewers

Get a remuneration of 15% of author fees

Associate members are eligible to join as a paid peer reviewer at Global Journals Incorporation (USA) and can get a remuneration of 15% of author fees, taken from the author of a respective paper.

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All members get access to 2 selected scientific museums and observatories across the globe. All researches published with Global Journals will be kept under deep archival facilities across regions for future protections and disaster recovery. They get 5 GB free secure cloud access for storing research files.

Associate	Fellow	Research Group	Basic
$4800 **lifetime designation**	$6800 **lifetime designation**	$12500.00 **organizational**	APC **per article**
Certificate, LoR and Momento 2 discounted publishing/year **Gradation** of Research 10 research contacts/day 1 **GB** Cloud Storage **GJ** Community Access	**Certificate,** LoR and Momento **Unlimited** discounted publishing/year **Gradation** of Research **Unlimited** research contacts/day 5 **GB** Cloud Storage **Online Presense** Assistance **GJ** Community Access	**Certificates,** LoRs and Momentos **Unlimited** free publishing/year **Gradation** of Research **Unlimited** research contacts/day **Unlimited** Cloud Storage **Online Presense** Assistance **GJ** Community Access	**GJ** Community Access

Preferred Author Guidelines

We accept the manuscript submissions in any standard (generic) format.

We typeset manuscripts using advanced typesetting tools like Adobe In Design, CorelDraw, TeXnicCenter, and TeXStudio. We usually recommend authors submit their research using any standard format they are comfortable with, and let Global Journals do the rest.

Alternatively, you can download our basic template from https://globaljournals.org/Template.zip

Authors should submit their complete paper/article, including text illustrations, graphics, conclusions, artwork, and tables. Authors who are not able to submit manuscript using the form above can email the manuscript department at submit@globaljournals.org or get in touch with chiefeditor@globaljournals.org if they wish to send the abstract before submission.

Before and during Submission

Authors must ensure the information provided during the submission of a paper is authentic. Please go through the following checklist before submitting:

1. Authors must go through the complete author guideline and understand and *agree to Global Journals' ethics and code of conduct,* along with author responsibilities.
2. Authors must accept the privacy policy, terms, and conditions of Global Journals.
3. Ensure corresponding author's email address and postal address are accurate and reachable.
4. Manuscript to be submitted must include keywords, an abstract, a paper title, co-author(s') names and details (email address, name, phone number, and institution), figures and illustrations in vector format including appropriate captions, tables, including titles and footnotes, a conclusion, results, acknowledgments and references.
5. Authors should submit paper in a ZIP archive if any supplementary files are required along with the paper.
6. Proper permissions must be acquired for the use of any copyrighted material.
7. Manuscript submitted *must not have been submitted or published elsewhere* and all authors must be aware of the submission.

Declaration of Conflicts of Interest

It is required for authors to declare all financial, institutional, and personal relationships with other individuals and organizations that could influence (bias) their research.

Policy on Plagiarism

Plagiarism is not acceptable in Global Journals submissions at all.

Plagiarized content will not be considered for publication. We reserve the right to inform authors' institutions about plagiarism detected either before or after publication. If plagiarism is identified, we will follow COPE guidelines:

Authors are solely responsible for all the plagiarism that is found. The author must not fabricate, falsify or plagiarize existing research data. The following, if copied, will be considered plagiarism:

- Words (language)
- Ideas
- Findings
- Writings
- Diagrams
- Graphs
- Illustrations
- Lectures

- Printed material
- Graphic representations
- Computer programs
- Electronic material
- Any other original work

Authorship Policies

Global Journals follows the definition of authorship set up by the Open Association of Research Society, USA. According to its guidelines, authorship criteria must be based on:

1. Substantial contributions to the conception and acquisition of data, analysis, and interpretation of findings.
2. Drafting the paper and revising it critically regarding important academic content.
3. Final approval of the version of the paper to be published.

