



SUSTAINABLE FASHION AND SOCIAL MEDIA: INDITEX'S STRATEGY TO JUSTIFY PREMIUM PRICES

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ABSTRACT

The present article conducts an analysis of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) communication within the fashion sector, with a particular focus on Inditex. The present study examines the relationship between sustainability, consumer perception and communication strategy, highlighting the role of social networks in the legitimisation of business practices. The present study employs an empirical approach, underpinned by surveys and content analysis of networks, to identify the deficiencies in the visibility and effectiveness of Inditex's sustainable message. The findings indicate that enhancing transparency and communication segmentation is required to strengthen consumer trust and their willingness to pay more for sustainable products.

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1. Introduction

Each of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the UN's 2030 Agenda has specific targets and indicators to measure their achievement. The objective of these initiatives is to incorporate economic, social and environmental dimensions into the global governance framework.

In the case of companies, achieving the SDGs necessitates effective communication. As Galán Cubillo (2024) explains: "Corporate communication facilitates awareness, education and commitment of society to the challenges posed for the achievement of the SDGs, promotes citizen participation, contributes to the accountability of the actors involved and fosters collaboration between stakeholders". In this particular context, there is a need to review corporate communication, in consideration of its fundamental role.

In the business world, the principles of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and sustainability will be fundamental components in the actions of the board of directors and in their performance. Consequently, the significance of effective communication has prompted a proposal to the United Nations to incorporate a new (SDG) into the existing list. This proposed addition, designated SDG 18-Responsible Communication, has been advocated by the Global Alliance for Public Relations and Communication Management, an international non-profit organisation (DIRCOM, 2024). This SDG-18 would encompass elements such as the promotion of freedom of opinion and press; ethical communication by organisations and institutions grounded in factual information; the endeavour to combat 'fake news' and various forms of propaganda; and the provision of support from both public and private spheres for rigorous journalism. Additionally, it would include the education of users in the effective utilisation of their communication tools, particularly through social networks or the employment of inclusive and positive language.

While the relationship between corporate communication and the achievement of the SDGs by companies is relevant for the management team, it is challenging to quantify the achievements in terms of their fulfilment. The subjectivity and lack of concreteness of the SDGs have been identified as factors that complicate the analysis of their results (Gasper et al., 2019; Sullivan et al., 2018). Consequently, the presentation of unmeasurable and unverifiable data and results can lead to practices known as greenwashing or SDG or CSR laundering (García-Ortega et al., 2023).

In order to facilitate the integration of the SDGs into corporate strategies, a range of international institutions are providing guidelines. The SDG Compass was created by the United Nations Global Compact, the Global Reporting Initiative and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (García-Sánchez et al., 2020). The document under consideration provides a guide that facilitates the formulation, implementation, measurement and communication of business strategies that promote the SDGs. For the purpose of these measurements, Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are established.

The European Union also promotes the adoption of responsible communication standards, as outlined in Directive (EU) 2024/825 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 February 2024, which amends Directives 2005/29/EC and 2011/83/EU. This directive aims to empower consumers to facilitate the green transition, through enhanced protection against unfair practices and improved information.

Conversely, the 2030 Agenda has been instrumental in prompting a shift in the prevailing CSR policy within the business sector. Participation, therefore, is not limited to contributing to social and environmental well-being through responsible behaviour but also implies the need to adopt good corporate governance (Ramírez Barredo & Guerrero González-Valerio, 2024).

In accordance with general guidelines, the fashion sector is also undergoing a transition towards sustainability. It is the second most polluting sector in the world, although it is showing certain changes, since, as opposed to the production model of fast fashion companies, there is an increasing number of slow fashion companies being created (García-Huguet, 2021). This approach entails the adoption of a subsequent production rhythm, characterised by the creation of garments that are produced in a sustainable manner and are composed of biodegradable materials. In this sector, CSR initiatives have been demonstrated to influence brand value, reputation and consumers' willingness to pay (Gálvez-Sánchez et al., 2024). In Spain, consumers are aware of the implications of sustainable fashion; however, these factors do not appear to play a key role in the final decision-making process. Nevertheless, a greater behavioural intention among consumers towards the social aspects of sustainability is observed (Blazquez et al., 2020). It is evident that consumers' influence over their behaviour and purchase

intention regarding sustainable products is contingent on the quantity and quality of the information and education they receive about sustainability in fashion.

In the context of CSR communication, organisations can utilise a variety of communication channels to ensure the accessibility of information to diverse stakeholders, given the significant impact of brand credibility. The advent of social media has given rise to a novel form of public interaction that is characterised by its horizontal nature. This medium is rapidly emerging as a significant tactic for engaging with younger demographics (Estanyol, 2020; Quiles-Soler et al., 2023).

In Spain, several fast fashion retailers have sustainability policies on their websites and clearly indicate how they are addressing the 21st century challenge. However, this has yet to be reflected in their communication practices (Blazquez et al., 2020), and they tend to communicate less about their CSR activities on social media platforms compared to slow fashion brands. This suggests that slow fashion companies are trend-setters in sustainability, while fast fashion companies adapt to "the trends".

Nevertheless, the mere presence of companies in social networks has been demonstrated to increase their legitimacy, as it has been shown to result in an improvement in their CSR policies (Monfort & Mas Iglesias, 2021). In light of the capacity of fast fashion companies to both educate and effect change among consumers (Cristófol Rodríguez et al., 2021), it is argued that these companies should utilise social media to raise awareness and educate customers about sustainability, rather than merely adapting to market "trends".

The present study explores Inditex's communication of its Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) compliance policy, a subject of particular relevance given the company's position as a global leader in the fast fashion industry. Inditex has incorporated sustainability and environmental protection initiatives into its CSR policies, primarily communicating them via its corporate website and infrequently through social media. This approach represents a significant opportunity missed to educate and raise consumer awareness on these issues (Quiles-Soler et al., 2023). Consequently, an analysis of the manner in which Inditex communicates its ESG commitments, and the presence of any inconsistencies in its CSR communication, could provide valuable insights into transparency and accountability practices in the fast fashion sector.

