



More green thoughts than actions: Insights from marketing instructors at a Canadian University

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ABSTRACT

Sustainability discourse provides directions for sustainable development in the global context; education should be transformed to address sustainability concerns. Many universities have adopted a sustainability focus and university instructors play a vital role in inculcating sustainability principles in students, but in business education there is little research on how marketing instructors interpret sustainability or how that affects their teaching. This qualitative case study used semi-structured interviews and content analysis of course syllabi to gain the insights of marketing instructors at a university in Canada; specifically, how they interpret sustainability, how they integrate sustainability into their marketing instruction, and the perceived factors affecting their teaching practices. Thematic analysis with NVivo identified a dilemma; business worldviews limit what marketing instructors think about sustainability and whether and how they teach it in marketing courses. If marketing instructors are not teaching about sustainability, it is a missed opportunity to transform production, consumerism and marketing. As universities are increasingly trying to implement sustainability integration in teaching and learning, this research provides useful implications for marketing instructors, educational leaders, business schools, professional associations and textbook publishers.

1. Introduction

Modern societies face social and environmental declines, leading to global sustainability issues such as climate change, biodiversity loss, poverty and social inequality. Sustainability means the ability to meet “the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (Brundtland, 1987, para 27). Environmental protection is a key to this. For almost twenty years, UNESCO has promoted education for sustainable development (ESD) to educate sustainability-aware citizens who can help transform the world for a sustainable future (UNESCO, 2017).

Higher education institutions (HEIs) are key stakeholders for ESD and have been integrating sustainability into teaching (Christie et al., 2015; Dziubaniuk and Nyholm, 2020; Melles, 2019; Sund, 2016), first revamping many environmental studies programs and then focusing on other areas of higher education curricula (Eaton et al., 2016), such as science and engineering (e.g., Andrades Peña et al., 2018; Arefin et al., 2021; Barber et al., 2014; Doh and Tashman, 2014; Guerra, 2017) and

business studies (e.g., Allen et al., 2019; Cole and Snider, 2019; Kolb et al., 2017; de Waal and Maritz, 2022; Manna et al., 2022; Setó-Pamies and Papaikonomou, 2016). However, Figueiró & Raufflet's (2015) systematic review on sustainability in management education found very few studies with a clearly defined concept of sustainability.

Business education, conventionally focused on knowledge transfer, must experience a paradigm shift to a competency-based approach to equip students with sustainability knowledge and skill sets (Bratianu et al., 2020; Elmassri et al., 2023). Although there is no agreed upon list of sustainability competencies, scholars have suggested integrated problem-solving, systems-thinking, futures-thinking, strategic thinking and interpersonal competencies (Brundiers et al., 2021). For instance, critical thinking competency is defined as “the ability to question norms, practices and opinions; to reflect on one's own values, perceptions and actions; and to take a position in the sustainability discourse” (UNESCO, 2018, p. 12, Box 1.1). Business schools should teach sustainability as they play a key role in producing business leaders who understand sustainability issues (Arquitt and Cornwell, 2007; Arruda Filho, 2017;

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Kolb et al., 2017; Menon and Suresh, 2020; Storey, 2020). On a global scale, climate change and inequality are caused or exacerbated by unsustainable production (Sheth and Parvatiyar, 2021) and increasing consumerism is a result of growth and competition (Bridges and Wilhelm, 2008; Gorge et al., 2015). In business, sustainability must be embraced throughout the whole supply chain, including production and consumption (Gruber and Schlegelmilch, 2013). This is where business schools can impact the practices of future business leaders and marketers (Ardley & May 2020; Cole and Snider, 2019) for driving sustainable production and sustainable consumption (Sheth and Parvatiyar, 2021). In their role as consumers and simultaneously as employees or employers or entrepreneurs, business graduates must be conscious of sustainability issues relating to ecological footprint, food safety and quality, environmental protection, and working conditions (Öberseder et al., 2013). Business schools thus need a transformation in curriculum design and delivery (Schlegelmilch, 2020).

As a major discipline in business schools, marketing education should raise students' awareness of sustainable consumption and social consciousness – important aspects of a sustainable society (Boulocher-Passet et al., 2019; Kemper et al., 2020b). In particular, students must be taught about consumerism and marketing, which are two facets of modern society, each impacting the other. Consumerism may be seen as “the doctrine that the self cannot be complete without a wealth of consumer goods and that goals can be achieved and problems solved through proper consumption” (Murphy, 2000, p. 636). It is connected to marketing by strategies used to increase consumers' needs and wants, making them buy more (Day and Aaker, 1997). Consumer advocates, on the other hand, create “a social movement seeking to augment the rights and power of buyers in relation to sellers”, positing that buyers have the right to expect products to be safe and essentially as promised by sellers, and the right not to buy products offered to them at all (Kotler, 1971, p. 49). In deciding not to buy products, though, consumers are swimming against the tide as the over-use of marketing leads to an imbalance of power favoring businesses (Yani-de-Soriano & Slater, 2009). Marketing students should be aware of these dynamics.

To approach sustainability, business leaders must be able to transform marketing practices to refrain from encouraging overconsumption (Helm et al., 2024) and to promote sustainable consumption (Naini et al., 2024). Despite this need, not all marketing instructors engage with sustainability due to a tension between marketing and sustainability (Kemper et al., 2019a,b; Toubiana, 2014) – a tension that results from the logic of corporate-driven consumption (Helm et al., 2024) and the “ontological and epistemological assumptions in business education” (Painter-Morland et al., 2016, p. 69). Consumption can fulfill basic human needs or can gratify human desires and wants – the latter being related to consumerism (Godazgar, 2007). To be considered sustainable, consumption must satisfy basic human needs and improve quality of life, not be for material gain and extravagance. Sustainable consumption must aim to reduce the environmental impact of consumption (Kumar and Sreen, 2020) whereas the related production must protect the environment and future generations (Quoquab and Mohammad, 2020). While traditional marketing may emphasize satisfying consumers' needs and wants profitably – by having people buy more (Kotler et al., 2002) – sustainability may require that people buy less (Jones et al., 2008; Lunde, 2018; Vogel and Hickel, 2023) or buy fewer, more durable goods (Sun et al., 2021).