Changes in Authorship

The corresponding author should mention the name and complete details of all co-authors during submission and in manuscript. We support addition, rearrangement, manipulation, and deletions in authors list till the early view publication of the journal. We expect that corresponding author will notify all co-authors of submission. We follow COPE guidelines for changes in authorship.

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Appealing Decisions

Unless specified in the notification, the Editorial Board's decision on publication of the paper is final and cannot be appealed before making the major change in the manuscript.

Acknowledgments

Contributors to the research other than authors credited should be mentioned in Acknowledgments. The source of funding for the research can be included. Suppliers of resources may be mentioned along with their addresses.

Declaration of funding sources

Global Journals is in partnership with various universities, laboratories, and other institutions worldwide in the research domain. Authors are requested to disclose their source of funding during every stage of their research, such as making analysis, performing laboratory operations, computing data, and using institutional resources, from writing an article to its submission. This will also help authors to get reimbursements by requesting an open access publication letter from Global Journals and submitting to the respective funding source.

Preparing your Manuscript

Authors can submit papers and articles in an acceptable file format: MS Word (doc, docx), LaTeX (.tex, .zip or .rar including all of your files), Adobe PDF (.pdf), rich text format (.rtf), simple text document (.txt), Open Document Text (.odt), and Apple Pages (.pages). Our professional layout editors will format the entire paper according to our official guidelines. This is one of the highlights of publishing with Global Journals—authors should not be concerned about the formatting of their paper. Global Journals accepts articles and manuscripts in every major language, be it Spanish, Chinese, Japanese, Portuguese, Russian, French, German, Dutch, Italian, Greek, or any other national language, but the title, subtitle, and abstract should be in English. This will facilitate indexing and the pre-peer review process.

The following is the official style and template developed for publication of a research paper. Authors are not required to follow this style during the submission of the paper. It is just for reference purposes.

Manuscript Style Instruction (Optional)

- Microsoft Word Document Setting Instructions.
- Font type of all text should be Swis721 Lt BT.
- Page size: 8.27" x 11'", left margin: 0.65, right margin: 0.65, bottom margin: 0.75.
- Paper title should be in one column of font size 24.
- Author name in font size of 11 in one column.
- Abstract: font size 9 with the word “Abstract” in bold italics.
- Main text: font size 10 with two justified columns.
- Two columns with equal column width of 3.38 and spacing of 0.2.
- First character must be three lines drop-capped.
- The paragraph before spacing of 1 pt and after of 0 pt.
- Line spacing of 1 pt.
- Large images must be in one column.
- The names of first main headings (Heading 1) must be in Roman font, capital letters, and font size of 10.
- The names of second main headings (Heading 2) must not include numbers and must be in italics with a font size of 10.

Structure and Format of Manuscript

The recommended size of an original research paper is under 15,000 words and review papers under 7,000 words. Research articles should be less than 10,000 words. Research papers are usually longer than review papers. Review papers are reports of significant research (typically less than 7,000 words, including tables, figures, and references)

A research paper must include:

a) A title which should be relevant to the theme of the paper.
b) A summary, known as an abstract (less than 150 words), containing the major results and conclusions.
c) Up to 10 keywords that precisely identify the paper’s subject, purpose, and focus.
d) An introduction, giving fundamental background objectives.
e) Resources and techniques with sufficient complete experimental details (wherever possible by reference) to permit repetition, sources of information must be given, and numerical methods must be specified by reference.
f) Results which should be presented concisely by well-designed tables and figures.
g) Suitable statistical data should also be given.
h) All data must have been gathered with attention to numerical detail in the planning stage.

Design has been recognized to be essential to experiments for a considerable time, and the editor has decided that any paper that appears not to have adequate numerical treatments of the data will be returned unrefereed.

i) Discussion should cover implications and consequences and not just recapitulate the results; conclusions should also be summarized.
j) There should be brief acknowledgments.
k) There ought to be references in the conventional format. Global Journals recommends APA format.

