The Impact of Account-Based Marketing Approach in Shaping Impactful Narratives on Sustainability and Resilience

Esli Spahiu*, Behzad Maleki Vishkaei†, Alberto Grando‡

Summary: 1. Introduction – 2. Theoretical background - 3. Methodology - 4. Results and discussion - 4.1 Gender and the effectiveness of ABM - 4.2 Years of experience and the effectiveness of ABM - 4.3 Management role and the effectiveness of ABM - 4.4 Involvement in a resilience-based project and the effectiveness of ABM - 5. Conclusions - 5.1 Theoretical implications - 5.2 Managerial implications - 5.3 Limitations and future research - References.

Abstract

This paper aims to assess the effectiveness of the impact of the Account-Based Marketing (ABM) approach in enhancing stakeholder engagement and communication for sustainability and resilience initiatives in the domain of Operations and Supply Chain Management. We employ exploratory research in assessing the following five key factors: benchmarking, innovation, knowledge sharing, network collaboration, and strategic planning. Our analysis indicates that the ABM approach is a valuable tool that efficiently communicates a core company's main programs with stakeholders by providing benchmarking and knowledge-sharing opportunities. Moreover, ABM enhances innovation capabilities, regardless of the experience level of the target audiences. Additionally, ABM fosters cooperation among the partners in a value chain and helps stakeholders gain a better understanding of the business network's sustainability and resilience goals, enabling them to align their strategic plans accordingly. Furthermore, sustainability managers found ABM valuable for increasing network collaboration, a crucial factor in successfully implementing sustainability initiatives.

Keywords: account-based marketing (ABM), sustainability, resilience, self-perception, operations and supply chain management (OSCM)

* **Esli Spahiu**, Ricercatrice di Operations & Supply Chain Management presso il Dipartimento di Management and Technology, Università Bocconi, e-mail: esli.spahiu@unibocconi.it
† **Behzad Maleki Vishkaei**, Ricercatore (RTDA) di Operations & Supply Chain Management presso il Dipartimento di Management and Technology, Università Bocconi, e-mail: behzad.maleki@unibocconi.it
‡ **Alberto Grando**, Professore di Economia e Gestione delle Imprese presso il Dipartimento di Management and Technology, Università Bocconi, e-mail: alberto.grando@sdabocconi.it

Esli Spahiu, Behzad Maleki Vishkaei, Alberto Grando
The Impact of Account-Based Marketing Approach in Shaping Impactful Narratives on Sustainability and Resilience
Impresa Progetto - Electronic Journal of Management, n. 1, 2025

_____

1. Introduction

In light of complex issues pertaining to social and environmental challenges, communicating sustainability and resilience effectively along the value chain demands careful consideration and a thoughtful approach. In this context, it is important to move beyond tailoring a good narrative. Effective communication should consist of finding the right messaging tools that can resonate with different stakeholders and ultimately drive meaningful change (Genç, 2017). In this context, stakeholder engagement is vital for advancing sustainable development (Redman, 2014; Baldassare & Campo, 2015). Successfully communicating projects and initiatives regarding sustainability and resilience between the core companies and their stakeholders not only promotes knowledge sharing (Evangelista & Durst, 2015) but can also aid in building a stronger collaborative network to achieve sustainability goals (Chen *et al.*, 2017). In the sustainability discourse benchmarking plays an equally important role as it enables organizations to assess their performance and refine their sustainability efforts (Hong *et al.*, 2012; Deng, 2015). Moreover, today's pressing environmental and social challenges call for bold innovation (Kuzma *et al.*, 2020) and strategic planning (Wu *et al.*, 2020) in embedding sustainability into long-term organizational goals.

Therefore, given the need for crafting a narrative with a more strategic focus, this paper seeks to examine the effectiveness of new strategic approaches such as the Account-Based Marketing (ABM) in enhancing stakeholder engagement and communication with regard to initiatives pertaining to sustainability and resilience in the domain of Operation and Supply Chain Management (OSCM). As sustainability and resilience are increasingly integral to OSCM (Beske & Seuring, 2014; Petit *et al.*, 2019), this field provides a virtuous domain for implementing and investigating related practices.

ABM is considered one of the best-performing marketing strategies in terms of ROI and for driving long-term profitable growth (Burgess & Shercliff, 2022). Accordingly, many renowned organizations, such as Microsoft and Fujitsu, have already implemented this method and positively reported upon it (Lyndon, 2022). ABM enhances traditional marketing techniques by focusing on tailored and targeted actions on specific accounts by collectively engaging marketing and sales activities. It is considered to be a client-centric method as all accounts are considered individual markets, allowing for highly specialized engagement while marketing in a B2B ecosystem. ABM has been proven to offer a range of benefits, such as increasing revenues, improving engagement rates, and enhancing brand reputation (Burgess & Munn, 2021). Moreover, the target approach can help forge sustainable relationships and cultivate long-lasting advantages for highly valued accounts (Burgess & Shercliff, 2022). Consequently, this study is guided by the following research questions:

1. How effective is the ABM approach in enhancing stakeholder engagement and communication for sustainability and resilience initiatives?
2. To what extent does ABM enhance sustainability and resilience communication by supporting benchmarking, fostering innovation,

Esli Spahiu, Behzad Maleki Vishkaei, Alberto Grando
The Impact of Account-Based Marketing Approach in Shaping Impactful Narratives on Sustainability and Resilience
Impresa Progetto - Electronic Journal of Management, n. 1, 2025

_____

facilitating knowledge sharing, strengthening network collaboration, and enabling strategic planning?
3. How do gender, years of experience, and management roles influence the effectiveness of the ABM approach in communicating sustainability and resilience initiatives?