Several studies show how sustainability has been taught in marketing courses to increase sustainability awareness in students (e.g., Albinsson et al., 2020; Tasdemir and Gazo, 2020; von der Heide, 2018), but few describe what marketing instructors think to be sustainability, how their interpretation affect their teaching (Kemper et al., 2020a), or what they think would help them incorporate sustainability in teaching. Moreover, ‘tried and tested’ approaches to sustainability integration such as stand-alone courses are more common, with barriers to implementation such as lacking a systemic approach to sustainability (Edwards et al., 2020). With scientific consensus on the urgency of

climate change (Ripple et al., 2019), marketing education should be transformed (Bolton, 2022; Kemper et al., 2020a). The state of this change varies widely across business schools (Louw, 2015). In this paper, we present a case study from a Canadian university to explore where marketing instructors think they are at and what would aid in the transformation.

The remainder of this paper is structured in five sections. First, a literature review of sustainability in business education and marketing education is given. Second, the case study method is discussed with details of the research process. Third, the results are described and fourth, a discussion of the main findings is presented with a synthesis of existing literature, followed by research implications. Finally, the conclusions outline research limitations and future research directions.

2. Literature review

2.1. Education for sustainable development (ESD) and business education

The terms ‘education for sustainable development’ (ESD), ‘education for sustainability’ (EfS) and ‘sustainability education’ (SE) are used interchangeably in literature (Kemper et al., 2020a). Scholars have, though, challenged the logic of economic growth underpinning ESD and EfS (Berryman and Sauvé, 2016; Jickling and Wals, 2012; Kopnina, 2012, 2020) since growth is the main cause of increasing pressure on natural resources (Hickel, 2019; Kopnina, 2012, 2016, 2020; Borland and Lindgreen, 2013; Kemper and Ballantine, 2019). Kopnina (2020) argued that ESD and EfS exhibit “worrying tendencies and contradictions” (p. 287) as they are primarily based on sustainability principles relating to the growth of human societies, meaning that they include little discussion of “ecological integrity for the future of both human and non-human species” (p. 288). Despite the limitations of ESD (Kopnina, 2020), we use this term in our study because it is advocated by UNESCO as the education that brings about personal and societal transformation for a sustainable future (UNESCO, 2017).

ESD is a highlight of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (UN's SDGs) (Leicht et al., 2018). The 17 SDGs are inter-connected to emphasize that sustainable development must include social, economic and environmental sustainability (United Nations Development Program). HEIs are important actors in educating citizens for the socially responsible and sustainable actions needed for the SDGs (Menon and Suresh, 2020). In response to the call for ESD, several HEIs in Europe have adjusted activities in teaching and research to address sustainability (Kioupi and Voulvoulis, 2020; Kopnina, 2018; Wals et al., 2004). Some examples include the Hague University of Applied Science (HHS), Leiden University College, and Leiden University in the Netherlands, showing that sustainability can be taught at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels (Kopnina, 2018).

The Decade of ESD (2005–2014) did not, however, do enough to challenge “business as usual” (Huckle and Wals, 2015, p. 502); a paradigm shift is needed to transform business education (Fang and O'Toole, 2023). This transformation must happen in curricula and pedagogy (Martínez-Campillo et al., 2019; Portuguese Castro and Gómez Zermeño, 2021) to provide students with critical thinking skills for understanding and tackling sustainability issues (Salinas-Navarro et al., 2022). To achieve ecologically sustainable and just societies, there must be cooperation between universities and the business sector (Paletta et al., 2019). Although some business schools have recognized the importance of sustainability teaching (Andersson and Öhman, 2016; Edwards et al., 2020), implementation is slow (Cavalcanti-Bandos et al., 2021) and, at least until recently, has made little headway (Kemper et al., 2019a,b; Kopnina, 2020; Peterson, 2022).

Many scholars support integrating ESD across three levels: macro, meso and micro (e.g., Molthan-Hill et al., 2020; Rode and Michelsen, 2008). At the macro level, international and national policies set a context for ESD and disciplinary philosophies guide ESD whereas at the meso level, institutional policies and frameworks guide ESD and at the

micro level, individual instructors implement ESD in teaching (Rode and Michelsen, 2008).

At the macro level, the United Nations set out a framework of 17 SDGs to direct international actions for sustainability targets (Molthan-Hill et al., 2020). This framework can exert influence on national and organizational governance in terms of sustainability commitment. However, at the meso level, in the context of HEIs, not all business schools include sustainability course requirements (Nicholls et al., 2013; Wymer and Rundle-Thiele, 2017). A case study focusing on MBA programs at three business schools in Asia, Latin America and South Europe showed a curriculum focus on technical skills in finance and marketing rather than sustainability issues (Fornes et al., 2019). At the micro level, teaching initiatives to embed sustainability in curriculum often happen with individual instructors (Leal Filho et al., 2018, 2019). To transform business education toward sustainability within the framework of SDGs, business schools need instructors committed to sustainability (Lazzarini et al., 2018; Moon and Orlitzky, 2011; Murphy et al., 2012) – though it should be noted that with an increasingly precarious contract workforce, individual instructors may bow to real or perceived institutional pressure. A recent study on a European business school reported that faculty are aware of sustainability (Tridapalli and Elliott, 2024), while another study indicated that when faculty teach sustainability topics in business courses, they are usually embedded in a profit-oriented model (Schlegelmilch, 2020) as faculty may place more emphasis on profit maximization (Kilbourne and Carlson, 2008) – one of the root causes of unsustainability (Varey, 2012; Kemper et al., 2020a).

2.2. Sustainability in marketing education

Sustainability integration in marketing education has a long way to go. According to Helm and Little (2022), marketing textbooks often suggest that marketing has evolved from the ‘marketing concept’ (i.e., marketing based on understanding customers’ needs and wants and delivering value better than competitors for a profit) to the ‘societal marketing concept’ (i.e., marketing based on balancing customers’ needs and wants and societal interests). Societal marketing, however, remains “subservient to individualism and competition” (Helm and Little, 2022, p. 309), undermined by economic growth logic (Helm and Little, 2022). Furthermore, the sustainability stream in marketing education research is underdeveloped (Rosenbloom, 2022). In business-to-business marketing research, for instance, there is an emerging interest in the SDGs, but existing studies are fragmented and lack depth (Voola et al., 2022a). Hence, scholars have called for sustainability issues to be holistically addressed in marketing theories (Voola et al., 2022b).

