

**The influence of the 2030 Agenda on sustainable consumption through
an analysis of academic publications**

Alan Marcelo Barbosa

Master Student, PUC-Campinas, Brazil
alan.mb@puccampinas.edu.br

Bruna Angela Branchi

PhD Professor, PUC-Campinas, Brazil.
bruna.branchi@puc-campinas.edu.br

Denise Helena Lombardo Ferreira

PhD Professor, PUC-Campinas, Brazil.
lombardo@puc-campinas.edu.br

SUMMARY

The sustainable development in a society depends on different factors, among which we can highlight the consciousness of the inhabitants about the need to maintain habits and consumption standards aligned with concepts of sustainability to ensure the preservation of natural resources for current and future generations. Focusing on the theme of consumption standards, this study aims to assess the influence of fostering the 2030 Agenda in academic publications related to the sustainable consumption theme. This research is classified as a bibliometric analysis, as it seeks to quantify the scientific production and its dissemination, with a quantitative approach, as it measures what was observed. The SCOPUS and SciELO databases were selected for the bibliometric research, with consultations on 06/23/2021. The results show that the articles available in the SCOPUS database represents 97.3% of publications with the term “sustainable consumption”. After 2015, the year of the introduction of the 2030 Agenda, there was an accelerated growth of the term Sustainable Consumption in academic publications, especially in the English language.

KEYWORDS: Bibliometric research. Sustainable Consumption. 2030 Agenda.

1 INTRODUCTION

Considering that manufacturing products to meet the population's demand requires the use of natural resources, it is necessary to incorporate the term sustainable consumption in the context of sustainable development.

Sachs (2009) clarifies that to achieve sustainable development it is necessary to take into account the preservation of biodiversity for the future of mankind.

Since the last decade, the idea of sustainable consumption has occupied a prominent place. In 1972, at the Conference of United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, held in Stockholm, it was established that it is a duty of all peoples and governments the improvement of the environment for the well-being of society.

However, it was only at the Rio 92 Conference, held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, that the term sustainable consumption was used, based on discussions on new concepts of wealth and prosperity in order to improve the population's well-being through lifestyle that requires fewer resources. From that Conference resulted Agenda 21, whose chapter 4 is entirely dedicated to the topic of unsustainable consumption patterns (UNCED, 1992). According to UNEP (2010), it is now internationally recognized that one of the main causes of environmental deterioration is related to unsustainable consumption and production patterns.

According to Jackson and Michaelis (2003), it was only at the Rio+5 Conference, held in New York in 1997, that governments recognized sustainable consumption as a challenge and a transversal theme in the debate on sustainable development.

In 2002 the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Rio+10, was held in Johannesburg, South Africa, highlighting that fundamental changes are needed in the way society produces and consumes to promote sustainable development (UN, 2002).

In 2012, Rio+20 took place with the aim of establishing guidelines to guide the sustainable development agenda for the next twenty years and the importance of sustainable consumption to achieve sustainable goals was reinforced (UNCSD, 2012).

More recently, in 2015, with the participation of most countries and mediated by the United Nations Organization (UNO), 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 goals to be achieved by 2030, called 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, were approved. Among the objectives of the 2030 Agenda, SDG 12 establishes that countries must ensure sustainable

production and consumption patterns, for which it proposes the goal of “ensuring that people, everywhere, have relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and styles of life in harmony with nature” (UN, 2015, p. 26).

Along these lines, Sachs (2015) points out that it is not enough to have an economically prosperous society, but an inclusive, environmentally sustainable and well-governed society.

2 OBJECTIVE

This study aims to study the influence of promoting the 2030 Agenda in academic publications related to the topic of sustainable consumption.

3 THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

Since Keynes' contribution (1936) to economic theory, consumer spending has assumed a central role in promoting economic growth, measured as a change in Gross Domestic Product. But with the advent of the theme of sustainable development, the need to consider the impacts of consumption decisions on the environment and the quality of life of current and future generations became evident.

Since then, different adjectives have been used to qualify consumption that is compatible with sustainable development: sustainable, green, ethical, responsible, conscious and ecological. Even having points in common, it is relevant to identify the peculiarities of each one of them.

The United Nations Environment Program emphasizes that **sustainable consumption** represents a different and more efficient way of consuming, it does not necessarily mean consuming less (UNEP, 1999). Many government policy makers tend to summarize this concept simply as the consumption of more sustainable products, focusing on sustainable production through better technologies (JACKSON; MICHAELIS, 2003). The intrinsic changes in the adoption of this new lifestyle present several challenges for companies that could be harmed by a drop in profitability of their business or difficulty in adapting to meet new consumer demands.