The key factors were selected for their significance in literature as critical drivers of meaningful change with regard to sustainability and resilience (Deng, 2015; Evangelista & Durst, 2015; León-Bravo *et al.*, 2017; Maier *et al.*, 2020; Kuzma *et al.*, 2020; Wu *et al.*, 2020).

For the purpose of our research, we conducted an exploratory case investigation within a value chain to examine the potential of the ABM as an innovative option for shaping an impactful narrative on sustainability and resilience. The investigation involved one core company and its five main stakeholders in OSCM and spanned over four months, during which time we examined the five key factors. Self-perception (Higgins, 1987) plays a crucial role in our study as evaluating the effectiveness of the communication efforts was assessed based on the prioritization of sustainability and resilience initiatives from a managerial point of view. Accordingly, the results from this research also highlight how ABM can enhance managers' self-perceptions of their capabilities in driving sustainability and resilience initiatives. Ultimately, the managers who perceive sustainability and resilience as strategic priorities are more likely to implement structured engagement approaches, making ABM an ideal framework for aligning targeted communication strategies with organizational goals and needs.

The findings from this study offer valuable insights into understanding the role of new techniques in communicating sustainability and resilience initiatives to stakeholders. From an organizational perspective, it allows managers working on sustainability to have a better understanding of alternative communication strategies capable of offering more optimized outreach. They can find value in understanding the role of ABM and how it can be associated with their current efforts. In addition, this paper raises awareness for policymakers working on sustainability and resilience to enhance their communication initiatives through new engagement strategies.

This paper is structured as follows: Section 2 provides the theoretical background, grounded in the relevant literature. Section 3 outlines in detail the methodology, and Section 4 showcases the main findings. Finally, section 5 presents the implications and concluding remarks, respectively.

2. Theoretical background

Sustainability has become a critical factor in establishing and strengthening stakeholder relations (Baldassare & Campo, 2015). Similarly, stakeholders play a pivotal role in ensuring sustainable development (Massaroni *et al.* 2015). Additionally, since resilience is a fundamental aspect of sustainability, focusing on this topic has become critical for stakeholder engagement in identifying risks and

Esli Spahiu, Behzad Maleki Vishkaei, Alberto Grando
The Impact of Account-Based Marketing Approach in Shaping Impactful Narratives on Sustainability and Resilience
Impresa Progetto - Electronic Journal of Management, n. 1, 2025

_____

opportunities and collaborating on strategies to recover in the face of disruptions (Redman, 2014). Moreover, stakeholder involvement in sustainability and resilience programs has become increasingly vital. This shift is fueled by the escalating challenges associated with sustainability (Santoro *et al.*, 2020; Huang *et al.*, 2020; Vishkaei & De Giovanni, 2024a). As a result, companies are investing more in collaborative programs to expand sustainability and resilience initiatives across the entire value chain (Negri *et al.*, 2021). Studies show that stakeholder engagement has a positive impact on sustainability and corporate performance due to increasing accountability and transparency, advancing sustainability reporting, and adopting new regulations (Caputo *et al.*, 2021; Sideri, 2021). Stakeholder engagement can significantly enhance the disclosure of firm-level sustainable development goals (Bose *et al.*, 2024). To foster and advance sustainable business practices, companies must prioritize continuous stakeholder engagement as a critical element of both their short-term and long-term strategies (Vollero, 2013; De Chiara, 2015). Additionally, expanding the scope of engagement improves the responsiveness of sustainability reporting and enhances accountability (Fusco *et al.*, 2024).

Furthermore, studies show that stakeholder engagement strengthens organizational resilience during both economic and non-economic disruptions by facilitating better access to financial and non-financial resources within the firm's value chain (Vishkaei & De Giovanni, 2024b). Engagement helps protect stakeholders during crises by facilitating long-term organizational resilience and is a key factor in addressing their non-economic value requirements (Billiet *et al.*, 2023). For instance, stakeholder engagement in vaccine supply chains during the COVID-19 enhanced resilience against disruptions (Kazancoglu *et al.*, 2022). However, obstacles to improving corporate environmental performance continue to exist despite the benefits associated with stakeholder engagement (Arco-Castro *et al.*, 2024).

Effective stakeholder engagement requires a series of systematic steps, including identifying key stakeholders, understanding their interests and concerns, establishing effective communication channels, and continuously reinforcing collaborative relationships (O'Riordan and Fairbrass, 2014). In their circular framework for engaging stakeholders on sustainability Bal *et al.* (2013) propose six key stages: identifying key stakeholders, engaging stakeholders, prioritizing stakeholders, managing relationships, measuring performance, and putting targets into action. In this vein, communication plays a vital role in exchanging relationships and facilitating engagement among multiple partners. While traditional methods of communication remain prevalent, such approaches may not adequately address the specific needs and concerns of diverse stakeholders. Conventional communication tactics frequently prove unsuccessful, which is why companies should engage in more effective personalized approaches. Given the complexity of the sustainability and resilience topics, more targeted communication strategies are required (Romagnoli *et al.*, 2023). In this regard, Account-Based Marketing (ABM) approach presents an ideal methodology, offering a tailored communication mechanism capable of ensuring a more impactful engagement (Golec *et al.*, 2019).