Some marketing instructors have challenged the discipline by proposing that marketing must be part of the solution to sustainability (Kemper et al., 2020b). There have been instructor efforts to incorporate sustainability into the marketing curriculum. For example, there are stand-alone sustainability marketing-related courses, approaching “sustainability marketing from a social impact and strategic perspective” (Brocato et al., 2022, p. 344). These courses offer guidance as well as sustainability resources to help with curriculum improvement (Brocato et al., 2022). Still, such efforts are at the micro level with individual instructors since most marketing programs lack a holistic view of sustainability (Rosenbloom, 2022), and marketing courses often fail to reflect macro societal issues (Watson et al., 2022).

When trying to integrate sustainability into teaching, marketing instructors may be discouraged by many obstacles (Peterson, 2022; Rosenbloom, 2022; Voola et al., 2022b). Internal constraints include lack of leadership, lack of knowledge and skills, lack of time, low personal commitment, staff development issues, and negative staff and student reactions (Doh and Tashman, 2014; Figueiró and Raufflet, 2015; Kemper et al., 2020a). External pressures may come from accreditation bodies, student demand, businesses, and university ranking systems (Doherty et al., 2015). Together, these may lead to the absence of a

professional approach to sustainability integration in marketing education (Kemper et al., 2020a).

As our study is focused on the micro level of sustainability teaching with individual instructors, we review related literature to identify research gaps. There are two major streams of research relating to individual instructors and sustainability in marketing education.

The first stream focuses on understanding marketing instructors’ perceptions of sustainability and sustainability integration. Kemper et al. (2018) reported that 86% of marketing instructors in a global survey defined sustainability in social, economic and environmental dimensions while 12% limited their perceptions to only environmental concerns. Some marketing faculty are even reluctant to recognize the social and environmental impacts of marketing (Kemper et al., 2020b). When it comes to sustainability integration in marketing education, Kemper et al. (2019a,b) identified three categories of sustainability educators: (1) the transformer delivers transformative learning experiences to change student mindsets; (2) the thinker brings about discussions to enhance students’ critical thinking; and (3) the actioner engages in experiential learning. Kemper et al. (2020a) interviewed eighteen marketing academics in Australasia, North America and Europe who actively teach and research sustainability. They reported desirable integration of sustainability topics across marketing courses, rather than a stand-alone sustainability marketing course. Sustainability, the authors found, is typically a personal interest and each instructor chooses what sustainability content to teach. The holistic, system-wide approach required to truly transform marketing education is lacking.

The second stream addresses how instructors incorporate sustainability content in individual courses (i.e., at the micro level) or in consideration of other courses in the same program (i.e., at the meso level). For example, Dziubaniuk and Nyholm (2020) conducted a case study on an International Marketing course with a unit on sustainability and ethics, finding that traditional lecturing should be combined with active learning via practical assignments to transform students’ thinking and encourage behavioural change. In another example about a foundation course, Introduction to Marketing, by articulating learning outcomes and adding content relating to sustainability in the macro-environment in which marketing operates, instructors can immensely increase students’ awareness of sustainability (Watson et al., 2022). Additionally, Macromarketing courses – connecting marketing to society – related to the UN’s SDGs are recommended (Peterson, 2022; Shapiro et al., 2021) and sustainability-related case studies are promoted to provide students with experiential learning (Shapiro et al., 2021). Field trips provide opportunities where students can observe the interplay of stakeholder interactions in marketing contexts to appreciate the connection between macromarketing systems and sustainability (Samuel et al., 2022).

Scholars also suggest design thinking approaches across academic marketing programs to achieve better sustainability integration. For example, cross-course experiential learning across two courses, Marketing Research and Product Design, proves effective in developing students’ macro-level sustainability knowledge (Manna et al., 2022). Scholars have also proposed sustainability integration across courses, for example teaching sustainability issues to undergraduate students in Integrated Marketing Communications (Albinsson et al., 2020), International Marketing (Perera and Hewege, 2016), and Marketing Principles (von der Heide, 2018). Markley Kopnina, 2019; Lim, 2016 recommended developing and teaching two complementary sustainability marketing courses in addition to core marketing courses, *Orienting Marketers towards Sustainability – An Introduction and Global Issues in Sustainable Development – Marketing Strategy and Global Policy*. To our knowledge, such transformative changes have been proposed on a pilot basis, but little is known about how typical marketing instructors teach sustainability in their courses, if they teach it at all.

In summary, prior literature primarily reports perceptions and practices of sustainability champions in marketing education but not much is known about typical marketing instructors whose interpretation

of sustainability and teaching practices impact learning outcomes. The current study of marketing instructors at a Canadian university explores their interpretation of sustainability and their current practices as well as the factors they believe impact their teaching.

3. Materials and method

3.1. The research context

Since the original signing of the Talloires Declaration by University Leaders for a Sustainable Future (ULSF) in 1990 (ULSF, n. d.) – a declaration joined by the university in the current study – many Canadian universities have committed to sustainability (Amey et al., 2020). Still, there is little literature on sustainability integration in business education in Canada (Driscoll et al., 2017) and no such studies reported for the marketing discipline within the past five years. A study on sustainability integration in Canadian higher education by McCunn et al. (2020) collected viewpoints from a group of multi-disciplinary academics attending a workshop on sustainability, but with no concentration on business education or marketing education in particular. Our study may be the first Canadian study to investigate marketing instructors' viewpoints toward sustainability, current practices of sustainability integration, and perceived factors affecting current practices. Given that past studies focused primarily on Europe (e.g., Hermann and Bossle, 2020; Kopnina, 2018; Tridapalli and Elliott, 2024; Olalla and Merino, 2019; Pujari et al., 2004; ULFS; Varadarajan, 2020), a case study on a university in Canada adds another perspective to existing literature. Though the contexts may be somewhat different, we believe some of the challenges we identify may be similar and some of our recommendations may be useful in locations outside Canada.

The university where this study took place has a strategic plan that highlights teaching and research for sustainability and is a part of the UN's Sustainable Development Solutions Network. It has implemented many sustainability initiatives, such as the Office of Sustainability and a five-year Sustainability Plan embracing sustainability in operations, investment, research, curriculum, teaching and learning and public engagement. It has also participated in the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings which purport to capture university impact on society based on the UN's SDGs. The university offers twenty sustainability-focused programs in the fields of engineering and environmental studies. The business school is accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) and offers more than ten degrees in Economics, Finance, Accounting, Marketing, Management, Human Resources Management, and International Business. This university is the context for the case study.