Authors should carefully consider the preparation of papers to ensure that they communicate effectively. Papers are much more likely to be accepted if they are carefully designed and laid out, contain few or no errors, are summarizing, and follow instructions. They will also be published with much fewer delays than those that require much technical and editorial correction.

The Editorial Board reserves the right to make literary corrections and suggestions to improve brevity.

Format Structure

It is necessary that authors take care in submitting a manuscript that is written in simple language and adheres to published guidelines.

All manuscripts submitted to Global Journals should include:

Title

The title page must carry an informative title that reflects the content, a running title (less than 45 characters together with spaces), names of the authors and co-authors, and the place(s) where the work was carried out.

Author details

The full postal address of any related author(s) must be specified.

Abstract

The abstract is the foundation of the research paper. It should be clear and concise and must contain the objective of the paper and inferences drawn. It is advised to not include big mathematical equations or complicated jargon.

Many researchers searching for information online will use search engines such as Google, Yahoo or others. By optimizing your paper for search engines, you will amplify the chance of someone finding it. In turn, this will make it more likely to be viewed and cited in further works. Global Journals has compiled these guidelines to facilitate you to maximize the web-friendliness of the most public part of your paper.

Keywords

A major lynchpin of research work for the writing of research papers is the keyword search, which one will employ to find both library and internet resources. Up to eleven keywords or very brief phrases have to be given to help data retrieval, mining, and indexing.

One must be persistent and creative in using keywords. An effective keyword search requires a strategy: planning of a list of possible keywords and phrases to try.

Choice of the main keywords is the first tool of writing a research paper. Research paper writing is an art. Keyword search should be as strategic as possible.

One should start brainstorming lists of potential keywords before even beginning searching. Think about the most important concepts related to research work. Ask, "What words would a source have to include to be truly valuable in a research paper?" Then consider synonyms for the important words.

It may take the discovery of only one important paper to steer in the right keyword direction because, in most databases, the keywords under which a research paper is abstracted are listed with the paper.

Numerical Methods

Numerical methods used should be transparent and, where appropriate, supported by references.

Abbreviations

Authors must list all the abbreviations used in the paper at the end of the paper or in a separate table before using them.

Formulas and equations

Authors are advised to submit any mathematical equation using either MathJax, KaTeX, or LaTeX, or in a very high-quality image.

Tables, Figures, and Figure Legends

Tables: Tables should be cautiously designed, uncrowned, and include only essential data. Each must have an Arabic number, e.g., Table 4, a self-explanatory caption, and be on a separate sheet. Authors must submit tables in an editable format and not as images. References to these tables (if any) must be mentioned accurately.

Figures

Figures are supposed to be submitted as separate files. Always include a citation in the text for each figure using Arabic numbers, e.g., Fig. 4. Artwork must be submitted online in vector electronic form or by emailing it.

Preparation of Eletronic Figures for Publication

Although low-quality images are sufficient for review purposes, print publication requires high-quality images to prevent the final product being blurred or fuzzy. Submit (possibly by e-mail) EPS (line art) or TIFF (halftone/ photographs) files only. MS PowerPoint and Word Graphics are unsuitable for printed pictures. Avoid using pixel-oriented software. Scans (TIFF only) should have a resolution of at least 350 dpi (halftone) or 700 to 1100 dpi (line drawings). Please give the data for figures in black and white or submit a Color Work Agreement form. EPS files must be saved with fonts embedded (and with a TIFF preview, if possible).

For scanned images, the scanning resolution at final image size ought to be as follows to ensure good reproduction: line art: >650 dpi; halftones (including gel photographs): >350 dpi; figures containing both halftone and line images: >650 dpi.

Color charges: Authors are advised to pay the full cost for the reproduction of their color artwork. Hence, please note that if there is color artwork in your manuscript when it is accepted for publication, we would require you to complete and return a Color Work Agreement form before your paper can be published. Also, you can email your editor to remove the color fee after acceptance of the paper.