The ABM approach focuses on a targeted set of accounts instead of a wide range of customers and creates a personalized and targeted marketing campaign aimed at

Esli Spahiu, Behzad Maleki Vishkaei, Alberto Grando
The Impact of Account-Based Marketing Approach in Shaping Impactful Narratives on Sustainability and Resilience
Impresa Progetto - Electronic Journal of Management, n. 1, 2025
_____

increasing sales (Burgess & Munn, 2017). This method typically consists of several steps including defining goals and objectives, selecting target accounts, creating appropriate content and a customer journey map, defining rules and automating the procedure, delivering appropriate content to the right audience through multiple channels, and improving the process according to feedback and analyzing relevant KPIs (Bacon, 2021). Recognizing the potential of ABM, leading ABM platforms like Demandbase provide tools and personalized services across a diverse set of accounts, extending beyond key accounts. (Demandbase, 2025). Since effective stakeholder communication requires precision and personalization, ABM provides a promising framework for engaging stakeholders with regard to sustainability and resilience initiatives more effectively.

Consequently, we evaluate the impact of the ABM approach in communicating a core company's sustainability and resilience programs with its stakeholders. In this context, we evaluate the performance of ABM by taking into consideration five different factors, namely, its role in enhancing benchmarking, fostering innovation, promoting knowledge sharing, facilitating network collaboration, and supporting strategic planning regarding sustainability and resilience initiatives. New approaches are essential in tackling sustainability challenges. The urgency of the challenges in this context demands bold innovation to develop solutions that mitigate the environmental impact and drive resilience (Leach *et al.*, 2012). Benchmarking is crucial for sustainability since it allows organizations to determine their performance in the context of multi-criteria analysis (Hong *et al.*, 2012). Benchmarking allows organizations to compare in light of various standards and consequently, identify gaps and improve their sustainability impact (Deng, 2015). Moreover, the body of literature puts a high emphasis on the importance of innovation in breeding sustainability (Maier *et al.*, 2020; Kuzma *et al.*, 2020). Similarly, promoting knowledge sharing is an essential element for sustainability and resilience as it accelerates the spread of best practices and encourages innovation (Evangelista & Durst, 2015). Research also shows that building a collaborative network ensures that sustainability is a shared priority and promotes systematic change (Chen *et al.*, 2017; León-Bravo *et al.*, 2017). Lastly, strategic planning is thought to be a crucial component in making sure that sustainability programs are both proactive and reactive (Wu *et al.*, 2020). Effective strategic planning enables organizations to anticipate future challenges, allocate resources more efficiently, and integrate sustainability into the core operations (Mintzberg *et al.*, 2005).

Moreover, to further support our discussion, we incorporate the self-perception of managers as the essential component in evaluating stakeholder engagement and communication strategies regarding our five factors. Managerial perception influences decision-making, the selection of engagement methods, and the prioritization of sustainability and resilience initiatives (Peloza *et al.*, 2012). According to studies, managers are more likely to use structured engagement techniques when they view sustainability as a strategic objective (Banerjee, 2001). This aspect reinforces further our rationale for using ABM, as it aligns targeted communication strategies with managerial expectations and organizational goals

Esli Spahiu, Behzad Maleki Vishkaei, Alberto Grando
The Impact of Account-Based Marketing Approach in Shaping Impactful Narratives on
Sustainability and Resilience
Impresa Progetto - Electronic Journal of Management, n. 1, 2025

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3. Methodology

To analyze the impact of the Account-Based Marketing (ABM) approach on sustainability and resilience, we conducted an exploratory research study (Stebbins, 2001), focusing on the value chain of one core company and its five key stakeholders. The core organization is a well-known Italian organization. We selected the stakeholders based on the findings emerging from preliminary interviews with the core company with respect to their significant influence in the core company's value chain. The selected companies represent a diverse range of sectors within the Italian industrial landscape, making them particularly relevant for assessing how the ABM approach can enhance various aspects of sustainability and resilience through targeted communications. A brief profile of each is as follows:

1. Stakeholder 1: consisted of an international energy company, well known in the oil, gas and renewable energy industries. The organization is heavily invested in energy transition and sustainability efforts through decarbonization, innovation and circular economy projects.
2. Stakeholder 2: consisted of a public organization operating in the shipbuilding industry. Considered as one of the largest naval groups worldwide, the organization is considered a major contributor in pushing forward efforts in more sustainable and energy efficient ship designs and shipbuilding through cutting-edge engineering solutions.
3. Stakeholder 3: consisted of one of the largest aerospace companies, making significant investments towards improving resilience and sustainability in space technologies and in the development of commercial aviation.
4. Stakeholder 4: consisted of a leading company specializing in the production of cutting-edge cable solutions for telecommunication and energy infrastructures. Sustainability has become a central theme of its processes through a dedicated focus on relying more heavily on recyclable materials and more energy-efficient processes.
5. Stakeholder 5: consisted of a prominent oilfield service company focused on drilling and pipeline construction. The company is actively involved in renewable energy development and carbon capture technologies across the globe.

The investigation lasted four months, from April 2024 to the end of July 2024. During the investigation, we communicated the sustainability and resilience programs of the core company with two groups of stakeholder managers using different communication channels. The first group was subjected to the ABM approach, and the second control group was uninvolved with the ABM method. All the steps of the investigation were conducted without the stakeholders' awareness regarding their involvement in the investigation. The sample of stakeholder managers for this study comprised 23 participants, including 12 females and 11 males. The participants represented a mix of sustainability and functional managers. Specifically, 6 sustainability managers and 17 functional managers were included.