The present study is structured around two principal axes. A review of the literature on the communication of sustainability by companies in the fashion sector, with a particular focus on the Inditex Group, is proposed. This literature review highlights that the results of previous studies show a limited presence of fast fashion companies on various social networks. The work then proposes to carry out an analysis of the perception and knowledge that a group of consumers have about the communication of the Inditex Group on social networks. The second part of the study will entail an analysis of the content of social networks through social listening. The textile sector group Inditex has been selected as the primary fashion group at both the national and international levels. The study is based on data collected in Spain in January 2025.

The following hypotheses are proposed for analysis in order to facilitate the development of the work:

- Hypothesis 1: The positive perception of Inditex is improved by transparent communication of sustainable initiatives, such as Join Life.
- Hypothesis 2: Young consumers (Generation Z and Millennials) are more receptive to Inditex's sustainability narrative and more likely to accept premium prices.
- Hypothesis 3: Inditex's sustainable communication on social networks exerts a positive influence on consumer trust and willingness to pay more.
- Hypothesis 4: In the fashion sector, the social dimension of sustainability exerts the greatest influence on consumers.

The present study has the potential to enhance the extant body of knowledge in this field by offering an analysis of how fashion companies communicate their sustainable practices and the influence of these practices on consumer perception and behaviour. Moreover, the findings provide recommendations on how fashion companies can better leverage social media to promote their sustainability initiatives and enhance their corporate reputation.

The article is structured as follows: firstly, an introduction is given, followed by a review of the literature, which is organised in order to answer four questions that provide a framework for the study. This is then followed by an explanation of the methodology, the results and the final conclusions.

2. Literature Review

The successful implementation of CSR communication strategies is contingent upon alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs). As posited by Escamilla Solano et al. (2016), there are several reasons for companies to incorporate and disseminate CSR:

- The responsibility to produce positive results and sustainable impacts, in its social, environmental and corporate governance dimensions.
- An increased demand from citizens for the management of this entity to be more efficient and transparent.

The expanding role of sustainable fashion entails the innovation of business models and supply chains, thereby augmenting a company's commitment to the social, environmental, and economic pillars of sustainability (Thorisdottir & Johannsdottir, 2020). The present study analyses four questions, based on the aforementioned premises.

2.1. *Is Investing in Corporate Social Responsibility a Waste of Money?*

In the opinion of Escamilla Solano et al. (2016, p. 201), the investment in CSR does not constitute a futile expenditure if a long-term vision is maintained. Conversely, companies can acquire competencies and capabilities that engender competitive advantages, thereby enabling them to enhance their reputation, fortify their relationship with society or the community in which they operate, elevate the satisfaction of all stakeholders, boost employee motivation and consolidate the values of the company's corporate culture. Consequently, the investment in CSR exerts a dual impact: on society, as it significantly mitigates some of the adverse externalities engendered by economic activity, and on the organisation itself (Gálvez-Sánchez et al., 2024).

Specifically, in the fashion industry, CSR initiatives influence brand equity, reputation and consumer willingness to pay, raise awareness of the impacts of mass consumption, and maintain company reputation by expanding the supply of eco-friendly products and establishing conditions for worker safety and welfare (Thorisdottir & Johannsdottir, 2020). The transition towards a sustainable model in the textile industry is accompanied by a number of challenges but is nevertheless considered to be a necessary step towards a future that is more ethical and conscious. The active involvement of consumers is imperative to catalyse these transformations and promote more sustainable practices within the sector (Modaes & KPMG, 2022).

2.2. *How to Engage Consumers? What Role Does Corporate Communication Play?*

In Spain, consumers are aware of the implications of sustainable fashion (Blazquez et al., 2020), but these factors do not seem to play a central role in their final decision-making process. The more information and education consumers receive about sustainability in fashion, the greater the influence on their actual behaviour and intention to purchase sustainable products. Consequently, if stakeholders perceive an increase in the value of the company due to the disclosure of the CSR measures implemented, this effect will have been offset by an increase in profits and, consequently, the profitability of the company (Escamilla-Solano et al., 2019, p. 10).

According to Reverte's seminal article of 1995 on Spanish companies listed on the stock exchange, media exposure is the most significant variable in explaining variations in CSR ratings. However, discrepancies emerge in the most highly valued dimensions. Estanyol (2020) conducted a study of successful CSR communication strategies, analysing the objectives of the CSR campaigns that were awarded prizes. The study found that the most common objective of the winning campaigns was SDG 5 (which pursues gender equality and women's empowerment). Escamilla-Solano et al. (2019) conducted a study of 103 companies listed on the Spanish continuous market. Their analysis revealed that the disclosure of CSR measures in their social and economic dimensions enhances business profitability, although this effect was not observed in the environmental dimension. In this regard, studies conducted within the fashion industry have observed that consumers' valuation of CSR actions varies according to the dimension analysed, whether social, economic or environmental (Gálvez-Sánchez et al., 2024).

In this sector, consumers are demonstrating an increased inclination towards the social aspects of sustainability, with the notion of ethical fashion, which considers environmental and social implications, emerging as a prominent concern (Blazquez et al., 2020). Gálvez-Sánchez et al. (2024) posit that the social dimension is the only one with a positive and direct effect on consumers in terms of brand value creation, corporate reputation and willingness to pay. Conversely, the environmental dimension exerts an indirect influence through brand credibility, given that consumers, confronted with potential instances of greenwashing, are compelled to place their trust in the brand to acknowledge its environmentally responsible actions.

Despite the emergence of ethical fashion as a potential marketing target (Blazquez et al., 2020), organisations must demonstrate transparency and loyalty in fulfilling their social, economic and environmental commitments to achieve tangible and intangible rewards from consumers. In order to address these challenges, fashion retailers must clearly communicate their sustainability efforts and develop effective dissemination strategies to highlight their compliance with sustainable practices.

2.3. How do Fashion Companies Communicate their Sustainable Practices to Stakeholders?

There is not much point in taking responsible actions if they are not shared with stakeholders, who are the main stakeholders and those affected by them (García-Huguet, 2021). Thus, while non-financial reports are often a very useful tool for institutional investors (Ali et al., 2024), the use of less one-way channels, such as blogs and social media, reinforces the search for more direct interaction with stakeholders (Estanyol, 2020). These social networks have profoundly changed the landscape of communication and the development of CSR, making it more useful for stakeholders in general. According to Cristófol-Rodríguez et al. (2024), it is the largest companies with the most resources that tend to comply best with sustainability standards, as they can afford to hire specialist consultants. The sustainability reports of these large groups are seen as solid commitments. However, the authors stress the need to improve transparency and adoption of sustainable practices in order to increase their impact on corporate governance and stakeholder perceptions.