Tips for writing a good quality Social Science Research Paper

Techniques for writing a good quality homan social science research paper:

1. Choosing the topic: In most cases, the topic is selected by the interests of the author, but it can also be suggested by the guides. You can have several topics, and then judge which you are most comfortable with. This may be done by asking several questions of yourself, like "Will I be able to carry out a search in this area? Will I find all necessary resources to accomplish the search? Will I be able to find all information in this field area?" If the answer to this type of question is "yes," then you ought to choose that topic. In most cases, you may have to conduct surveys and visit several places. Also, you might have to do a lot of work to find all the rises and falls of the various data on that subject. Sometimes, detailed information plays a vital role, instead of short information. Evaluators are human: The first thing to remember is that evaluators are also human beings. They are not only meant for rejecting a paper. They are here to evaluate your paper. So present your best aspect.

2. Think like evaluators: If you are in confusion or getting demotivated because your paper may not be accepted by the evaluators, then think, and try to evaluate your paper like an evaluator. Try to understand what an evaluator wants in your research paper, and you will automatically have your answer. Make blueprints of paper: The outline is the plan or framework that will help you to arrange your thoughts. It will make your paper logical. But remember that all points of your outline must be related to the topic you have chosen.

3. Ask your guides: If you are having any difficulty with your research, then do not hesitate to share your difficulty with your guide (if you have one). They will surely help you out and resolve your doubts. If you can't clarify what exactly you require for your work, then ask your supervisor to help you with an alternative. He or she might also provide you with a list of essential readings.

4. Use of computer is recommended: As you are doing research in the field of homan social science then this point is quite obvious. Use right software: Always use good quality software packages. If you are not capable of judging good software, then you can lose the quality of your paper unknowingly. There are various programs available to help you which you can get through the internet.

5. Use the internet for help: An excellent start for your paper is using Google. It is a wondrous search engine, where you can have your doubts resolved. You may also read some answers for the frequent question of how to write your research paper or find a model research paper. You can download books from the internet. If you have all the required books, place importance on reading, selecting, and analyzing the specified information. Then sketch out your research paper. Use big pictures: You may use encyclopedias like Wikipedia to get pictures with the best resolution. At Global Journals, you should strictly follow here.

6. Bookmarks are useful: When you read any book or magazine, you generally use bookmarks, right? It is a good habit which helps to not lose your continuity. You should always use bookmarks while searching on the internet also, which will make your search easier.

7. Revise what you wrote: When you write anything, always read it, summarize it, and then finalize it.

8. Make every effort: Make every effort to mention what you are going to write in your paper. That means always have a good start. Try to mention everything in the introduction—what is the need for a particular research paper. Polish your work with good writing skills and always give an evaluator what he wants. Make backups: When you are going to do any important thing like making a research paper, you should always have backup copies of it either on your computer or on paper. This protects you from losing any portion of your important data.

9. Produce good diagrams of your own: Always try to include good charts or diagrams in your paper to improve quality. Using several unnecessary diagrams will degrade the quality of your paper by creating a hodgepodge. So always try to include diagrams which were made by you to improve the readability of your paper. Use of direct quotes: When you do research relevant to literature, history, or current affairs, then use of quotes becomes essential, but if the study is relevant to science, use of quotes is not preferable.

10. Use proper verb tense: Use proper verb tenses in your paper. Use past tense to present those events that have happened. Use present tense to indicate events that are going on. Use future tense to indicate events that will happen in the future. Use of wrong tenses will confuse the evaluator. Avoid sentences that are incomplete.

11. Pick a good study spot: Always try to pick a spot for your research which is quiet. Not every spot is good for studying.

12. Know what you know: Always try to know what you know by making objectives, otherwise you will be confused and unable to achieve your target.