Still on sustainable consumption, Peres et al. (2019) argue that this expression encompasses a type of production process with less use of resources, carried out efficiently and with reduced emissions. Essential products and services are sold ethically, and consumers are informed about reuse, recycling or proper disposal. The term sustainable consumption covers the behavior of consumers, when their choices favor an ethical-moral lifestyle, thinking about cultural and social aspects, and questioning the reason for consumption, the need to be satisfied (basic or superfluous need). As well as it encompasses the production and commercialization process, considering its environmental and social impacts.

In the study by Biswas and Roy (2015), the term **green consumption** is used to identify the purchase of green or ecological products, that is, produced without toxic chemicals and from recyclable or biodegradable materials, using ecologically correct and low environmental impact, aiming at the preservation of the natural environment. According to these authors, consumer choice depends on several values, which are personal and subjective, including needs such as emotional aspects, knowledge, experiential need, prestige associated with the purchase.

Therefore, the decision to consume green products depends on how consumers value these aspects when compared to traditional products.

According to Haws et al. (2014, p. 337), green consumption expresses “the value of environmental protection through purchases and consumption behaviors”, being that the green consumers are generally oriented to protect resources on an environmental and personal level. They prefer environmentally friendly products chosen through assessment of environmentally positive attributes consistent with their values. As such, environmentally friendly products help green consumers to express their consumer values. However, these same products can go against the desire of some consumers when they are more expensive or when they seem to be less effective and, therefore, should be consumed in greater quantities. Finally, this type of consumer buys green products and services when they perceive their positive or less negative influence on the environment, or sponsor companies that promote positive social transformations (HAWES et al., 2014).

Carrington et al. (2014) use the term **ethical consumption** to highlight consumption decisions guided by personal values, moral norms, internal ethics and other similar factors. The ethical consumer movement gains strength due to concerns about the consequences of consumerism on society and the environment. The dissemination of these issues in the media, the formation of groups of activists and the availability of ethical products, lead to a greater awareness of consumers about the impact of their purchase and consumption decisions (CARRINGTON et al., 2014). These authors also emphasize that ethical consumption encompasses different aspects for each individual, which can be a concern with the environment and sustainability, respect for labor rights, animal welfare, among others. In addition to ethical issues, the decision-making of these consumers would continue to be subject to influences of price, availability, convenience, information and timeliness.

In this sense, Adams and Raisborough (2010) argue that ethical consumption is favored if products are more readily available, with competitive prices and equivalent quality. For the authors, ethical consumption is any consumption practice in which there is an explicit commitment to other individuals, including those who are distant or absent (BARNETT et al., 2005 apud ADAMS; RAISBOROUGH, 2010), and this commitment guides consumers in their purchasing decisions, being also concerned with commercial issues, corruption, bureaucracy and consumer culture.

To define **responsible consumption**, Schlaile et al. (2018) rescue the definitions from different authors. Among them:

- Antil (1984) highlights the influence of environmental problems on consumer choices, who weigh the satisfaction of personal needs with concern for the impacts of the choices made;
- Fisk (1973) emphasizes rationality and efficiency in the use of natural resources;
- Heidbrink and Schmidt (2011) use the expression to define the act of consumption where concerns about the social and natural environment, as well as one's own well-being, have priority;
- Mohr et al. (2001) define the behavior of the consumer who, from the moment of purchase to the final disposal of the products, takes into account the well-being of society, trying

to limit the negative consequences of their own choices while acting to promote longer-term benefits;

- Roberts (1993) uses the term to define the behavior of consumers who are aware of the influence of their choices on the environment or who support companies committed to social change.

In their own definition, Schlaile et al. (2018) mention that socially responsible consumption represents a social action that involves the act of consuming while considering and avoiding predictable negative consequences that affect other people, thus showing an altruistic and moral attitude (behavioral ethics), as it involves decisions in favor of others to the detriment of their own interests. The researchers point out that responsible consumption may be more expensive than normal consumption, but more expensive does not necessarily, or does not just mean, additional expenses caused by a higher price or higher operating and disposal costs. But it may imply higher transaction costs arising from the acquisition of information, or opportunity costs, due to abstaining from consumption of a regular good or service in favor of some good or service traded fairly, environmentally friendly or produced fairly, which additionally might still not be able to satisfy the consumer's needs as broadly as the normal one.

