

# Social Media Communications Provide Proof of the Container Transport Industry's Commitment to Sustainable Brand Positioning

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## Introduction

By profiling container shipping lines in terms of their sustainability-related brand positioning strategies through their social media communications, this study contributes to shipping research. Multiple correspondence analysis (MCA) and longitudinal content analysis are used to map the branding strategies of selected lines in relation to the dimensions of the triple bottom line (TBL) and the benefits of functional versus emotional sustainability. According to the findings, the messages of shipping lines emphasize a win-win situation, bringing their brands closer to economic or environmental sustainability. A gap in the market and an opportunity for these brands' sustainability positioning exist in social sustainability. In addition, the majority of lines utilize functional sustainability benefits in brand positioning, despite the fact that a few recognize the potential in emotional benefits. Emotional sustainability benefits give shipping lines more opportunities to differentiate their brands and get customers involved in their sustainability initiatives [1].

## Description

The shipping industry has accelerated its own plans for decarbonization and sustainability in response to rising awareness of the climate crisis and the pursuit of global targets for sustainable development. Understanding how the shipping industry is shifting toward sustainability is crucial in light of the many facets of sustainable development. The industry's reflections on the environment have been the primary focus of research. These studies demonstrate the indirect relationship between environmental policies, ship technologies, or supplier selection strategies and financial performance mediated through environmental performance, as well as when and why shipping companies engage in green shipping practices and how buyer-driven environmental demand and regulatory requirements can facilitate environmental sustainability. Shipping companies should focus on the needs of stakeholders and invest in financial resources, tangible infrastructures, and technology in order to make sustainability transitions [2].

However, you could make the case that sustainability promises will only have an impact on financial performance if the shipping company first meets the expectations of shippers regarding its core competencies. These studies do not address shipping companies' sustainability positions, despite their significant contributions to the connection between performance and sustainability. In addition, based on their internal policies, strategies, or marketing strategies,

various businesses in this mature and fragmented industry probably position themselves in a variety of ways through sustainability initiatives. An in-depth comprehension of the industry's sustainability transformation pathways can be gained by gaining an understanding of this diversity in sustainability positioning, which can reveal the routes that various shipping companies take [3].

Since social media marketing is an effective tool for managing customer relationships in the era of Web 2.0, a social media analytics study of Twitter posts from selected container shipping companies is carried out. Brand perceptions in both consumer and business-to-business (B2B) markets can be significantly affected by social media disclosure. It has also been shown to be effective for interacting with shipping stakeholders, according to recent research. While research into sustainable maritime transportation is relatively new and growing, sustainability in transportation is a well-established field. Instead of "fragmented contributions focusing on isolated cases," they recommend shipping service marketing research based on broader analytical frameworks. As a result, there are two main ways that our study adds to the literature on maritime transportation.

First, the study provides significant insights into management of sustainability positioning in container shipping firms by employing two analytical frameworks, the TBL and functional-emotional benefits. The environmental sustainability focus in sustainable shipping literature is extended to a more comprehensive perspective by adopting the TBL framework. The findings show how environmental and social sustainability initiatives can set themselves apart from the industry's dominant economic sustainability positioning. The companies' comparative profiles show that sustainability-related messages can emphasize both emotional and functional benefits together rather than just functional benefits. Second, the method of analysis suggests a novel approach to investigating initiatives for sustainability in the maritime transportation sector. Instead of focusing on isolated cases, the analysis enables comparative study and visualization of secondary data, allowing for insights into a larger sample [4].

The goal of sustainable shipping is to meet current requirements without hindering future generations' ability to do so. Environmental management practices and enhanced green operations are introduced into the industry on the basis of regulations developed by the IMO, UN, and EU. Similar to the larger logistics and transportation research, the majority of sustainable shipping literature ignores social sustainability in favor of environmental sustainability. Strategies for achieving energy-efficient transportation and transitioning to a low carbon economy are provided by environmentally sustainable shipping, which is broadly defined as carrying out maritime transportation activities with the least amount of harm to health and the environment.

A management perspective to prevent environmental damage includes green shipping practices like "the handling and distribution of cargoes in an environmentally sustainable way with a view to reducing waste creation and conserving resources in performing shipping activities." Sort these practices according to the institutional forces that influence them: policy and procedures of the company are linked to the company's dedication to a sustainability vision; shipping documentation focuses on the use of resources in paper-based shipping processes; shipping equipment" refers to shipping equipment's eco-friendly design in order to meet environmental regulations and increase efficiency; shipper cooperation" refers to the eco-design of cargo handling procedures performed in collaboration with shippers; shipping

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materials" focuses on recycling, reducing, and reusing shipping materials to reduce environmental pollution; Measurements for energy savings, reusing shipping equipment, expanding recycling, and waste recovery are all covered in "shipping design for compliance."

Green strategies can be implemented by shipping companies at a variety of levels through various initiatives. Reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions is one of the most pressing requirements. Divides efforts toward this goal into two main categories: operational and technical. The first includes ship design, propulsion systems, and fuel types, while the second includes green vessel scheduling, slow steaming, route design, and fleet optimization. Additional market-based measures for reducing shipping-related emissions include funding, incentives, or fees. The literature also focuses on oil spills, environmentally friendly ballast water treatment, reducing environmental impacts through regulations, assessing the environmental and societal impacts of shipping emissions, and ship recycling in addition to these widely studied green initiatives.

Given the numerous requirements imposed on shipping companies by regulations like SOLAS, safety is one of the most frequently discussed dimensions in the limited literature on social sustainability in shipping. These studies examine social issues in shipping, such as community involvement, open and accurate disclosure, charitable donations for the benefit of employees and customers, employee training and education, gender equality in shipping, and health and working conditions for employees. Since energy efficiency measures, slow steaming, route and fleet optimization all improve economic performance by reducing fuel consumption and improving resource use, most of these sustainability initiatives also reinforce the economic TBL pillar of sustainability. The literature on green shipping practices demonstrates how this win-win relationship between the environmental and economic sustainability pillars boosts both productivity and environmental performance. Identify the three components of "green" shipping management: "greener ships," "greener suppliers," and "greener policies" [5].

## Conclusion

The first two of these components help companies perform better by influencing their environmental performance. Discover that four green shipping

dimensions-company policy and procedure, shipping documentation, shipping equipment, and shipping materials-increase customer loyalty and productivity. Through the role of a mediator, sustainable shipping practices increase both financial and non-financial performance, customer satisfaction, and loyalty. According to these findings, the manner in which shipping companies convey their sustainability strategies is crucial to fostering customer loyalty and contentment, which in turn enhances business performance. Brand positioning is an essential component of this communication that requires special attention.

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## Conflict of Interest

None.

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