13. Use good grammar: Always use good grammar and words that will have a positive impact on the evaluator; use of good vocabulary does not mean using tough words which the evaluator has to find in a dictionary. Do not fragment sentences. Eliminate one-word sentences. Do not ever use a big word when a smaller one would suffice.

Verbs have to be in agreement with their subjects. In a research paper, do not start sentences with conjunctions or finish them with prepositions. When writing formally, it is advisable to never split an infinitive because someone will (wrongly) complain. Avoid clichés like a disease. Always shun irritating alliteration. Use language which is simple and straightforward. Put together a neat summary.

14. Arrangement of information: Each section of the main body should start with an opening sentence, and there should be a changeover at the end of the section. Give only valid and powerful arguments for your topic. You may also maintain your arguments with records.

15. Never start at the last minute: Always allow enough time for research work. Leaving everything to the last minute will degrade your paper and spoil your work.

16. Multitasking in research is not good: Doing several things at the same time is a bad habit in the case of research activity. Research is an area where everything has a particular time slot. Divide your research work into parts, and do a particular part in a particular time slot.

17. Never copy others' work: Never copy others' work and give it your name because if the evaluator has seen it anywhere, you will be in trouble. Take proper rest and food: No matter how many hours you spend on your research activity, if you are not taking care of your health, then all your efforts will have been in vain. For quality research, take proper rest and food.

18. Go to seminars: Attend seminars if the topic is relevant to your research area. Utilize all your resources.
Refresh your mind after intervals: Try to give your mind a rest by listening to soft music or sleeping in intervals. This will also improve your memory. Acquire colleagues: Always try to acquire colleagues. No matter how sharp you are, if you acquire colleagues, they can give you ideas which will be helpful to your research.

19. Think technically: Always think technically. If anything happens, search for its reasons, benefits, and demerits. Think and then print: When you go to print your paper, check that tables are not split, headings are not detached from their descriptions, and page sequence is maintained.

20. Adding unnecessary information: Do not add unnecessary information like "I have used MS Excel to draw graphs." Irrelevant and inappropriate material is superfluous. Foreign terminology and phrases are not apropos. One should never take a broad view. Analogy is like feathers on a snake. Use words properly, regardless of how others use them. Remove quotations. Puns are for kids, not grunt readers. Never oversimplify: When adding material to your research paper, never go for oversimplification; this will definitely irritate the evaluator. Be specific. Never use rhythmic redundancies. Contractions shouldn't be used in a research paper. Comparisons are as terrible as clichés. Give up ampersands, abbreviations, and so on. Remove commas that are not necessary. Parenthetical words should be between brackets or commas. Understatement is always the best way to put forward earth-shaking thoughts. Give a detailed literary review.

21. Report concluded results: Use concluded results. From raw data, filter the results, and then conclude your studies based on measurements and observations taken. An appropriate number of decimal places should be used. Parenthetical remarks are prohibited here. Proofread carefully at the final stage. At the end, give an outline to your arguments. Spot perspectives of further study of the subject. Justify your conclusion at the bottom sufficiently, which will probably include examples.

22. Upon conclusion: Once you have concluded your research, the next most important step is to present your findings. Presentation is extremely important as it is the definite medium though which your research is going to be in print for the rest of the crowd. Care should be taken to categorize your thoughts well and present them in a logical and neat manner. A good quality research paper format is essential because it serves to highlight your research paper and bring to light all necessary aspects of your research.

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Informal Guidelines of Research Paper Writing

Key points to remember:

- Submit all work in its final form.
- Write your paper in the form which is presented in the guidelines using the template.
- Please note the criteria peer reviewers will use for grading the final paper.

Final points:

One purpose of organizing a research paper is to let people interpret your efforts selectively. The journal requires the following sections, submitted in the order listed, with each section starting on a new page:

The introduction: This will be compiled from reference matter and reflect the design processes or outline of basis that directed you to make a study. As you carry out the process of study, the method and process section will be constructed like that. The results segment will show related statistics in nearly sequential order and direct reviewers to similar intellectual paths throughout the data that you gathered to carry out your study.