3.2. Method

We employed an interpretivist paradigm emphasizing social contexts (Orlikowski and Baroudi, 1991) and the variety of human experiences of the phenomenon being studied (Kaplan and Maxwell, 1994). We conducted a qualitative case study focused on the marketing discipline at the research site, which can be referred to as a bounded system (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). We sought the experience of marketing instructors, which led to descriptions and recommendations (Runyan, 1982); we were not seeking to generalize findings (Kazdin, 1978). We looked for “what things ‘exist’ rather than how many such things there are” (Walker, 1985, p. 3). A single case study, with sufficient attention paid to validity, can contribute to knowledge (Numagami, 1998).

The following strategies were used to strengthen the validity of our research. First, we applied triangulation, using more than one data collection method and source of data (Patton, 2015). We collected and analyzed interview data and course syllabi. Second, we undertook member checking, returning interview transcripts to participants for verification (Slettebo, 2021). Third, being a marketing instructor, the lead author of the research team practiced reflexivity (Probst and

Berenson, 2014) by keeping a research diary to acknowledge biases, dispositions and assumptions. Finally, peer examination was applied as members of the team reviewed data analysis, results and discussion (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016).

All full-time and contract marketing instructors ($n = 7$) at the research site were invited by email to participate in semi-structured one-on-one interviews via Zoom; five agreed to participate. Two instructors did not respond to the invitations or two reminders. The non-responses might be due to inability to respond or missed communication, indifference to, or discomfort with, the topic, or inappropriate timing. It is tempting to speculate that instructors keen on sustainability in marketing would likely have responded, but we cannot conclude this.

In-depth interviewing is a commonly used method in qualitative research, allowing a depth of understanding of the studied topic (Markley Rountree and Koernig, 2015; McCarty and Shrum, 2001; Osborne and Grant-Smith, 2021). We developed the interview guide with key questions (see Appendix) and allowed flexibility for probing and following up to encourage further insights from participants. Four interviews lasted between 45 and 75 min and one participant sent written responses. Saturation was reached after the third interview.

Two participants identified as women and three as men, with teaching experience ranging from two years to more than fifteen years. Participants taught different marketing subjects at different levels. Three participants taught advanced marketing courses to third- or fourth-year undergraduate students and two participants taught foundational marketing courses to first- or second-year undergraduate students. Of the five participants, two also taught students in the MBA program. Pseudonyms are used in reporting the findings to protect participants' identities.

Data analysis followed procedures suggested by Creswell and Creswell (2018), including coding using NVivo software. Four participants sent us, altogether, seven marketing course syllabi for the academic years 2020 and 2021. When conducting the content analysis of course syllabi, we used the definition of sustainability proposed in the SDGs (United Nations, 2020), embracing sustainability regarding social, environmental and economic dimensions (Ford and Despeisse, 2016; Ghobakhloo, 2020). Using this definition, Khan and Henderson (2020) propose three types of courses based on the ranking of sustainability integration: (1) Courses that include some course content from a sustainability perspective (on at least one dimension of sustainability); (2) Courses that include course content and one assessment on the intersection of at least two dimensions of sustainability; and (3) Courses that include significant course content and assessment on three dimensions of sustainability. We used this classification when reviewing the course syllabi.

There were five main steps in our data analysis: (1) after several readings of transcripts, we used NVivo for initial screening, using word cloud, tree map, and cluster analysis; (2) we used NVivo for coding important items emerging from the data; (3) we classified codes and grouped similar codes together to form themes based on thematic questioning linked directly to research questions; (4) we cross-checked the themes identified across transcripts and with course syllabi to achieve data triangulation for increasing research credibility (O'Donoghue and Punch, 2003), and (5) we applied the within-case and cross-case analytical process (Ayres et al., 2003), re-reading and comparing across the transcripts to confirm the final set of themes.

4. Results

We found that five course syllabi had no sustainability-related content, while two other courses included some content on environmental sustainability, business ethics and corporate social responsibility, thus falling into Khan and Henderson (2020)'s most basic category.

The coding process using NVivo determined ten themes from the interview data: social sustainability, economic sustainability, environmental sustainability, content of teaching, pedagogy, assessment,

motivation, barriers, professional development, and supportive culture. With regard to environmental sustainability, we identified two related sub-themes, namely, sustainable products and sustainability communication, which emerged from interview data (see Table 1).

4.1. Marketing instructors' interpretation of sustainability in marketing education

Participants defined sustainability as including social sustainability, environmental sustainability, and economic sustainability and their interpretation of sustainability included a future orientation. For example, Ashley wrote: "Sustainability must be first related to protecting the environment for the future." Thomas said: "Sustainability is thinking of a business from a long-term perspective, caring about not only the bottom-line profit but also society and the environment." Lucas summarized their views and how they placed emphasis on each sustainability dimension:

In terms of sustainability, I will rank the environment first, and then social and economic dimensions. The environment comes first as we can't have a society without the environment. Then socially, people need to work together and have their needs met before being able to focus on economics, because the economy focuses on the organization of how we manage and use our natural resources.

Of note, social sustainability was mentioned most frequently in the interviews while the second most mentioned was environmental sustainability, with economic sustainability the least discussed (see Table 1). Four out of five participants described social changes leading to marketing changes, such as:

Traditionally, marketing has been accused of being short-term oriented when marketers satisfy needs and make profit. But now, marketing is not that bad. Marketers deliver values to consumers who are embedded in society. Consumers are becoming smarter, society is becoming smarter and so marketing is adapting. (Thomas)

According to participants, in marketing education, sustainability must be put in the context of business. For example, sustainability was demonstrated in the business sector through their sustainable products and packaging as well as sustainability communication (i.e., how businesses should engage in communicating their sustainability initiatives to consumers). Four participants used examples about real companies, such as Amazon, Coca Cola, Lush, Nike, Patagonia and Unilever, to illustrate that businesses were more focused on environmental

sustainability than they had historically been, and that they used sustainable products and packaging initiatives to attract customers and maximize sales.

In participants' viewpoints, sustainable products and packaging were integral to business sustainability in association with consumption, and were said to be implemented by businesses who wanted to respond to consumer demands. For instance, Michael said:

The other day, I went to Amazon and bought reusable Ziploc bags, not single-use Ziploc bags. I do not know how much of that has shifted percentage wise on consumers demanding sustainable products, but I do see that growing, and businesses are adapting.