Influencer marketing has emerged as a significant strategy, particularly within the fashion and beauty sectors, demonstrating a robust positive correlation with consumer purchasing decisions (Marín et al., 2024). Collaboration with celebrities and the creation of video content designed for widespread dissemination on social media platforms represent some of the most prevalent tactics employed to engage with audiences, particularly younger demographics. The perceived attributes and characteristics of influencers, including credibility and experience, have been demonstrated to positively impact purchase intentions (Pereira et al., 2023). These findings underscore the evolving nature of the fashion industry, underscoring the significance of digital strategies and collaborations with influencers to reach consumers.

Analysing consumer concerns about the environmental impact of the fashion industry, their actions have led management to rethink their business strategy and consumption habits towards a more sustainable approach, committed to the three dimensions of CSR, as this could affect their good reputation. Although this sector is carrying out sustainable actions, as reported on their corporate websites, they do not communicate them consistently in their profiles. In the case of fast fashion companies, which have a significant environmental impact, they tend to communicate less about their CSR activities on social media platforms than slow fashion brands (Cristófol Rodríguez et al., 2021; García-Huguet, 2021). This discrepancy exists despite the fact that fast fashion companies report on sustainable actions on their corporate websites, showing a gap between their practices and public communication strategies (Alonso-Mosquera et al., 2024). The communication of sustainability by fast fashion companies does not have a global purpose (like that of slow fashion companies), but rather commercial objectives to adapt to market "trends" (Cristófol Rodríguez et al., 2021), to achieve positioning and image objectives, or simply to promote and sell products (Alonso-Mosquera et al., 2024).

In the context of influencer marketing, Castillo-Abdul et al.'s (2020) study of Spanish fashion YouTubers found no direct correlation between the promotion of sustainable clothing and video interaction metrics. The research also noted that influencers rarely explicitly mentioned brands' environmentally responsible practices in their content. In the case of Instagram posts from leading Spanish fast fashion brands, this discrepancy is confirmed, emphasising that the communication of

sustainability is not a priority at present (Alonso-Mosquera et al., 2024). Cristófol Rodríguez et al. (2021) conducted a comparative analysis of the communication of sustainable actions in Instagram posts between two fast fashion companies, Zara and H&M, and two slow fashion companies, Patagonia and Ecoalf. The study concluded that Zara utilises sustainability communication as a sales tool, with the objective of educating and raising awareness among consumers at an international level. In the context of Facebook, slow fashion companies, in contrast to fast fashion companies, have been observed to engage in consistent communication (García-Huguet, 2021).

As Martín López (2019) asserts, the findings concerning the incorporation of corporate sustainability in communication channels indicate that Zara and OVS disseminate information on the subject through their corporate websites, while Mango utilises its online shop as a medium for this purpose. As posited by Quiles-Soler et al. (2023), an analysis is conducted of the extent to which seven of Spain's largest fashion brands (including ZARA) communicate on their corporate websites, as opposed to social media platforms. The conclusion of this study is that said fashion labels could employ social media to a more beneficial effect in the informing and educating of customers in regard of environmental sustainability.

2.4. What is the Inditex Group's Strategy?

The Inditex Group, a Galicia-based business group, was listed on the Spanish stock exchange in May 2001. This was an important milestone for the company and one that deserved to be celebrated, as becoming a public company brought with it a new set of standards and regulations. The Clean Clothes Campaign (CCC) network, founded in the 1990s in response to the exploitation of textile workers, became a shareholder in the company. After the takeover, Inditex took steps to integrate a corporate social responsibility policy, adopting the so-called 'triple bottom line' of financial, social and environmental efficiency" (Marcuello Servos & Marcuello, 2007).

Inditex's sustainability practices and commitment to the SDGs can be linked to Niklas Luhmann's social systems theory (Luhmann, 1998; López Pérez, 2018), which focuses on communication as a constitutive element of social systems. Luhmann (1998) argues that social systems produce and maintain themselves through communication. In this context, Inditex, as an entity within the global economic system, has aligned its sustainability strategy with the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, reflecting the functional differentiation described by Luhmann, and uses communication to promote and manage its sustainability initiatives. The company is committed to transparency and collaboration with various stakeholders, including academics, environmental and social organisations and other partners, to advance its sustainability goals. As stated in its overview: "Inditex started with the ambition to make fashionable, quality clothes that improve people's lives, at the right price. Today, many of the social, economic and environmental challenges we all face are more pressing than ever".

In addition, the company has implemented a sustainability roadmap that includes ambitious goals such as reducing emissions, using sustainable raw materials, and improving water and energy efficiency. These efforts can be seen as a mechanism to reduce complexity and manage uncertainty and are reflected in the way Inditex communicates and manages its sustainability initiatives, aligning them with the SDGs and promoting a positive impact on society and the environment. A study of the company's environmental accounts from 2013 to 2018 shows the transition to a circular economy model as the company's response to environmental changes and shows different speeds of implementation in different dimensions of the circular economy, revealing areas of rapid progress and others that require more effort (Esbeih et al., 2021).

Inditex explicitly publishes the Sustainability Report (Inditex Sustainability Report), in which a series of intentions and objectives are communicated, such as that "the effects of climate change, human impact on the natural world and the scarcity of natural resources affect us all" and that "the textile group believes that fashion is universal and must be a positive force, and that is why it will do all it can to transform our industry".

Within the Inditex group, each company seeks to operate with a focus on sustainability, from product design to store management, using specialised codes to process information and make decisions that support the SDGs. In the general conclusions drawn by Pérez Santos and Pérez Hernansanz (2022) from the fieldwork, they show that there are certain differences between the brands belonging to the group, which do not coincide in the information provided, so that those with a younger target group are the most active within the social network studied.