The discussion section:

This will provide understanding of the data and projections as to the implications of the results. The use of good quality references throughout the paper will give the effort trustworthiness by representing an alertness to prior workings.

Writing a research paper is not an easy job, no matter how trouble-free the actual research or concept. Practice, excellent preparation, and controlled record-keeping are the only means to make straightforward progression.

General style:

Specific editorial column necessities for compliance of a manuscript will always take over from directions in these general guidelines.

To make a paper clear: Adhere to recommended page limits.

Mistakes to avoid:

- Insertion of a title at the foot of a page with subsequent text on the next page.
- Separating a table, chart, or figure—confine each to a single page.
- Submitting a manuscript with pages out of sequence.
- In every section of your document, use standard writing style, including articles ("a" and "the").
- Keep paying attention to the topic of the paper.
- Use paragraphs to split each significant point (excluding the abstract).
- Align the primary line of each section.
- Present your points in sound order.
- Use present tense to report well-accepted matters.
- Use past tense to describe specific results.
- Do not use familiar wording; don't address the reviewer directly. Don't use slang or superlatives.
- Avoid use of extra pictures—include only those figures essential to presenting results.

Title page:

Choose a revealing title. It should be short and include the name(s) and address(es) of all authors. It should not have acronyms or abbreviations or exceed two printed lines.

Abstract: This summary should be two hundred words or less. It should clearly and briefly explain the key findings reported in the manuscript and must have precise statistics. It should not have acronyms or abbreviations. It should be logical in itself. Do not cite references at this point.

An abstract is a brief, distinct paragraph summary of finished work or work in development. In a minute or less, a reviewer can be taught the foundation behind the study, common approaches to the problem, relevant results, and significant conclusions or new questions.

Write your summary when your paper is completed because how can you write the summary of anything which is not yet written? Wealth of terminology is very essential in abstract. Use comprehensive sentences, and do not sacrifice readability for brevity; you can maintain it succinctly by phrasing sentences so that they provide more than a lone rationale. The author can at this moment go straight to shortening the outcome. Sum up the study with the subsequent elements in any summary. Try to limit the initial two items to no more than one line each.

Reason for writing the article—theory, overall issue, purpose.

- Fundamental goal.
- To-the-point depiction of the research.
- Consequences, including definite statistics—if the consequences are quantitative in nature, account for this; results of any numerical analysis should be reported. Significant conclusions or questions that emerge from the research.

Approach:

- o Single section and succinct.
- o An outline of the job done is always written in past tense.
- o Concentrate on shortening results—limit background information to a verdict or two.
- o Exact spelling, clarity of sentences and phrases, and appropriate reporting of quantities (proper units, important statistics) are just as significant in an abstract as they are anywhere else.

Introduction:

The introduction should "introduce" the manuscript. The reviewer should be presented with sufficient background information to be capable of comprehending and calculating the purpose of your study without having to refer to other works. The basis for the study should be offered. Give the most important references, but avoid making a comprehensive appraisal of the topic. Describe the problem visibly. If the problem is not acknowledged in a logical, reasonable way, the reviewer will give no attention to your results. Speak in common terms about techniques used to explain the problem, if needed, but do not present any particulars about the protocols here.

The following approach can create a valuable beginning:

- Explain the value (significance) of the study.
- Defend the model—why did you employ this particular system or method? What is its compensation? Remark upon its appropriateness from an abstract point of view as well as pointing out sensible reasons for using it.
- Present a justification. State your particular theory(-ies) or aim(s), and describe the logic that led you to choose them.
- Briefly explain the study's tentative purpose and how it meets the declared objectives.