In the product category, we just don't look at the product, but also the packaging, so packaging has to be sustainable. There are some companies that position themselves as more sustainable by showing that their packaging is very environmentally friendly. I don't know if you're familiar with a company called Lush. Their packaging is very minimalist. (Thomas)

Participants also said that marketers must satisfy consumer demand to buy products produced in a sustainable manner. Michael said:

A good marketer makes products based on consumer demand and I do see a growing trend for sustainable products. Consumers are starting to think about purchasing sustainable products, and businesses are taking a more sustainable approach than ever before.

There was ample talk about sustainability marketing communication from four participants, who believed that marketing had evolved from applying a short-term selling concept to implementing long-term communication strategies to educate consumers about sustainable products while doing good for society, with marketers thereby acting as social change agents. While marketing often seems very focused on increasing consumption, it can aim to change what is produced through impacting what consumers demand. Seen from the communication perspective, marketing could serve sustainability in terms of social dimensions, as Thomas summarized: "Marketing is the interface between business and society, and consumers make up society. Any kind of sustainability communication and offering sustainable products in marketing can change society for the better."

Three participants explicitly said that students should be taught about sustainability to prepare to lead in the long run. Sarah said:

Sustainability has a lot of value, especially in the marketing discipline to be discussing that and to be able to raise up leaders who may think long-term in regard to sustainability. So, if we're teaching these types of things in universities, more about how we develop sustainability in terms of what we're bridging into products and maybe the partnerships and the suppliers who we're working with, I think it develops a long-term view for people to be able to see into the future and for students to be prepared.

There appeared to be a paradox in some participants' viewpoints towards sustainability and marketing education. While recognizing the importance and necessity of sustainability teaching in marketing classrooms, three participants explicitly stated that the emphasis of marketing education must still be on profit maximization. As Thomas simply put it: "Too much sustainability content in marketing education may dilute the true nature of marketing. Marketing is like a war: you are fighting with other businesses to get more customers and more of their money. That's the heart of marketing."

Two other participants also felt that it might not always be practical to implement sustainability in marketing. According to Ashley: "How sustainability can be integrated into marketing strategy is essential, but I feel sustainability is more conceptual or theoretical than practical in marketing." They thought that sustainability might be easily applied in renewable energy sectors, but they were uncertain about sustainability implementation in other industries or in all marketing areas, including

Table 1
Summary of themes/sub-themes.

Research question (RQ)	Themes/sub-themes	References	Sources
1. What do marketing instructors interpret sustainability in marketing education to mean?	(1) Social sustainability	20	5
	(2) Economic sustainability	12	5
	(3) Environmental sustainability	17	5
	(3.1) Sustainable products	12	5
	(3.2) Sustainability communication	11	4
2. What are the practices of marketing instructors regarding sustainability integration in marketing education?	(4) Content of teaching	21	5
	(5) Pedagogy	18	5
	(6) Assessment	19	5
3. What are the factors affecting the practices of marketing instructors regarding sustainability integration in marketing education?	(7) Motivation	15	5
	(8) Barriers	17	5
	(9) Professional development	18	5
	(10) Supportive culture	12	4

branding and sales. Lucas said: “I do not see how sustainability fits into all marketing areas. Sustainability is like a footnote in marketing textbooks about what companies must do to increase sales.”

Notably, most participants shared that businesses were reacting to consumer trends and not the other way around, which might be factored into the way they integrated sustainability into teaching. For example:

Marketing historically used to be more of a sales function - you make the product, and you sell it. That's what it was. Then came this idea that you can't just push sales, you have to understand the market and produce products that the market needs. Consumers are becoming smarter, and society is becoming smarter, and marketing is adapting. Now, we are taking on the role of making people happy and then maybe getting into practices which are more sustainable. There are so many campaigns around the environment which are telling how products are being produced and are now better for the environment, etc. So, there's that discourse, that kind of a narrative, but if you look at it critically, maybe marketing would not have changed if society had not evolved. That's my take on it. (Thomas)

I think a lot of it probably comes down to what you see companies doing and the push from the public and from consumers towards companies to make changes for transparency and to show their corporate initiatives towards sustainability. (Sarah)

As participants described the reactive nature of marketing in responding to consumers demanding sustainable products, this again suggests a business worldview in seeing the role sustainability plays in marketing education. As part of data triangulation, our analysis indicated that only a few sustainability-related concepts such as environmental sustainability, business ethics, corporate social responsibility, and pro-environmental behaviours were written down in two out of seven course syllabi.

4.2. Marketing instructors' perspectives regarding sustainability integration

4.2.1. Current practice

Participants said that sustainability content did not belong in all marketing courses. Lucas said:

Some courses can do integration a lot better, although I feel in most business courses, there is not a large focus on sustainability – at least from my perspective in my time going through it as a business student and now teaching it.

Despite this, participants said that they were willing to introduce sustainability content where appropriate.

Four out of five participants shared that they did integrate such sustainability concepts as sustainable products and packaging, societal marketing, environmental protection, diversity, and corporate social responsibility, thereby integrating sustainability to some extent in their teaching. Two participants taught about sustainability-related behaviours in their courses, such as consuming less plastic and buying healthy food products. However, overall, participants said that there was not much sustainability integration in course content. One prominent reason they noted was owing to the nature of the marketing area they were teaching in. Lucas explained:

In a Consumer Behaviour class, for example, we can discuss how consumers transform their consumption and the demand for sustainable products, but in my class, I can't do much to push students into sustainability topics. Sustainability may fit better in foundational marketing courses than in my specialist course.

Teaching pedagogy must match course content and student characteristics. Case studies, class discussions, real-world examples, and presentations were the most commonly used teaching techniques. Thomas said: “In fundamental marketing courses, we use simple case studies

about the dos and don'ts in marketing with regard to sustainability.” The main purpose of foundational courses was to facilitate first-year undergraduates' learning about basic sustainability principles that would help firms position their products to meet sustainability demands. In advanced courses, participants used student projects that were connected with local businesses or communities as they encouraged the application side of marketing theories.

Participants all agreed that marketing education could impact marketing and consumerism. Thomas summarized the principles of using 4Ps (Product, Price, Place and Promotion) to influence businesses and consumers that instructors could teach to students:

When we're teaching marketing, it is more of a 'corporate focus,' but it would have connections with sustainability from a consumer perspective. For example, I can teach about marketing campaigns that would change consumer behaviour – to be more responsible and environmentally conscious.