Previous studies have shown the growing importance of CSR in corporate reputation management and the need for transparent and committed sustainability practices with stakeholders in the fashion industry, and actions such as Inditex's donation during the COVID-19 pandemic improved its corporate reputation with stakeholders (Galan-Ladero & Sánchez-Hernández, 2022). Although sustainability is a strategic priority for the Inditex group, this is not reflected in its investment in resources and communication tools to connect and communicate with consumers (Regadera González, 2023). Recent research examines how Inditex integrates sustainability into its corporate social responsibility (CSR) policy and finds a discrepancy between corporate sustainability reports and stakeholder opinions expressed on social media (Barbeito-Caamaño & Chalmeta, 2020). There is also a significant gap between the company's sustainability actions and consumers' perception and knowledge of them (Ramírez Barredo & Guerrero González-Valerio, 2024), who receive highly biased information, mainly through social media and points of sale, rather than annual reports.

Studies of Inditex brands such as Zara note that Zara, in line with the group, is moving towards more socially and environmentally responsible practices, and research suggests that communicating these initiatives has a positive impact on consumers' purchase intentions (Baena, 2024). A case study of Zara's Join Life collection in stores in Barcelona revealed inconsistencies in the communication of sustainability across different channels, so that Inditex's efforts in its sustainability strategy do not translate into increased consumer interest, awareness and knowledge of sustainability (Regadera González, 2023).

It is noted that the sustainable actions most communicated by Inditex are environmental (Ramírez Barredo & Guerrero González-Valerio, 2024). However, the social dimension of sustainability is the one that generates the highest number of tweets among the company's stakeholders (Barbeito-Caamaño & Chalmeta, 2020).

3. Methodology

As this is an exploratory study, the analysis is based on descriptive statistics, i.e. comparisons of basic means. In order to complete the study, a cross-sectional analysis will be carried out using the SPSS programme on the variables that can confirm the hypotheses set out at the beginning.

3.1. Study Design

This study is based on a quantitative approach using surveys as the main data collection tool. A total of 232 surveys were carried out with participants selected using stratified random sampling to ensure equal representation.

The survey was accompanied by social listening, a tool that allows us to monitor what people are saying about a brand in different online spaces, from social networks to blogs, news portals and customer service channels. Using this tool to measure the public perception of Inditex's sustainable initiatives, which have a significant global presence and a notable impact on the fashion industry, made it possible to find out how consumers perceive the sustainability efforts made by the group, as well as how well these actions are received and whether there are areas for improvement. Finally, the data collected has made it possible to identify criticisms, misunderstandings or negative comments about Inditex's sustainability practices.

3.2. Population and Sample

The target population of the study includes males and females between 15 and 75 years of age. The final sample consisted of 232 people, of whom 44.4% were male, 51% were female, and the remainder opted not to disclose their gender. With respect to age distribution, 69% of the sample were between 15 and 25 years old, 9.9% were between 26 and 40 years old, and 21.1% were over 41 years old. It is asserted that the requisite diversity in terms of gender and age was successfully ensured.

3.3. Data Collection Instrument

The instrument employed for the collection of data was a structured questionnaire (created with Google Form), which was specifically designed to cover the objectives of the study. The data collection process was conducted in January 2025. The questionnaire comprised 21 closed and semi-open questions, encompassing subjects such as the sustainability of the Inditex group, the perception of the group's communication on sustainability, and the knowledge of the different initiatives.

Surveys were administered online, primarily via email and WhatsApp, depending on the availability of the participants. The study was conducted in accordance with the established ethical requirements for research involving human subjects. The participants were informed of the purpose of the study in a concise manner, and they were assured that their involvement was entirely voluntary, anonymous, and intended for academic purposes only. The collected data were then subjected to coding and analysis to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the results.

In order to execute the process of social listening, the primary social networks were subjected to analysis and monitoring. The following social media platforms should be considered: TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube and forums.

4. Analysis and Results

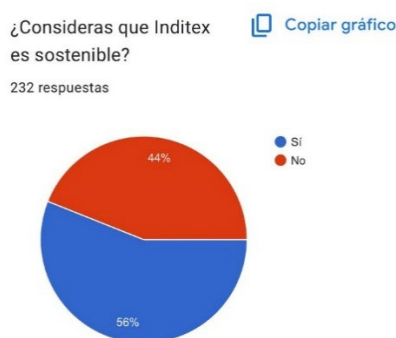
4.1. Analysis of the survey results

The following results were obtained from the survey.

With respect to the demographic profile of the sample, the majority of respondents (69%) fall within the 15-25 age bracket, 10% are between 26 and 40 years old, and 21% are older than 41. This finding is indicative of a significant proportion of the younger demographic, who are likely to be frequent users of social media and have elevated expectations with regard to corporate sustainability. This data is pivotal for the development of targeted communication strategies for this demographic. With respect to gender, the data indicates that 51% of the subjects are female and 45% are male. The subsequent discourse shall entail an analysis of the items that were raised in the survey.

The general perception of sustainability at Inditex: Question 1 (see Figure 1) demonstrates that a considerable proportion of respondents consider Inditex to be a sustainable company (56%). This finding suggests the presence of a significant group that continues to exhibit reservations regarding its dedication in this domain. The potential influence on this division of a paucity of detailed information, or of perceptions of greenwashing in the textile industry, is a matter for consideration.

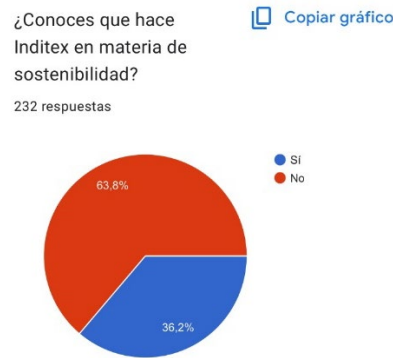
Figure 1. Question 1



Source: Own elaboration, 2025

Level of knowledge concerning Inditex's sustainable initiatives: The majority of participants (64%) claim to be unaware of the specific actions Inditex undertakes in the area of sustainability, compared to 36% who are informed (Figure 2). This observation underscores the necessity for enhanced transparency and effective communication by the company to disseminate information regarding its endeavours in this domain.

Figure 2. Question 2



Source: Own elaboration, 2025

Sustainability highlights: When respondents are invited to provide an open response regarding the most prominent aspect of companies' sustainability communication, issues such as the environment, recycling, circular fashion and sustainable fashion are frequently cited. However, the responses are extremely varied and scattered, showing a lack of clear focus in the public's perception of which area Inditex prioritises (Figure 3).