Approach:

Use past tense except for when referring to recognized facts. After all, the manuscript will be submitted after the entire job is done. Sort out your thoughts; manufacture one key point for every section. If you make the four points listed above, you will need at least four paragraphs. Present surrounding information only when it is necessary to support a situation. The reviewer does not desire to read everything you know about a topic. Shape the theory specifically—do not take a broad view.

As always, give awareness to spelling, simplicity, and correctness of sentences and phrases.

Procedures (methods and materials):

This part is supposed to be the easiest to carve if you have good skills. A soundly written procedures segment allows a capable scientist to replicate your results. Present precise information about your supplies. The suppliers and clarity of reagents can be helpful bits of information. Present methods in sequential order, but linked methodologies can be grouped as a segment. Be concise when relating the protocols. Attempt to give the least amount of information that would permit another capable scientist to replicate your outcome, but be cautious that vital information is integrated. The use of subheadings is suggested and ought to be synchronized with the results section.

When a technique is used that has been well-described in another section, mention the specific item describing the way, but draw the basic principle while stating the situation. The purpose is to show all particular resources and broad procedures so that another person may use some or all of the methods in one more study or referee the scientific value of your work. It is not to be a step-by-step report of the whole thing you did, nor is a methods section a set of orders.

Materials:

Materials may be reported in part of a section or else they may be recognized along with your measures.

Methods:

- Report the method and not the particulars of each process that engaged the same methodology.
- Describe the method entirely.
- To be succinct, present methods under headings dedicated to specific dealings or groups of measures.
- Simplify—detail how procedures were completed, not how they were performed on a particular day.
- If well-known procedures were used, account for the procedure by name, possibly with a reference, and that's all.

Approach:

It is embarrassing to use vigorous voice when documenting methods without using first person, which would focus the reviewer's interest on the researcher rather than the job. As a result, when writing up the methods, most authors use third person passive voice.

Use standard style in this and every other part of the paper—avoid familiar lists, and use full sentences.

What to keep away from:

- Resources and methods are not a set of information.
- Skip all descriptive information and surroundings—save it for the argument.
- Leave out information that is immaterial to a third party.

Results:

The principle of a results segment is to present and demonstrate your conclusion. Create this part as entirely objective details of the outcome, and save all understanding for the discussion.

The page length of this segment is set by the sum and types of data to be reported. Use statistics and tables, if suitable, to present consequences most efficiently.

You must clearly differentiate material which would usually be incorporated in a study editorial from any unprocessed data or additional appendix matter that would not be available. In fact, such matters should not be submitted at all except if requested by the instructor.

Content:

- Sum up your conclusions in text and demonstrate them, if suitable, with figures and tables.
- In the manuscript, explain each of your consequences, and point the reader to remarks that are most appropriate.
- Present a background, such as by describing the question that was addressed by creation of an exacting study.
- Explain results of control experiments and give remarks that are not accessible in a prescribed figure or table, if appropriate.
- Examine your data, then prepare the analyzed (transformed) data in the form of a figure (graph), table, or manuscript.

What to stay away from:

- Do not discuss or infer your outcome, report surrounding information, or try to explain anything.
- Do not include raw data or intermediate calculations in a research manuscript.
- Do not present similar data more than once.
- A manuscript should complement any figures or tables, not duplicate information.
- Never confuse figures with tables—there is a difference.

Approach:

As always, use past tense when you submit your results, and put the whole thing in a reasonable order.

Put figures and tables, appropriately numbered, in order at the end of the report.

If you desire, you may place your figures and tables properly within the text of your results section.

Figures and tables:

If you put figures and tables at the end of some details, make certain that they are visibly distinguished from any attached appendix materials, such as raw facts. Whatever the position, each table must be titled, numbered one after the other, and include a heading. All figures and tables must be divided from the text.

Discussion:

The discussion is expected to be the trickiest segment to write. A lot of papers submitted to the journal are discarded based on problems with the discussion. There is no rule for how long an argument should be.