Guarín and Knorrinda (2014) use responsible consumption and ethical consumption as synonyms to define decisions about the purchase of goods and services that involve a concern with social equity and environmental sustainability. According to the same authors, it can make a big difference whether most people in a society consume products that are produced in good working conditions or that have a smaller environmental footprint. One way often used to assess consumers' environmental or social commitment is to measure their willingness to pay extra for social and environmental attributes. The size of this award depends on specific attributes of the product, such as biodegradability or the absence of child labor in its production and the amount of information they have about the specific impact of their purchase, among others (GUARÍN; KNORRINGA, 2014). These attributes often come at a higher cost, and when this is the case, increased income can remove an obstacle to responsible consumption. However, regardless of income levels, norms, and values in societies about the minimum expected level of ethical behavior change over time.

According to Carr et al. (2012, p. 224), **conscious consumption** is defined as

any choice about products or services made as a way of expressing values of sustainability, social justice, corporate responsibility, or workers' rights and that takes into account the broader context of production, distribution, or impacts of goods and services.

Conscientious consumers manifest their commitments not only when purchasing, but also promoting company boycotts or seeking ethically certified products. They may even accept a higher price if the product reflects their worldview (CARR et al, 2012). Although conscious consumption is generally seen as a reflection of genuine social, ethical and ideological values, for some the display of the use of green products, without exploration or testing on animals and linked to social causes, may also reflect a need for status (CARR et al, 2012). Finally, the concept of purchasing natural products and products from companies that support charitable causes as an indication of conscious consumption is based on the expectation that such consumer

behaviors are rooted in the desire to seek products that respect environmental and ethical responsibilities.

In academic literature, the expression **ecological consumption** is also found as a type of consumption that enjoys a certain popularity among certain sectors of the population, which makes it a socially relevant consumption phenomenon (VIÑAS, 2014). Furthermore, it maintains a strong symbolic, cultural and ideological content, thus becoming a fully sociological object of study. Community components, based on ethical-political principles and on the projection of a socio-environmental ideal over the ecological, have been developed in certain contexts of consumption in cooperatives. These bonds have tended, at times, to forms of active adherence to groups, in which experiences of shared consumption, practices of participation and autonomous and collective organization are placed, while at the same time demanding recognition of the identity from which it is constituted. (VIÑAS, 2014).

In summary, the expressions most used in academic literature to describe sustainable consumer behaviors share a broad vision that includes the production, commercialization, consumption and disposal phases. Consumer behavior implies awareness of the act of consumption, which encompasses environmental impacts, the well-being of current and future generations, and which avoids consumerism, following an ethical and moral path.

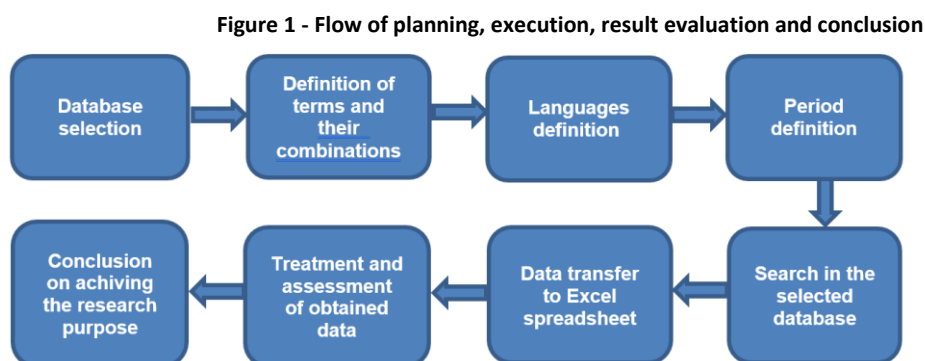
4 METHODOLOGY

According to Marconi and Lakatos (2003), bibliographical research aims to favor direct contact with what is already published.

This research is classified as a bibliometric analysis, as it seeks to quantify scientific production and its dissemination, in order to generate new knowledge, useful for the advancement of Science, in addition to involving universal truths and interests. Bibliometric research consists of mapping and identifying the number of academic papers designed to assess the topic in question.

The approach is quantitative, as it deals with measuring the records regarding what was observed, as according to Araújo (2006), bibliometrics is a quantitative and statistical technique.

Figure 1 summarizes the flow defined for the planning, execution, result evaluation and conclusion phases of the bibliometric research performed.