Although participants desired to integrate some sustainability content into teaching, most assessments still placed a heavy emphasis on marketing concepts. There were some bright spots though. Two participants mentioned that they used assessments that asked students to recommend strategies to change behaviours, such as waste reduction and health-related behaviours. Such assessments, they noted, could engage students in transformative learning approaches. One participant implemented a work-integrated-learning assessment by encouraging students to implement projects with a focus on sustainable enterprises. Michael said: “I want students to focus on local businesses and not-for-profit social enterprises and I am trying to build that focus into class discussions and getting students to think more about sustainability in some way.”

There were discrepancies between the content analysis of course syllabi and participants' current practices as they described. Course syllabi supported a prevailing business and profit orientation. Course assessments seemed to be centered on marketing strategies to win customers, not on sustainability. While course syllabi largely lacked explicit sustainability values and principles, two of the course learning objectives were to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills in a global context, which are cited by UNESCO (2017, 2023) as core sustainability competencies and which overlap with some sustainability competencies as proposed in Brundiers et al. (2021). Although participants described engaging somewhat with sustainability topics in teaching, there was an absence of an explicit sustainability focus in course syllabi that could have been used to direct students towards sustainability issues in marketing.

4.2.2. Motivation

Regarding motivation, four out of five participants felt an intrinsic drive to include sustainability content where relevant in their courses but admitted that they could not always do so. Participants also noted that sustainability topics reflecting consumer and social trends could be used to engage students in learning about the market and society at large. Lucas said: “Sustainability is a huge topic and a pushing factor in the market and society. Discussing these topics with students makes the class more relevant to keep up with market trends.” Thomas also thought that making students think about marketing in a critical way through sustainability-related case studies could increase student engagement and was thus an effective way to improve teaching.

Most participants stated that their motivation originated from the nature of the teaching job:

Our job is to mold the minds of students and hope that they are going to push for more sustainability. Though I do not teach much sustainability content, I try to teach about human values, multiculturalism, and diversity, as I want students to think about the community. (Michael)

If we are teaching sustainability concepts to students, they would know more about how they could develop sustainability. This offers a long-term view for students to see the future for sustainability. (Sarah)

Overall, four of the participants' motivation for teaching sustainability was expressed as an intrinsic factor arising from the instructors' job. With the intention to integrate sustainability into teaching at some point, participants described barriers to actually doing so.

4.2.3. Barriers

A number of barriers to teaching sustainability were described by participants. Ashley stated: "There is too much content to cover in my course." Lucas and Michael shared their experiences with student skepticism whereas Thomas would like to have more connection with industry and community. Four out of five participants also experienced difficulty finding teaching resources on sustainability in marketing and textbooks that fit well with their courses. For example, Lucas, who was teaching a specialist marketing course, said: "There's no textbook that's able to demonstrate sustainability in marketing that I can use in my class."

Two participants also mentioned their inherent lack of knowledge due to lack of training on sustainability, stating:

I can't speak on other people's behalf, but in order for me to feel comfortable teaching about sustainability, I would like to have a better understanding of this concept, because in my university years, I didn't really hear a whole lot about this. (Sarah)

Other challenges came from students. Three participants cited teaching mixed cohorts of students coming from different cultural and social backgrounds as a barrier when explaining sustainability concepts in class. For instance, Michael stated: "I think the big challenge is whether students buy into sustainability. Some might not buy into it or just don't believe in it. There is resistance to learning or even to discussing sustainability topics in class." Lucas also said: "There are students who always question, 'why are we learning this stuff?' or 'I don't see why this is important; this has nothing to do with marketing'." Lucas noted: "The backlash from students could affect teaching evaluation. Students can say, oh, this professor is kind of pro-sustainability and biased in their teaching."

Reactions from colleagues were also quoted as obstacles to sustainability integration. According to two participants, senior faculty viewed sustainability as a dilution of the marketing discipline, whereas new faculty might be more receptive.

Another challenge to sustainability integration was the perceived gap between sustainability content and marketing content. Sarah stated:

To me, sustainability seems like a standalone topic, rather than being built into marketing theories. In my course, there's a sole chapter that covers a few basic sustainability concepts, and has no connection with other chapters of the textbook.

There were additional barriers inherent in individual instructors that could impede the effort for sustainability integration. For example, limited knowledge made some feel a lack of confidence to teach sustainability. Moreover, they felt a tension between what they wanted to teach and what they were trained to teach. While most participants included some sustainability integration through group discussions and case studies, their motivation to increase sustainability content in teaching might not be strong enough to make it happen without support.

4.2.4. Professional development and supportive culture

Participants said they needed support for developing capacity to integrate sustainability into teaching. First, they wanted reliable teaching resources, such as textbooks, journal articles, test banks and case studies. Ashley stated: "I need relevant case studies about sustainability in marketing." Sarah suggested having resources on

sustainability content, saying: "I would expect monthly or weekly emails or newsletters that send articles related to sustainability and connected to marketing." Lucas wanted textbooks with sustainability content relevant to specialist marketing courses, and proposed online databases dedicated to sustainability in marketing, including content, pedagogy and assessment practices.

Participants also wished to have professional development opportunities. They would like to learn from experts and colleagues with experience in teaching or researching sustainability. They would highly value faculty or multi-disciplinary meetings where instructors could exchange experiences. Michael said: "Experience sharing across disciplines is probably the strongest way to make us think about how we can apply sustainability topics in teaching." As university instructors ourselves, we understand that when change is facilitated through professional development programs, sustainability integration is more likely to happen.

Participants emphasized that educational leadership is indispensable to the success of sustainability integration in curriculum development and delivery, citing that a leader's role is to develop a supportive and inspiring culture. Michael said:

I think educational leaders have a big role in ESD because they are the representatives and leaders of the community. We need a positive environment where people want to talk about sustainability in a comfortable setting. That's where we're going to have our biggest growth for sustainability within the institution.

Other participants also said that a sustainability-promoting culture would motivate them to integrate sustainability and to overcome inertia and resistance. In their views, a supportive culture would have the biggest impact on their sustainability integration effort if they were made aware that they would need to transform their teaching practice to demonstrate organizational values. However, they did not feel they were immersed in such a culture:

I know that sustainability is implemented in some areas of my institution, but I don't see that as a value of my school. It might be written somewhere but I don't think the expectations are well communicated. (Michael)

I feel that the culture around teaching business students about sustainability is important. If it comes from the organizational culture, we will have resources, support and discussions on sustainability, which will allow the transformation process to happen in teaching. (Lucas)

I do not feel that I've been pushed to focus on sustainability. If this came from management, I would change my teaching practice, knowing sustainability is a value of the faculty, students, and the institution. (Sarah)

As culture in a business school includes all aspects of teaching, research and service, effective leadership is needed to build an organizational culture that appreciates sustainability and ensures the provision of resources and professional development.