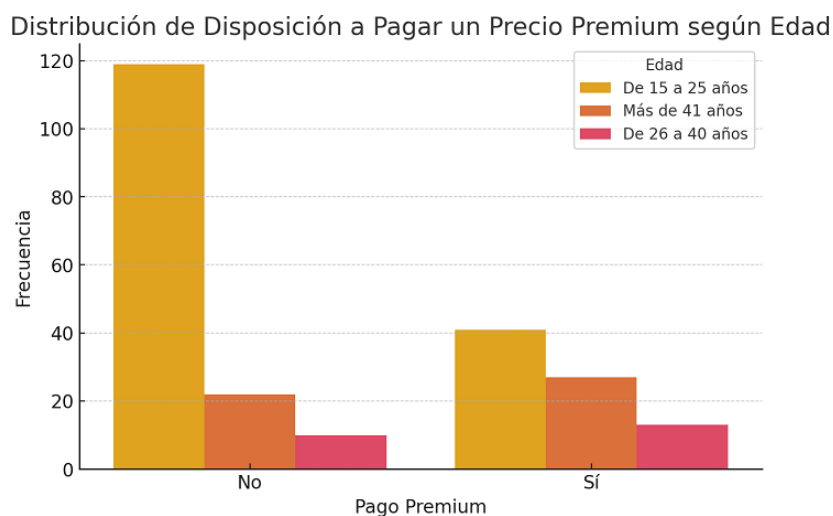
Figure 3. Word cloud of responses to question 3: What aspect do you think companies emphasise most when they talk about sustainability?



Source: Own elaboration, 2025

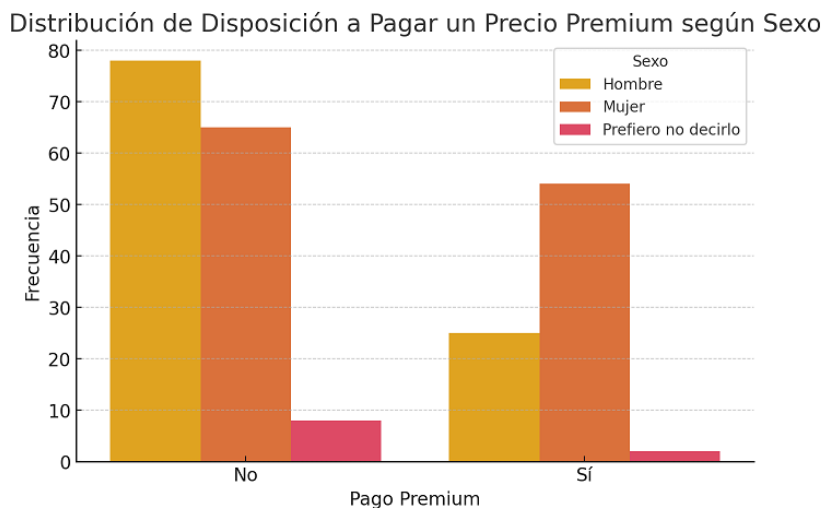
Willingness to pay a premium price for sustainable products: Over half of respondents (65%) expressed a reluctance to pay a premium price for sustainable textile products, while a comparatively smaller proportion (35%) expressed a willingness to do so. This finding indicates that, despite the recognised importance of sustainability, cost remains a pivotal factor in the decision-making process when purchasing.

This analysis can be conducted by comparing willingness to pay more by age range and gender (see Figures 4 and 5).

Figure 4. Relationship between the variables age and willingness to pay a premium

Source: Own elaboration, 2025

It has been observed that the younger age group is much less willing to pay a premium price. The relationship is statistically representative, as evidenced by a Chi-square value of 19.59 and a p-value of 0.000056, which is less than 0.05. The findings of this study indicate a statistically significant relationship between age and the willingness to pay a premium price for sustainable products.

Figure 5. Relationship between the variables sex and willingness to pay a premium.

Source: Own elaboration, 2025

It has been observed that men are less willing to pay a premium. The statistical significance of this relationship is indicated by the result of the Chi-squared test, which yielded a value of 11.85 and a p-value of 0.0027 (less than 0.05). This finding suggests that there are substantial differences between men and women in terms of their propensity to allocate a greater proportion of their income to sustainability.

Information sources on Inditex initiatives: Social networks were identified as the primary source of information for the majority of participants (52%), followed by conventional media (35%) and the company's official website (31.5%) (Figure 6). However, a significant proportion of respondents selected "other" media, which could indicate a necessity to diversify and optimise communication channels.

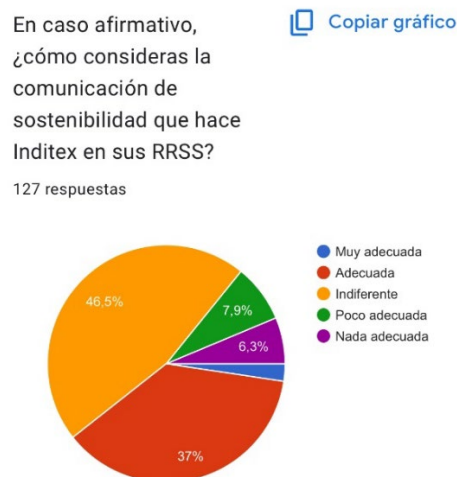
Figure 6. Question 5



Source: Own elaboration, 2025

Acknowledgement of sustainability communication on social networks: 75% of respondents do not recall having seen Inditex's sustainability communications on its social networks, compared to 25% who do. This finding suggests an issue with the visibility or impact of the communication strategies employed on these channels. This question is then followed by another question, which poses a query to those who have previously encountered these communications, soliciting their opinions on the quality of the communication. Five potential responses were provided, with 47% of respondents indicating a state of "indifference" and 37% classifying their level of satisfaction as "adequate". A minority of respondents allocated a rating of "not very adequate" or "very adequate" (Figure 7). This finding suggests the presence of scope for enhancement with regard to both content and form.