Source: Own elaboration.

The search was performed using the search terms described in Table 1, including combinations and variations of these terms, in Portuguese and English.

The search in the chosen databases was divided into two search steps using the keywords in the first line of Table 1 in all articles published until 2021 and the remaining keywords in articles published between 2010 and 2021 (second line). The databases were consulted on 06/23/2021, which should be considered when evaluating the quantities in the tables and figures that show the evolution over the years.

Table 1 - Terms used in bibliometric research

Searching Terms in Portuguese and English				
Searching Part 1	Consumption	Sustentável, Consciente, Verde, Ecológico, Responsável, Eficiente, Ético Sustainable, Conscious, Green, Ecological, Responsible, Efficient, Ethical		
Searching Part 2	Consumption	Sustentável, Consciente, Verde, Ecológico, Responsável, Eficiente, Ético	AND	Agenda 2030
				Sustainable Development Objective(s)

Source: Own elaboration.

5 RESULTS

A first category of analysis aims to identify the diffusion of the term sustainable consumption and a second analysis aims to verify the influence of the 2030 Agenda under the aspect of sustainable consumption.

5.1 Dissemination of the term

The searches in the selected databases were carried out using the Boolean search technique, allowing the location of terms or keywords more precisely in published studies. The use of quotation marks allowed the search with a combination of keywords, enabling the search for compound terms and helping to narrow the search.

Table 2 shows the quantities of terms identified for each database and each selected language.

Table 2 - Frequency of selected terms in articles published until 2021

Searching Terms	SCOPUS		SciELO		Overall Total
	English	Portuguese	English	Portuguese	
Sustainable Consumption	2.056	8	16	20	2.100
Responsible Consumption	443	3	11	15	472
Ethical Consumption	460	4	0	5	469
Green Consumption	443	3	7	9	462
Efficient Consumption	135	1	0	5	141
Conscious Consumption	100	8	3	9	120
Ecological Consumption	65	5	0	2	72
Total by language	3.702	32	37	65	
Total by base		3.734		102	3.836
		97%		3%	

Source: Own elaboration.

Table 2 shows that the SCOPUS database represented 97.3% of the number of articles published. The wide diffusion of some terms, especially “sustainable consumption”, showed the need to analyze the temporal evolution of the use of the selected keywords. Tables 3 and 4 show this evolution for the keywords in English and Portuguese.

Table 3 - Temporal evolution of keywords in English of scientific articles from SCOPUS and SciELO databases

Searching Terms	1963-2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Total
Sustainable Consumption	282	77	85	75	99	92	140	159	134	205	231	285	208	2.072
Ethical Consumption	48	19	19	29	30	37	34	41	38	37	46	50	32	460
Responsible Consumption	30	10	7	15	23	16	15	22	27	51	63	92	83	454
Green Consumption	38	4	8	6	18	32	31	35	32	35	69	85	57	450
Efficient Consumption	40	4	3	5	4	9	6	6	7	9	8	26	8	135
Conscious Consumption	8	4	6	9	3	8	10	6	8	7	11	13	10	103
Ecological Consumption	11	1	5	-	3	3	6	3	2	5	8	13	5	65
Overall Total	457	119	133	139	180	197	242	272	248	349	436	564	403	3.739

Source: Own elaboration.

It can be seen in Table 3 that the keyword Sustainable Consumption stands out with the highest recurrence among the articles published (2,072 times), representing 55% of the total surveyed (3,739). The survey carried out included all the years available in the selected databases, where it was verified that this term was used for the first time in an article published in the 70s, but it became more used in the late 90s and from 2017 onwards it became to stand out more quickly after the introduction of the 2030 Agenda.

Table 4 - Temporal evolution of keywords in Portuguese in scientific articles from SCOPUS and SciELO databases