5. Discussion

Our study focuses on the micro level of individual instructors' views toward sustainability and its integration into teaching. Recognizing how business education offers a foundation for students, we see it as imperative that business schools include sustainability in their curriculum (Peterson, 2022) to ensure graduates are equipped with sustainability knowledge and competencies. However, our research findings suggest that this integration is not occurring with instructors in a holistic or systematic way. In the following discussion, we synthesize our findings with existing literature and discuss implications for marketing instructors, deans, researchers, trade associations and textbook publishers.

While participants talked the most about social factors related to

sustainability, their emphasis put environmental sustainability in the first place. This is dissimilar to prior research reporting that marketing instructors were hesitant to acknowledge the social impacts of marketing (Kemper et al., 2020b) and some even limited sustainability only to environmental issues (Kemper et al., 2018). While the survey-based study by Kemper et al. (2018) did not allow faculty to freely express their opinions, our findings are based on narratives that can add new perspectives to existing literature.

Although the application of sustainability in new product development and marketing communication can strengthen the competitive advantage of business firms, three participants explicitly considered sustainability to be a desirable ‘add-on’ in marketing curricula. They may not yet consider solidly embedding sustainability into teaching, instead, allowing a profit-driven business worldview to dominate the way they teach. Where sustainability appeared at all in course syllabi, corporate social responsibility, ethics and sustainability were standalone topics rather than integrated into course content.

In their teaching, instructors described using examples of, or case studies on, companies offering sustainable products and initiatives as a response to consumer trends. It seems that instead of challenging students to discuss the tensions between marketing and sustainability, instructors limited their teaching of marketing to responding to consumer trends to increase sales. Our findings suggest that the statement “sustainable marketing considerations have grown but not to the extent of becoming the driver of markets and business practices that meet sustainability goals” (Sheth and Parvatiyar, 2021, p. 150) may be used to describe what was happening in some participants’ marketing classrooms.

The use of case studies on companies responding to consumer trends may imply instructors’ preconceptions that marketing must satisfy consumer needs and wants and, hence, consumers are responsible for demanding sustainable products. This is congruent with the neoliberal responsabilization of consumers (Kipp and Hawkins, 2019; Roff, 2007). Unfortunately, where “consumer responsibility is evoked and produced, the responsibility in question is also taken from other political and corporate shoulders” (Giesler and Veresiu, 2014, p. 854). This could be a fertile area for discussion in marketing classrooms.

Despite its small scope, this case study contributes to the literature by documenting marketing instructors’ perspectives on what is actually happening in their classrooms. Apart from class discussions, the limited incorporation of sustainability topics in marketing courses is concerning. Although instructors seemed to understand the impact of marketing education on consumerism and marketing, they described barriers to transforming their marketing course towards sustainability. The research participants in our study therefore appear to belong in the “thinker” cluster as portrayed by Kemper et al. (2019a,b) – trying to engage students in thinking about sustainability, but not leading them to act for sustainability. While instructors were aware of sustainability trends and most felt an intrinsic motivation to integrate some sustainability topics, obstacles included limited knowledge and resources and an absence of a supportive culture. These findings partly confirm previous studies describing constraints in terms of resources and institutional support (e.g., Doh and Tashman, 2014; Figueiró and Raufflet, 2015; Kemper et al., 2019a,b, 2020a, 2020b). Furthermore, instructors expressed a need to integrate sustainability and yet only acknowledged sustainability as a desirable feature, not as an essential part of the marketing curriculum.

Our findings suggest that the profit-maximization view of marketing can hinder the incorporation of sustainability. This resonates with Painter-Morland et al. (2016), who wrote, “the ontological and epistemological assumptions in business education undermine the kind of orientation that is necessary to engage with sustainability” (p. 69). These assumptions may have been learned through years of receiving marketing education or working as marketing practitioners. Our review of course syllabi also suggests that marketing content is developed, taught and discussed from a ‘corporate focus’, rather than from a

consumer perspective or a social lens. This may prevent instructors from a paradigm shift in their teaching.

Whilst some participants reported student interest as a motivator for including sustainability in their teaching, student skepticism was also noted as a barrier by two participants as it may affect teaching evaluations – an important aspect of performance review, contract renewal and the tenure process. Kemper et al. (2018) found that student interest was considered a source of motivation for instructors to teach about sustainability in a marketing class, while Kemper, Ballantine, and Hall (2019) found students’ skepticism slowed sustainability integration. We speculate that as climate impacts and biodiversity loss increase, more and more young people will demand a sustainability lens in the institutions and programs they choose.

It is not easy to embed sustainability content into marketing courses without credible resources. Participants said the lack of sustainability-focused teaching materials can cause immense difficulties in teaching design and delivery. This finding is consistent with past studies that cite inadequate resources as one challenge (Kemper et al., 2019a,b, 2020a, 2020b). In our study, participants did not know of a textbook that holistically integrates sustainability into marketing theories. In literature, instructors report using journal and press articles to compensate for this perceived resource gap (Brocato et al., 2022). Moreover, sustainability in business schools is often confined within the business discourse (Andersson and Öhman, 2016), thus limiting sustainability to a stand-alone topic or interpreting sustainability solely as a mechanism for increasing profit (Brocato et al., 2022).

Although participants might not be aware of them, publishers have introduced sustainability-related textbooks in the marketing discipline. Wiley published *Sustainability Marketing: A Global Perspective* by Belz and Peattie in 2011; Sage published *Sustainable Marketing: A Holistic Approach* by Peterson in 2021; Pearson published the e-textbook *Sustainable Marketing* by Emery in 2021; and Routledge published a case book on *Social and Sustainability Marketing* by Bhattacharyya et al., in 2021. There are also a growing number of online databases of case studies, news, and journal articles, which instructors can use as supplementary learning resources on sustainability in marketing, such as those from Ivey Publishing Canada, Harvard Business Publishing, and the Academy of Marketing Science and Macromarketing journals.