Esli Spahiu, Behzad Maleki Vishkaei, Alberto Grando
The Impact of Account-Based Marketing Approach in Shaping Impactful Narratives on
Sustainability and Resilience
Impresa Progetto - Electronic Journal of Management, n. 1, 2025
_____

The participants' professional experience ranged from 6 to over 20 years, with varying levels of experience, ensuring a well-rounded perspective on sustainability and resilience practices across diverse industrial contexts. More specifically, 5 of the respondents had between 5 and 10 years of experience, 7 respondents had between 11 and 15 years of experience and the remaining 6 respondents had more than 15 years of job experience.

The ABM approach towards stakeholders consisted of the following seven interactions, strategically designed to communicate the core company's sustainability and resilience initiatives. Each iteration served as a touchpoint to engage the stakeholders. The seven iterations were spread across the four-month period, allowing for multiple opportunities to assess the impact of the ABM approach. In order to help stakeholders gain a better grasp of sustainability and resilience, these iterations consisted of emails, WhatsApp messages, LinkedIn articles, and invites to conferences and events.

- Iteration 1 (18 April 2024): Invitation via email to meet with a Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) expert to discuss the results of the projects.
- Iteration 2 (30 April 2024): Communicating the results of the core company's projects by publishing an article on LinkedIn.
- Iteration 3 (15 May 2024): Communicating an invitation via WhatsApp about participating in a conference related to the core company's sustainability initiatives and resilience projects.
- Iteration 4 (6 June 2024): Inviting the target audience via institutional email to participate in an event at the core company to discuss the results of sustainability and resilience projects.
- Iteration 5 (21 June 2024): Communicating the results of a project related to environmentally sustainable procurement projects by publishing a report on the core company's LinkedIn page.
- Iteration 6 (3 July 2024): Communicating the results of projects related to social sustainability aspects of sourcing and procurement by publishing a report on the core company's LinkedIn page.
- Iteration 7 (10 July 2024): Invitation via WhatsApp to participate in a research project with the research division of the core company.

At the end of the seven iterations, we administered a questionnaire to all stakeholders. Using a Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), all stakeholders were asked to rate their level of agreement with the following statements regarding the impact of communications through the previously mentioned iterations:
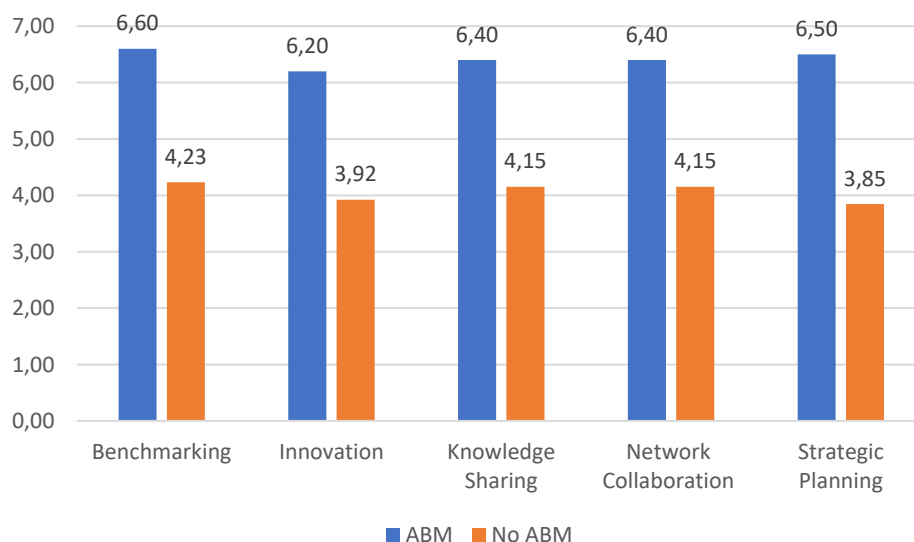
1) The core company's communication strategy would help us to identify specific projects by benchmarking the core company's sustainability and resilience programs.

Esli Spahiu, Behzad Maleki Vishkaei, Alberto Grando
The Impact of Account-Based Marketing Approach in Shaping Impactful Narratives on
Sustainability and Resilience
Impresa Progetto - Electronic Journal of Management, n. 1, 2025

_____

2) The core company's communication strategy would enhance my company's efforts in defining innovative solutions for improving sustainability and resilience performance.
3) The core company's communication strategy would increase my company's access to valuable insights and opportunities in sustainability and resilience through knowledge sharing.
4) The core company's communication strategy would foster collaboration on sustainability and resilience projects along the value chain.
5) The core company's communication strategy would enhance our strategic planning capabilities regarding sustainability and resilience.

4. Results and discussion

We evaluated the impact of the ABM approach in improving benchmarking, innovation, knowledge sharing, and strategic planning concerning sustainability and resilience aspects. We investigated how communicating the sustainability and resilience initiatives of the core company using the ABM method can enhance the ability of the stakeholders to benchmark sustainability and resilience projects, improve their knowledge and capabilities in devising innovative solutions, increase their collaborative effort, and achieve better strategic planning that encompasses sustainability and resilience issues.

Figure n. 1 – Comparison between ABM and no-ABM approaches

Source: authors' elaboration

Esli Spahiu, Behzad Maleki Vishkaei, Alberto Grando
The Impact of Account-Based Marketing Approach in Shaping Impactful Narratives on
Sustainability and Resilience
Impresa Progetto - Electronic Journal of Management, n. 1, 2025

_____

Figure n. 1 shows a significant difference, at the 0.05 level, between the ABM approach and the non-ABM methods in increasing stakeholders' capabilities in benchmarking, innovation, knowledge sharing, network collaboration, and strategic planning regarding sustainability and resilience initiatives.