Figure 7. Question 7

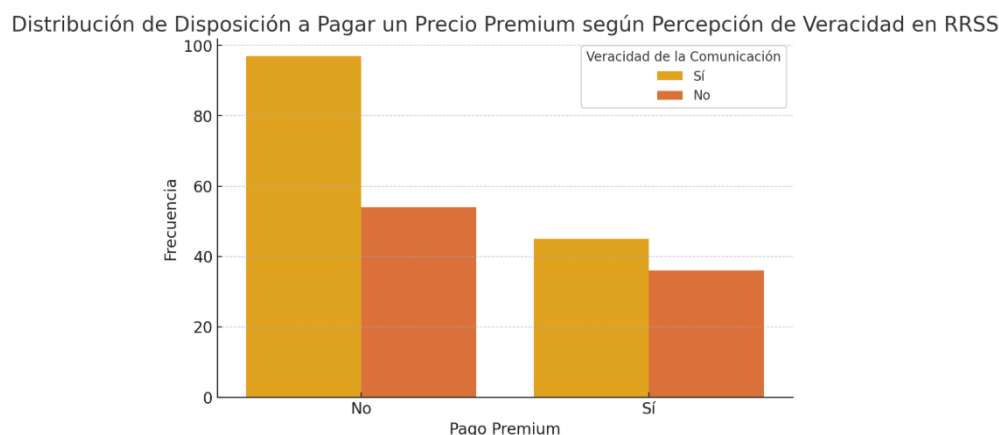


Source: Own elaboration, 2025

Credibility of sustainable content on social networks: The majority of participants (61.2%) expressed the opinion that the sustainable content published by Inditex on social networks is truthful. This underscores the significance of enhancing transparency and authenticity in communication.

The following investigation will examine the relationship between the variable of trust in content published on social networks and the willingness to pay a premium price. Figure 8 demonstrates a superior relationship between those willing to pay more and those who have confidence in the messages.

Figure 8. Relationship between the variables willingness to pay a premium and perceived truthfulness on social media

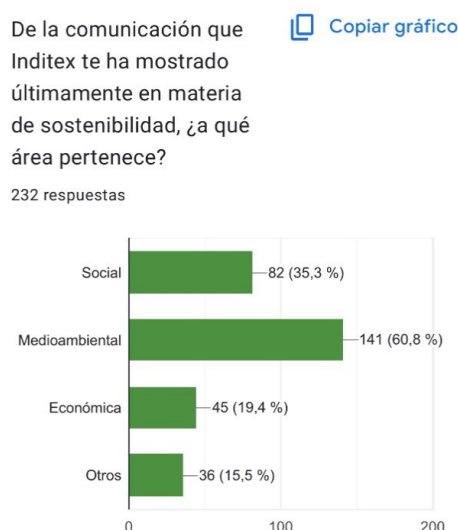


Source: Own elaboration, 2025

The absence of statistical evidence for this relationship is indicated by the result of the chi-squared test, which yielded a value of 1.33 and a p-value of 0.2491 (greater than 0.05).

Recognised areas of sustainable communication: The most prevalent responses identified environmental initiatives (61%), followed by social and economic factors, as illustrated in Figure 9. However, a considerable proportion of respondents selected "other" areas, which could be indicative of either confusion or a lack of familiarity with the company's sustainability approach.

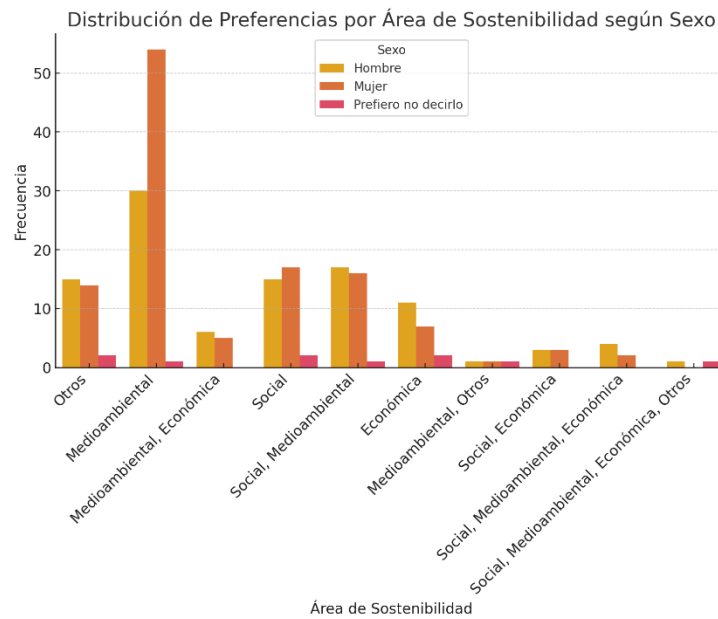
Figure 9. Question 9



Source: Own elaboration, 2025

This variable has been associated with the demographic characteristics of the respondents, specifically their sex and age. To this end, the chi-squared test and a contingency table are utilised to observe the distribution of preferences (see Figures 10 and 11).

Figure 10. Relationship between the variables gender and perception of sustainability



Source: Own elaboration, 2025

The present study has identified a statistically significant relationship between gender and the perception of which area of sustainability Inditex prioritises. This finding is supported by a chi-squared value of 29.70 and a p-value of 0.0404 (less than 0.05). This finding suggests the presence of a gender disparity in the perception of Inditex's prioritisation of environmental, social, or economic concerns. For the company, this may imply that its communication strategy does not impact both genders in the same way, which may require adjustments in the way its sustainable initiatives are presented.

However, it is observed that in all age groups the environmental variable is the most prevalent, with no significant differences between them.

Awareness of specific initiatives: The survey results indicate a relatively low level of awareness regarding specific initiatives such as "Join E-Receipt", which is known by only 11.2% of the respondents, "clothing donation in Inditex shops" (40%), "Zara Pre-Owned" (34%), the garment repair service (39%), the opportunity to sell used garments through the platform (37%), the "Join Life" programme (6.5%), and the "Sustainability Innovation Hub" project (4%). Furthermore, it is noteworthy that a mere 42% of respondents expressed awareness of Inditex's collaborative endeavours with prominent organisations such as Caritas, the Red Cross, and Médicos Mundi.

4.2. Inditex Social Listening Analysis

A thorough investigation has been conducted into the sentiments expressed in comments pertaining to the company and sustainability across a range of social media platforms, video-sharing sites, and discussion forums. The results obtained in the different media are presented below.