Position your understanding of the outcome visibly to lead the reviewer through your conclusions, and then finish the paper with a summing up of the implications of the study. The purpose here is to offer an understanding of your results and support all of your conclusions, using facts from your research and generally accepted information, if suitable. The implication of results should be fully described.

Infer your data in the conversation in suitable depth. This means that when you clarify an observable fact, you must explain mechanisms that may account for the observation. If your results vary from your prospect, make clear why that may have happened. If your results agree, then explain the theory that the proof supported. It is never suitable to just state that the data approved the prospect, and let it drop at that. Make a decision as to whether each premise is supported or discarded or if you cannot make a conclusion with assurance. Do not just dismiss a study or part of a study as "uncertain."

Research papers are not acknowledged if the work is imperfect. Draw what conclusions you can based upon the results that you have, and take care of the study as a finished work.

- You may propose future guidelines, such as how an experiment might be personalized to accomplish a new idea.
- Give details of all of your remarks as much as possible, focusing on mechanisms.
- Make a decision as to whether the tentative design sufficiently addressed the theory and whether or not it was correctly restricted. Try to present substitute explanations if they are sensible alternatives.
- One piece of research will not counter an overall question, so maintain the large picture in mind. Where do you go next? The best studies unlock new avenues of study. What questions remain?
- Recommendations for detailed papers will offer supplementary suggestions.

Approach:

When you refer to information, differentiate data generated by your own studies from other available information. Present work done by specific persons (including you) in past tense.

Describe generally acknowledged facts and main beliefs in present tense.

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Topics	Grades		
	A-B	**C-D**	**E-F**
Abstract	Clear and concise with appropriate content, Correct format. 200 words or below	Unclear summary and no specific data, Incorrect form Above 200 words	No specific data with ambiguous information Above 250 words
Introduction	Containing all background details with clear goal and appropriate details, flow specification, no grammar and spelling mistake, well organized sentence and paragraph, reference cited	Unclear and confusing data, appropriate format, grammar and spelling errors with unorganized matter	Out of place depth and content, hazy format
Methods and Procedures	Clear and to the point with well arranged paragraph, precision and accuracy of facts and figures, well organized subheads	Difficult to comprehend with embarrassed text, too much explanation but completed	Incorrect and unorganized structure with hazy meaning
Result	Well organized, Clear and specific, Correct units with precision, correct data, well structuring of paragraph, no grammar and spelling mistake	Complete and embarrassed text, difficult to comprehend	Irregular format with wrong facts and figures
Discussion	Well organized, meaningful specification, sound conclusion, logical and concise explanation, highly structured paragraph reference cited	Wordy, unclear conclusion, spurious	Conclusion is not cited, unorganized, difficult to comprehend
References	Complete and correct format, well organized	Beside the point, Incomplete	Wrong format and structuring

INDEX

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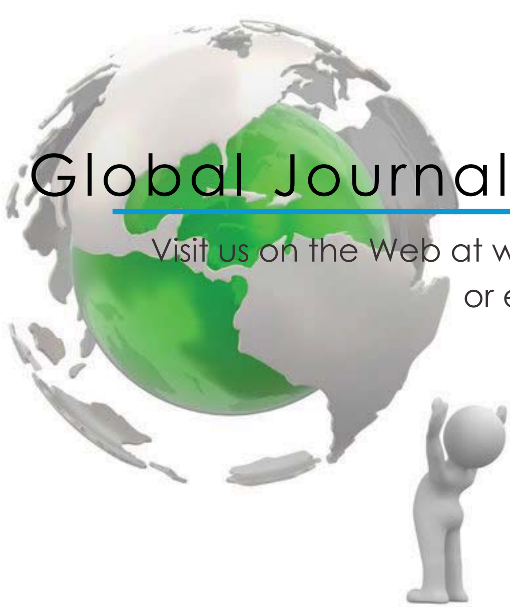

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