Despite the emergence of useful resources on sustainability marketing, we realize that most textbooks deal with the topic in general and not in specific areas of marketing. Achieving effective sustainability integration demands specialized expertise in macro-theories, which not all instructors possess. Thus, business schools must offer professional development opportunities at the meso level to equip instructors with the necessary skills to teach sustainability effectively—a point also emphasized by Kemper et al. (2020b). In our study, participants would like to be informed of sustainability resources that they might be able to use in teaching and would like networking opportunities, seminars and workshops on sustainability and sustainability integration. Moreover, they wanted to hear expert opinions in research and teaching workshops. The issue of instructors’ lack of sustainability expertise has been pointed out in prior research and some suggestions have been made to increase faculty confidence. For instance, Watson et al. (2022) suggested guest lectures and Samuel et al. (2022) proposed field trips as ways to access authentic sustainability content. Lozano et al. (2015) also suggested that instructors need support in developing appropriate assessment reflecting a robust sustainability focus in marketing courses.

Perhaps the most important finding of this study is the desire for leadership that could create a supportive sustainability culture in this business school, which is at the meso level. We note that participants did not feel that sustainability was positioned as an important value at their business school. While the selected university has implemented sustainability initiatives, instruction in marketing at the business school does not seem to be keeping the same pace. Instructors in this study believe an immersive culture is needed for sustainability to thrive. This resonates with work reporting the need for leadership to create a culture

for sustainability in marketing instruction (Barber et al., 2014).

Instructors are not always sustainability experts (Edwards et al., 2020) and may hold different definitions of sustainability (Owens and Legere, 2015). A sustainability culture that supports communities of practice where instructors can share ideas, exchange experiences, and learn by doing would help instructors to become change agents and they can benefit from a leader inspiring change (Wright and Horst, 2013). Sustainability can become an integral part of the culture at business schools through interdisciplinary collaboration, research, scholarship, and external engagement with community and industry (Barber et al., 2014; García-Feijoo et al., 2020).

6. Research implications and limitations

This study provides useful implications for marketing instructors, deans of business schools, professional associations, researchers and textbook authors. At the micro level, instructors can proactively propose and contribute to sustainability integration by communication with their deans about support required to close knowledge gaps. Time release may be required to provide space for professional development. With a solid knowledge of sustainability achieved from professional development activities, instructors will be able to embed sustainability content into marketing courses and overcome student skepticism so as to motivate students' critical thinking about sustainability in marketing.

At the meso level, deans of business schools can lead transformative changes to embed a sustainability culture embracing research, teaching and industry and community engagement. However, deans alone cannot transform the culture of business schools, since this will require a concerted effort across business disciplines and throughout all levels of the institution. A well communicated and well supported strategic plan to embed sustainability into teaching in business schools could nurture sustainability values among instructors and students, providing space for support and professional development. The more instructors are convinced that the business school values sustainability, the more likely they will be devoted to teaching sustainability. Conversely, adopting sustainability may be dependent on the commitment of individual instructors (at the micro level), who influence changes (at the meso level) in their institutions (Setó-Pamies and Papaiconomou, 2016).

In particular, to make sure that curricula align with sustainability, instructors should design and redesign marketing courses with sustainability integrated holistically. Sustainability values should be explicitly stated in course learning objectives. Additionally, learning outcomes in terms of sustainability competencies should be clearly defined to match the sustainability demands of society.

Professional associations for academics and practitioners, such as the American Marketing Association, Australia and New Zealand Marketing Academy, European Marketing Academy, and Canadian Marketing Academy, can promote sustainability in marketing education, and advance the science and ethical practice of marketing disciplines through academic and industry engagement. Researchers can collaborate on writing up scientific findings to consolidate the conceptualization of sustainability marketing, which can add meaningful explanations to theoretical concepts. Authors and publishers can write and publish relevant materials such as textbooks, casebooks, and assessments concerning sustainability in marketing. Especially useful would be cases on how businesses pioneer sustainability initiatives leading consumer demand and cases on how sustainable consumption trends impact marketing practices, providing opportunities to discuss sustainability marketing strategies. Such resources will benefit instructors in their sustainability integration efforts, making marketing education transformation more likely.

At the macro level, ministries of colleges and universities could issue directives relating to the implementation of UN's SDGs framework with sustainability targets in higher education in general and business education in particular. This is urgently needed as business schools produce business leaders who play important roles in working with other

stakeholders, such as governments, non-government organizations, communities, and customer groups towards a sustainable society. It is, however, unlikely to happen without greater citizen demand for sustainability across society.

The current research has some limitations. As a qualitative case study, it is limited to the marketing discipline at the research site and with a small sample, the findings cannot be generalized. Still, it is concerning to know that aspirations for integrating sustainability exceed the practice. This study did not include observing the teaching practice of research participants. Future research might use mixed methods including classroom observations to provide a more holistic picture. Finally, the current research only collected thoughts from marketing instructors. Their viewpoints may differ from other stakeholders, such as students, university staff, educational leaders and industry personnel. In particular, further research involving institutional management may help explain discrepancies between institutional sustainability policy and its implementation in a part of the business school. Moreover, studies investigating the macro level of sustainability in terms of how international and national policies and the macro environment affects consumerism and marketing could add perspectives to existing literature on sustainability in marketing education.

7. Conclusions

This research adds to the literature by providing a narration about marketing instructors' views of sustainability, their current practices and factors they believe affect their teaching within the context of a Canadian university. These marketing instructors do not incorporate much sustainability content but would like to include more. Supporting them could create a thriving culture of learning about teaching sustainability in marketing. This is desperately needed to transform marketing education, which is supposed to provide graduates with sustainability competencies to move consumerism and marketing practices towards sustainability (Bieser et al., 2022).

This research recommends framing professional development in a supportive culture that allows instructors to step out of their comfort zone to learn, understand and apply sustainability worldviews in business schools. It highlights the importance of a culture connecting members with access to useful resources, professional development based on a needs analysis, and communities of practice for the purpose of sustainability integration. Sustainability values must be clearly communicated and embedded in business schools to provide directions for sustainability integration at the course and program level and to gain faculty and students' understanding and support. Sustainability values should also be reflected in marketing course syllabi, especially in course learning objectives and outcomes relating to sustainability knowledge and competencies. While it might seem like much needs to be done, instructors' orientations to sustainability suggest that an explicit valuing of sustainability by the business school could lead to rapid progress.

CRediT authorship contribution statement

Anh Thu Nguyen: Writing – original draft, Software, Project administration, Methodology, Investigation, Formal analysis, Data curation, Conceptualization. **Paul Berger:** Writing – review & editing, Supervision, Methodology. **Ellen Field:** Writing – review & editing.

Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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Appendix A Supplementary data

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Data availability

The authors do not have permission to share data.

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