The ABM approach provides opportunities for stakeholders to learn from their partners' experience by propagating innovative ideas and knowledge sharing, which enhances collaboration among them in the value chain. In addition, these practices can improve the quality of the stakeholders' strategic planning due to access to more accurate information regarding the sustainability and resilience projects of the core company.

In addition, the analysis reveals a higher score of 6.60 when using the ABM method compared to the non-ABM approach (with a score of 4.23) for benchmarking the sustainability and resilience projects due to receiving more accurate and specific information about them. Moreover, the stakeholders find the ABM approach more helpful (with a score of 6.20 compared to 3.92) in improving their innovative solutions for the sustainability and resilience performance of their companies.

This could be attributed to the stronger positive impact of the ABM approach on knowledge sharing, besides increasing the collaboration among the partners (with a score of 6.40 compared to 4.15 in both factors) regarding the initiatives and projects of the core company through precise communication. Finally, the ABM method is more effective (with a score of 6.50) than the non-ABM methods (with a score of 3.85) in improving the strategic planning capabilities of the stakeholders concerning sustainability and resilience issues. Consequently, the higher performance of the ABM approach in improving innovation, benchmarking, knowledge sharing, and network collaboration provides the opportunity to devise effective short-term and long-term plans to improve sustainability and resilience performance.
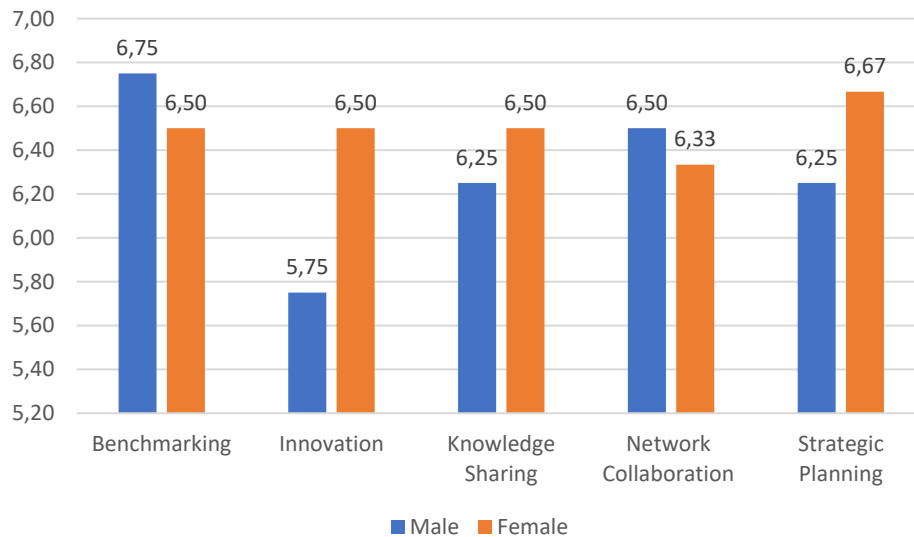
4.1 Gender and the effectiveness of ABM

In this section, we discuss the impact of the ABM method by analyzing the variations of the factors in terms of gender. In all factors, the difference between the scores is insignificant at the 0.05 level when considering two groups: males and females.

In other aspects, despite there being no significant difference between the opinions of the genders, by simply comparing the average scores in Figure n. 2, females found the ABM approach, on average, more interesting for strategic planning (with a score of 6.67).

Additionally, they mentioned ABM as a useful tool for benchmarking, innovation, and knowledge sharing, with an average score of 6.50 for each. In contrast, the variation in the scores of the factors is more significant for males. Accordingly, they mainly emphasized the importance of benchmarking (with a score of 6.75) and network collaboration (with a score of 6.50) over other factors, such as innovation (with a score of 5.75) and knowledge sharing (with a score of 6.25).

Esli Spahiu, Behzad Maleki Vishkaei, Alberto Grando
The Impact of Account-Based Marketing Approach in Shaping Impactful Narratives on Sustainability and Resilience
Impresa Progetto - Electronic Journal of Management, n. 1, 2025

_____

Figure n. 2 – The impact of gender on ABM effectiveness

Source: authors' elaboration

Overall, the insignificant difference between most factors, besides the high average scores (more than 5.75), indicates that both genders found the ABM method an efficient tool for communicating the core company's initiatives among stakeholders aiming to improve their benchmarking, innovation, knowledge sharing, network collaboration, and strategic planning in sustainability and resilience areas.

Moreover, none of the factors show a statistically significant difference, suggesting that gender equality will not negatively impact the quality of sustainability communication. On the contrary, it provides the opportunity to enhance stakeholder engagement throughout the value chain. Specifically, according to Fig n. 2, diverse leadership is more effective in knowledge sharing, innovation, and strategic planning. This is aligned with studies like Sharif *et al.* (2022).

4.2 Years of experience and the effectiveness of ABM

Comparing the factors regarding years of experience for the managers subjected to the ABM trial does not show a significant difference at the 0.05 level. This emphasizes the efficiency of the ABM approach in communicating sustainability and resilience initiatives regardless of the experience level of the target audience. However, even though there is no significant difference between the opinions of managers with less than ten years of experience and managers with more than ten, by simply comparing the average scores (Figure n. 3), we can conclude that experienced managers are primarily interested in using the ABM approach to enhance benchmarking and strategic planning (with a score of 6.57) than other

Esli Spahiu, Behzad Maleki Vishkaei, Alberto Grando
The Impact of Account-Based Marketing Approach in Shaping Impactful Narratives on
Sustainability and Resilience
Impresa Progetto - Electronic Journal of Management, n. 1, 2025
_____

factors including innovation, knowledge sharing, and network collaboration (with a
score of 6.29). Managers with less experience believe that the ABM method can
increase their performance in benchmarking, knowledge sharing, and network
collaboration (with a score of 6.67), considering their programs' sustainability and
resilience aspects.