4.2.1. Inditex on YouTube

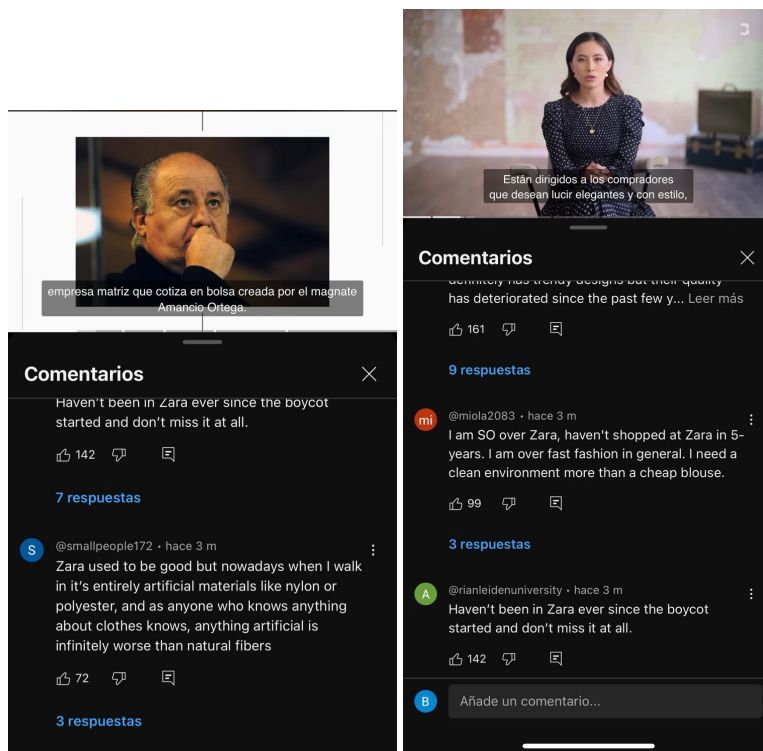
A perusal of the content on YouTube reveals the paucity of comments and videos from Inditex's own channels. However, it is evident that there are some videos that discuss the history and evolution of what Zara is today.

A broad spectrum of comments has been proffered; however, those of a negative nature are the most prevalent, as they principally allude to social and economic levels. The following aspects can be highlighted:

- The garments are not manufactured in Spain, and as a consequence of this fact, a proportion of consumers do not consider the group to be a Spanish company.

- Regarding their shopping preferences, it is asserted that there has been a hiatus in Zara shopping for some time, and that this decision is not a subject of regret. It is noteworthy that certain comments are influenced by the quality and type of materials utilised in Zara's garments.

Image 1. Example of Inditex on Youtube



4.2.2. Inditex on Instagram

It appears that the commentary suggests an absence of social engagement.

- People experience financial losses, and it is evident that their claimed commitment to environmental issues is not a component of their practices.
- There is a lack of interest and processes in terms of social and environmental commitment, as well as economic commitment.
- Fatal waste of time from an individual who believes in Zara's policies and campaigns.

Image 2. Example of Inditex on Instagram



4.2.3. Inditex on TikTok

In general, people who talk about Inditex like it because of the price, but they also complain about fast fashion and the pollution it causes.

- There are complaints about being charged for bags at the end of the purchase, as they are paying for a bag with the brand name and advertising on it.
- There are comments about the exploitation of labour in manufacturing and how this does not contribute to a better society, regardless of what is behind it and the long-term consequences for the planet.
- There are comments about animal abuse because Inditex continues to use animals for its clothes.
- Inditex does have sustainable options, but most people are not even aware of them. The best known is second-hand "Zara".

Image 3. Examples of Inditex in Tik Tok



4.2.4. Inditex on Facebook

A paucity of information regarding the sustainability of Inditex brands is observable on Facebook. The majority of comments pertain to complaints about online shopping, delivery, refunds and poor service in stores.

- There are a few comments on Facebook that address the Zara brand, particularly in relation to social issues such as the exploitation of workers and the substandard working conditions that these workers are subjected to. A significant proportion of these comments appear to be from Asian children and teenagers, and these issues are directly related to the quality of the clothing of the entire Inditex group.
- Opinions on the matter are divided, with some critics denouncing the company and its CEO for their alleged evasion of taxes and exploitation of workers, while others have underscored the social commitment of Amancio Ortega and the Inditex group, citing their contributions to initiatives such as DANA in Valencia and investments in senior care homes.

Image 4. Examples of Inditex on Facebook

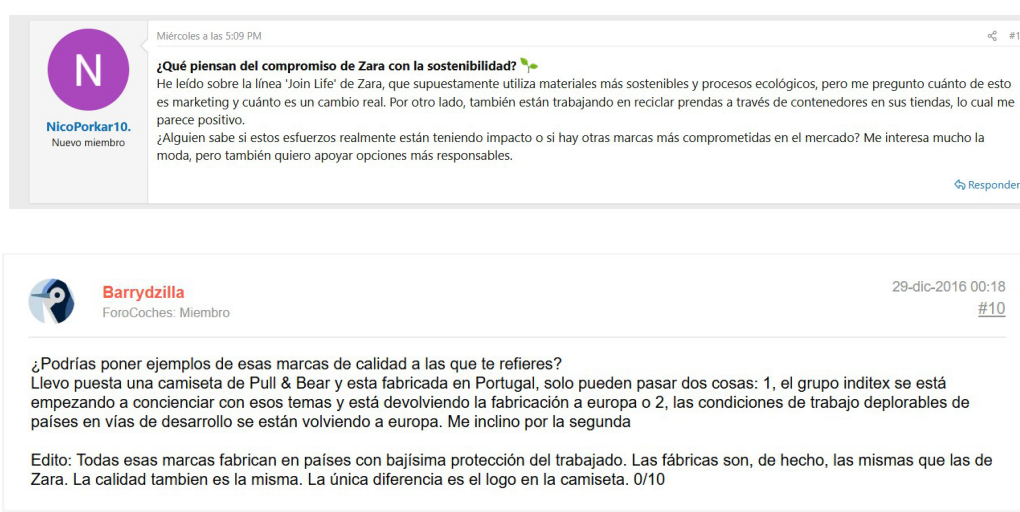


4.2.5. Inditex in the Forums:

Inditex on the forums:

- People are discussing Zara's commitment to environmental issues and questioning the authenticity of this commitment.
- It has been posited that the quality of the garments is deteriorating, and it is possible to engage in a dialogue with the store staff regarding this issue and obtain a reimbursement. This suggests that the company's practices, including its garment turnover and its commitment to sustainability, are questionable.
- The majority of the commentary on these forums is of a negative nature, with some contributors even claiming to have switched to purchasing products from competing companies.
- The absence of commentary on environmental or social awareness, in addition to a paucity of references to the company's working conditions or wages, is particularly noteworthy.