Figure n. 3 – The impact of years of working experience on ABM effectiveness
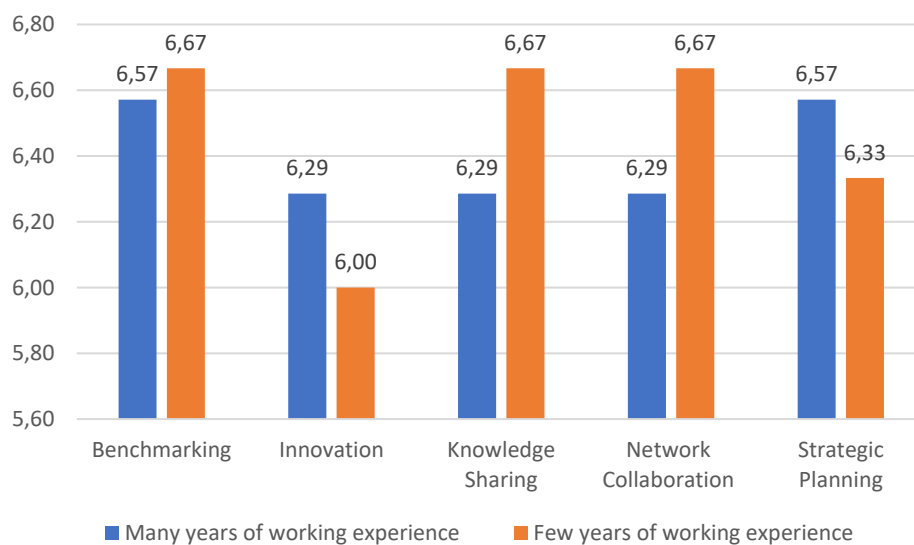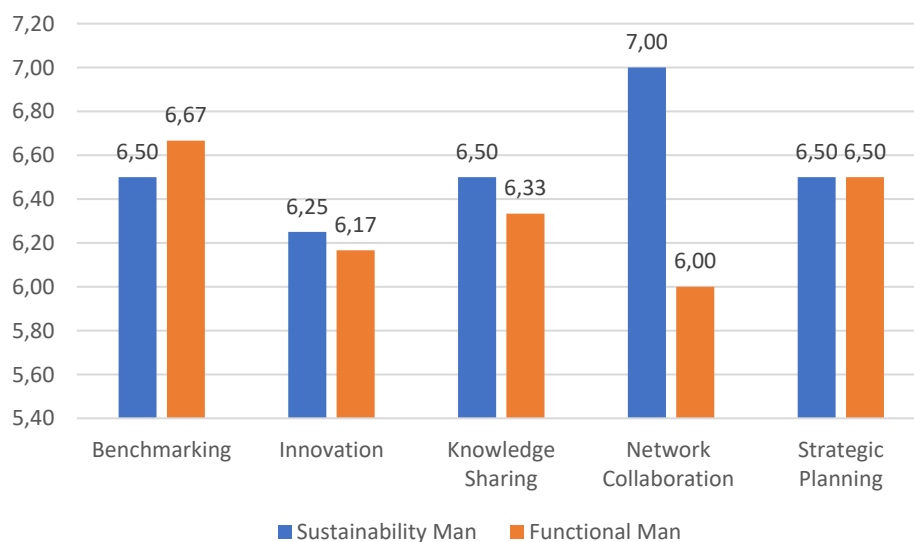

Source: authors' elaboration

Overall, the insignificant difference between the factors' average scores according
to managers with many years of experience and managers with fewer years of
experience indicates that core companies can use the ABM approach as an efficient
strategy for communicating sustainability and resilience projects regardless of the
experience level of the target managers. Moreover, both groups found the ABM
method valuable for benchmarking goals in sustainability and resilience. However, on
the one hand, the results in Fig n. 3 reveal that in areas like knowledge sharing and
network collaboration, there is a higher potential for the younger managers to
increase stakeholder engagement levels and accordingly improve communication
regarding sustainability and resilience programs. On the other hand, more
experienced managers have a greater potential for recognizing and developing
innovative solutions besides devising strategic plans considering sustainability and
resilience issues of the company (Khattak et al., 2024).

Esli Spahiu, Behzad Maleki Vishkaei, Alberto Grando
The Impact of Account-Based Marketing Approach in Shaping Impactful Narratives on
Sustainability and Resilience
Impresa Progetto - Electronic Journal of Management, n. 1, 2025
_____

4.3 Management role and the effectiveness of ABM

The comparison of factors as shown in Figure n. 4 distinguishes between the companies' representatives who were subjected to ABM in terms of sustainability and the functional managers. In all factors, except network collaboration, there is no significant difference between the results of the proposed groups at the 0.05 level. However, in terms of network collaboration, the sustainability managers provide a higher score than the functional managers, which is significant at the 0.05 level. The reason may be related to the importance of collaboration in enhancing sustainability performance in a value chain. In simpler terms, achieving sustainability goals requires cooperation among partners, and the ABM approach improves the connection between them by providing accurate information about sustainability projects to the relevant stakeholders' managers.

In the other factors, sustainability managers mainly emphasize the efficiency of the ABM approach in helping to improve benchmarking, knowledge sharing, and strategic planning, with an average score of 6.50. Interestingly, the functional managers consider their highest scores for the same factors with average scores of 6.67, 6.50, and 6.50, respectively.

Figure n. 4 – The impact of management roles on ABM effectiveness

Source: authors' elaboration

Accordingly, the sustainability managers experienced communication through the ABM approach as a valuable strategy to enhance their network collaboration in their value chains. This may be due to the fact that sustainability managers have a better understanding of the role of network collaboration as they are more aware of the social sustainability issues and the essential role of implementing sustainability

Esli Spahiu, Behzad Maleki Vishkaei, Alberto Grando
The Impact of Account-Based Marketing Approach in Shaping Impactful Narratives on Sustainability and Resilience
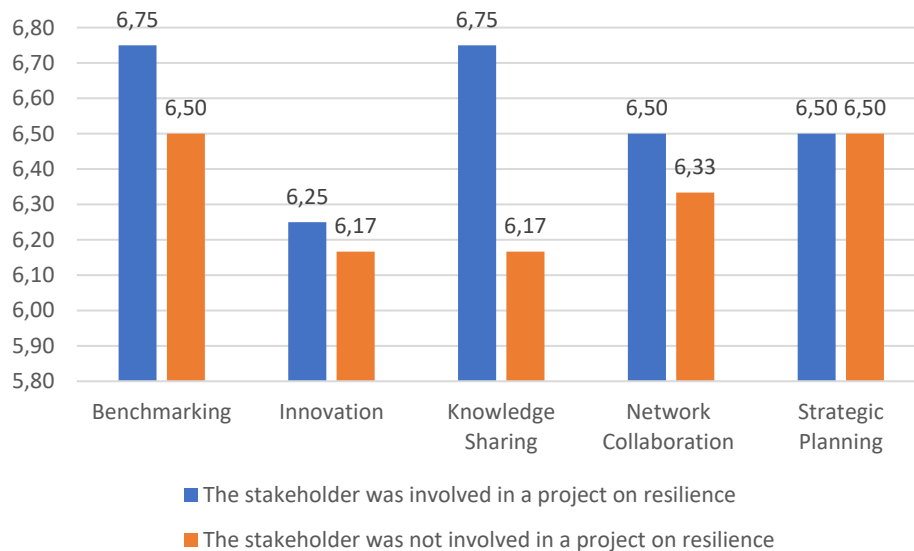Impresa Progetto - Electronic Journal of Management, n. 1, 2025
_____

initiatives along the whole supply chain. In other words, according to sustainability regulations, standards, and frameworks, strengthening the sustainability performance of the supply chain highly relies on network collaboration to eliminate noncompliance in the value chain (Vurro et al., 2009; Tachizawa & Wong, 2015). The insignificant difference between other factors, besides having results with more than an average score of 6 for each of them, indicates that both the sustainability and functional managers found the same efficiency level for adopting the ABM approach by the core company.

4.4 Involvement in a resilience-based project and the effectiveness of ABM

In this section, we investigate the workability of the ABM approach specifically in the context of resilience projects. According to our methodology, one part of the stakeholders was subjected to ABM by communicating resilience projects. We then compare the factors considering two groups of stakeholders involved in communicating resilience projects and those not communicating about the core company's resilience initiatives.

The results in Figure n. 5 indicate no significant difference between the proposed groups at the 0.05 level. This reveals the ABM approach's efficiency for sustainability and resilience projects. However, by comparing the average scores of each group, on the one hand, we can conclude that the stakeholders involved in resilience projects considered a higher score for benchmarking and knowledge sharing, with an average score of 6.75, and dedicated their lowest score to innovation, with an average score of 6.25. On the other hand, the stakeholders not subjected to resilience projects primarily emphasize benchmarking and strategic planning, with an average score of 6.50 each. Moreover, they considered their lowest scores for innovation and knowledge sharing with an average score of 6.17.

Esli Spahiu, Behzad Maleki Vishkaei, Alberto Grando
The Impact of Account-Based Marketing Approach in Shaping Impactful Narratives on
Sustainability and Resilience
Impresa Progetto - Electronic Journal of Management, n. 1, 2025

_____

Figure n. 5 – The impact of project type on ABM effectiveness

Source: authors' elaboration

So, both groups found ABM mostly efficient for benchmarking, which shows the precise communication of this approach provides a high level of possibility for the stakeholders to benchmark the initiatives to align themselves with the core company. Moreover, knowledge sharing is an essential factor regarding resilience projects to enhance the resilience performance of the stakeholders. The ABM approach can be a valuable method for communicating resilience initiatives and increasing the stakeholders' performance in terms of benefiting from benchmarking, knowledge sharing, and strategic planning in this field.

Moreover, this result also highlights the synergies between sustainability and resilience programs leading to the possibility of adopting similar approaches for communicating the relevant initiatives to the stakeholders. In other words, sustainability and resilience programs are connected through the relationship between innovations and disruptions, the need for long-term planning and adopting a risk management system, and the impact of the circular economy on resource efficiency (Negri et al., 2021).