Image 5. Examples of Inditex in Forums



5. Conclusions and Recommendations

In consideration of the hypotheses outlined in the initial section, the following conclusions can be drawn:

Hypothesis 1: The transparent communication of sustainable initiatives, such as Join Life, will positively impact the perception of Inditex. The awareness of initiatives such as Join Life is minimal, with only 15 people expressing recognition of the scheme. While the enhancement of perception is predicated on enhanced transparency, the current paucity of visibility surrounding initiatives such as Join Life serves to limit the impact thereof.

The survey results indicate that, despite Inditex's notable recognition as a sustainable company, challenges persist in the communication and visibility of its initiatives, particularly on social networks. One of the main concerns is the high number of people who are unaware of the company's sustainable actions and who do not remember having seen communications of this type on its social networks. The level of awareness regarding specific programmes, such as Join Life or the Sustainability Innovation Hub, is also very low. Furthermore, there is a lack of recognition of services, including garment repair and the resale platform.

Consequently, Inditex must recalibrate its sustainability strategy, placing greater emphasis on effective communication, enhancing the perception of value, and achieving distinctiveness in the market. It is recommended that Inditex strengthen its communication of its sustainability programmes.

Hypothesis 2: The sustainability narrative of Inditex is met with a greater degree of receptiveness amongst younger consumers (Generation Z and Millennials), who are more inclined to accept premium prices. Evidence suggests that younger participants are more open to new ideas, yet less willing to pay elevated prices for them.

As a recommendation, it could be indicated that Inditex needs to launch a more robust sustainability narrative and thus accept premium prices for all age groups.

It is recommended that the current segmentation of sustainability communication be improved. It is important to note that consumers do not all perceive sustainability in the same way. It is imperative to adapt communication to suit diverse audiences.

For young people (Gen Z and Millennials): The utilisation of social media platforms such as TikTok and Instagram is recommended for the purpose of showcasing sustainability as an aspirational lifestyle.

For adults (40+): Emphasise the superior quality, durability and exclusivity of sustainable products. It is imperative that interactive web-based tools are integrated for consumers to calculate their positive impact of sustainable purchasing.

Hypothesis 3: Inditex's sustainable communication on social media does not appear to influence consumer trust and willingness to pay more, as evidenced by the available data. This finding suggests that other factors, such as the perception of the real value of the product, the quality or the differentiation of Inditex compared to other sustainable brands, could be more influential in the willingness to pay a premium price.

The data demonstrate that perceived truthfulness in sustainability communication on social media does not directly correlate with willingness to pay a premium price. This suggests that while consumers may have confidence in Inditex's sustainability communications, this does not automatically translate into a higher propensity to pay more for its sustainable products.

In order to enhance the efficacy of its sustainability strategy and translate positive perceptions into purchase intent, Inditex may wish to consider the following recommendations:

- Reinforcing the tangible value of sustainability beyond the discourse in networks is imperative. While consumers may hold Inditex's sustainability credentials in high regard, this does not invariably translate into increased willingness to pay more for its products. It is imperative to demonstrate the tangible benefits of sustainability, rather than merely conveying its principles. It is imperative that they provide concrete data to demonstrate how sustainable products result in tangible benefits, such as enhanced durability, superior quality and reduced environmental impact. It is recommended that visible in-store and online labels or certification seals be included in order to reinforce the differentiation of sustainable products.
- Better connection of sustainability with consumers' emotional values is required. It is evident that sustainable communication on social media is insufficient to persuade consumers to incur additional costs. It is imperative that sustainability is associated with aspirational and emotional values. It is imperative that campaigns are created which relate sustainability to concepts of exclusivity, fashion, wellbeing and social impact. Furthermore, it is recommended that they present case studies of actual consumers opting for sustainable fashion and the subsequent environmental and societal impacts thereof. It is imperative that the initiative incorporates brand ambassadors who are in alignment with sustainability principles, with the objective of eliciting social influence.
- The incentivisation of premium payment should be accompanied by the provision of additional benefits. However, it is important to note that only a small percentage of consumers are willing to pay more for sustainability. In order to justify the premium price, incentives such as exclusive discount programmes or bonuses for those who purchase sustainable products and offer additional services such as extended warranties, free repairs or access to limited collections should be offered.

Hypothesis 4: In the fashion sector, the social dimension of sustainability exerts the greatest influence on consumers. It has been demonstrated that, in response to enquiries regarding the sustainable information to which they are exposed via networks, respondents prioritise environmental concerns over social issues. However, an analysis of social listening data reveals the presence of a social dimension. There is an increasing awareness among consumers regarding the social implications of fashion brands, encompassing issues such as working conditions, gender equality, and respect for human rights within the supply chain. The perception of a brand as socially responsible has been shown to exert a significant influence on consumers' purchasing decisions, suggesting that initiatives in this area can translate into competitive advantage.

It should be acknowledged that brands that demonstrate a genuine commitment to social sustainability can engender greater loyalty among consumers. This can result in higher levels of repeat purchases and brand recommendation (Jones, 2020, p. 45). In order to achieve the aforementioned objective, the following recommendation is put forward:

- **Strengthening Social Responsibility:** It is recommended that Inditex continue and expand its efforts in social responsibility, ensuring fair and safe working conditions throughout its supply chain. This encompasses regular audits and the implementation of continuous improvement programmes.
- **Transparent Communication:** It is imperative that Inditex articulates its social sustainability policies and practices in a lucid and accessible manner. This may encompass annual reports, marketing campaigns, and the utilisation of labels on products that report on social impact.
- **Consumer Engagement:** The creation of platforms through which consumers can engage in social sustainability initiatives, such as recycling programmes or donations, has been demonstrated to increase customer engagement and their connection to the brand.

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