5. Conclusions

5.1 Theoretical implications

The importance of stakeholder engagement in developing and extending sustainability and resilience programs and initiatives along the value chain is indispensable. However, there remains a notable gap in the literature in devising

Esli Spahiu, Behzad Maleki Vishkaei, Alberto Grando
The Impact of Account-Based Marketing Approach in Shaping Impactful Narratives on Sustainability and Resilience
Impresa Progetto - Electronic Journal of Management, n. 1, 2025

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effective communication approaches to ensure conveying proper information to targeted audiences, particularly in the context of Operations and Supply Chain Management (OSCM), where these topics have become highly relevant (Beske & Seuring, 2014; Petit *et al.*, 2019). Moreover, the application of new techniques as a tool to facilitate the interaction between stakeholders regarding sustainability and resilience has been overlooked. Our study responds to the need for investigating tailored communication strategies to effectively engage stakeholders (Evangelista & Durst, 2015) and to employ more precise tactics for fostering stakeholder engagement (O'Riordan & Fairbrass, 2014). Consequently, in this research, we conducted an exploratory investigation to assess the effectiveness of the impact of the Account-Based Marketing (ABM) approach in enhancing stakeholder engagement and communication for sustainability and resilience initiatives in the domain of Operations and Supply Chain Management. The findings in this study add to the body of knowledge by demonstrating that ABM can be an effective method for enhancing the communication of sustainability and resilience initiatives. This is aligned with the studies that focus on the essential role of devising communication strategies to inform and involve stakeholders with corporate social responsibility programs (Morsing & Schultz, 2006).

Moreover, we focused on analyzing five main factors, which the literature highlights as critical factors for developing sustainability and resilience practices, including benchmarking (Hong *et al.*, 2012; Deng, 2015), innovation (Leach *et al.*, 2012; Maier *et al.*, 2020; Kuzma *et al.*, 2020), knowledge sharing (Evangelista & Durst, 2015), network collaboration (Chen *et al.*, 2017; León-Bravo *et al.*, 2017), and strategic planning (Mintzberg *et al.*, 2005; Wu *et al.*, 2020). We analyzed the impact of ABM in improving these factors considering the sustainability and resilience goals of the companies. To achieve this goal, we categorized the target managers into two groups: those subjected to ABM and those not communicated with the ABM method. The trial and investigation lasted four months, and after that, we sent a questionnaire to all the involved managers to evaluate the impact of the ABM method on different factors. Finally, we analyzed the dataset and discussed the outputs by comparing the proposed groups. In line with findings from the literature (Romagnoli *et al.*, 2023), our results suggest that, contrary to traditional approaches, new personalized strategies can lead to more efficient communication on complex topics such as sustainability and resilience. Eventually, the findings suggest that multidisciplinary research can positively contribute to sustainability and resilience, emphasizing the importance of expanding the research scope and methodologies in this field beyond traditional methods.

5.2 Managerial implications

Overall, the results show that the ABM method outweighs the non-ABM approach in all factors. There is a significant difference between the evaluation scores related to the efficiency of the ABM method and the non-ABM option used for communicating the sustainability and resilience initiatives of the core company. The stakeholders

Esli Spahiu, Behzad Maleki Vishkaei, Alberto Grando
The Impact of Account-Based Marketing Approach in Shaping Impactful Narratives on Sustainability and Resilience
Impresa Progetto - Electronic Journal of Management, n. 1, 2025

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found ABM to be an efficient methodology that helps them improve their benchmarking and innovation capabilities, as well as increase sharing knowledge and network collaboration, which consequently can facilitate strategic planning of companies concerning sustainability and resilience aspects. In most of our analyses, the managers subjected to ABM emphasized the essential role of ABM in benchmarking sustainability and resilience initiatives to be aligned with the core company in the value chain. Additionally, ABM facilitates knowledge sharing and improves network collaboration by transferring accurate information to appropriate stakeholders along the value chain. Moreover, ABM is a valuable approach for resilience projects due to its efficiency in raising knowledge sharing and providing opportunities for benchmarking relevant projects. The synergies and relationships between the sustainability and resilience programs make it possible to adopt similar communication approaches like ABM. Furthermore, we found ABM to be an efficient communication tool regardless of the experience level of the target managers. However, the experienced managers found this approach more appropriate for strategic planning and innovation than other factors. In addition, sustainability managers mentioned ABM as an essential communication tool that increases cooperation in the business networks, which is crucial for adopting sustainability initiatives along the supply chain. Finally, in line with Higgins (1987), our study reveals how self-perception plays an important role in the evaluation of the effectiveness of communication efforts. Based on our findings, it can be inferred that ABM has the potential to enhance managers' self-understanding in driving initiatives related to sustainability and resilience through the successful alignment of communication strategies with organizational goals.

5.3 Limitations and future research

This study has some limitations, which present opportunities for future research. Firstly, this paper examines a single value chain, focusing on the main stakeholders of one core company. Expanding the analysis to include additional value chains across different sectors can provide additional managerial insights for business owners. Secondly, with regard to the methodology, conducting supplementary surveys or interviews with more companies and comparing the results with the findings of this investigation could offer new directions for research and ultimately, valuable implications. Finally, this study focuses on factors like innovation, benchmarking, knowledge sharing, and strategic planning. Therefore, exploring the same analysis concerning other aspects like transparency, accountability, and governance could also serve as a valuable research avenue for future studies.

Esli Spahiu, Behzad Maleki Vishkaei, Alberto Grando
The Impact of Account-Based Marketing Approach in Shaping Impactful Narratives on Sustainability and Resilience
Impresa Progetto - Electronic Journal of Management, n. 1, 2025

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Esli Spahiu, Behzad Maleki Vishkaei, Alberto Grando
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Esli Spahiu, Behzad Maleki Vishkaei, Alberto Grando
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