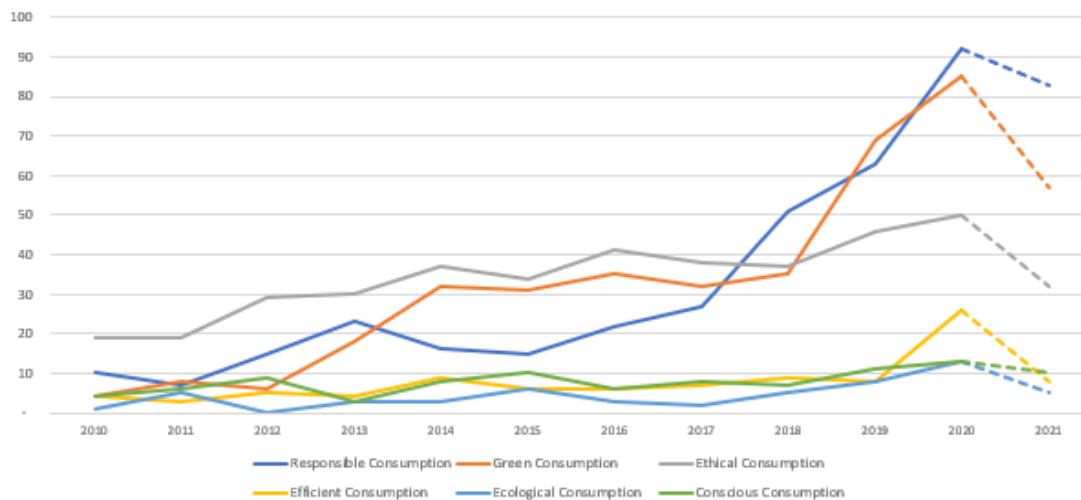
Searching Terms	2005-2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Total
Consumo Sustentável	1	2	2	3	1	2	1	2	3	4	1	4	2	28
Consumo Responsável	-	3	-	2	4	1	2	1	2	3	1	3	1	23
Consumo Verde	2	-	-	-	-	3	-	1	1	2	3	1	1	14
Consumo Consciente	1	-	1	1	1	1	-	1	1	3	-	-	-	10
Consumo Ético	-	2	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	1	1	9
Consumo Eficiente	-	1	-	-	-	-	3	-	1	1	-	2	-	8
Consumo Ecológico	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	2	-	-	-	1	-	5
Overall Total	5	8	4	8	6	8	6	7	8	15	5	12	5	97

Source: Own elaboration.

Although Table 4 does not show a clear predominance of a keyword in Portuguese, it appears that Sustainable Consumption was the most cited considering the sum of all years, the same occurred for this term in English.

Figure 2 shows the evolution of the other terms in English, segregated from Sustainable Consumption, from the 2010s onwards, when their use started to increase with greater consistency.

Figure 2 - Evolution of the number of articles in English, without Sustainable Consumption



Source: Own elaboration.

In Figure 2, it can be seen that in the 2010s the terms included in the graph became more used and alternated over the years to the present day. In the late 2000s the terms Ethical and Responsible started to be cited more, while the use of Green accelerated in the beginning of the following decade. The terms Ecological, Conscious and Efficient have had a more modest usage and without major variations, unlike the terms Responsible, Green and Ethical, which in 2016 gained more strength and continued to grow at an accelerated pace until the beginning of the current decade.

5.2 The influence of the 2030 Agenda

Additionally, a research was carried out with the keyword consumption associated with the adjectives sustainable, conscious, green, ecological, responsible, efficient and ethical, combined with the terms 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals, on the same bases, SCOPUS and SciELO, and the same languages, English and Portuguese.

In the search combined with Agenda 2030, it was verified which keywords showed growth after the introduction of the 2030 Agenda, where the direct relationship to the term Sustainable Consumption was confirmed, especially in the English language. Table 5 shows that only the keywords Sustainable Consumption and Responsible Consumption were directly

impacted by the term Agenda 2030, with 2020 being the year with the highest number of publications.

Table 5 - Combined keyword search with Agenda 2030 (English and Portuguese / SCOPUS and SciELO)

Searching Term	Language	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Total
Sustainable Consumption AND Agenda 2030	English		2	2	4	3	11
	Portuguese		2		1		3
Sustainable Consumption AND Agenda 2030	English	1		3	3		7
Overall Total		1	4	5	8	3	21

Source: Own elaboration.

The influence of the 2030 Agenda can also be seen when the terms Goals or Sustainable Development Goals are used as synonyms. When the search was carried out in the SCOPUS database, in English, the number of publications increased, always keeping the terms sustainable consumption and responsible consumption in a prominent position (Table6).

Table 6 - Combined keyword search with ODS, English, SCOPUS base

Searching Term	2011-2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Total
Sustainable Consumption AND Sustainable Development goal*	5	7	12	11	26	18	79
Responsible Consumption AND Sustainable Development goal*		5	2	7	35	27	76
Green Consumption AND Sustainable Development goal*		1			3	1	5
Ethical Consumption AND Sustainable Development goal*					1	2	3
Ecological Consumption AND Sustainable Development goal*						1	1
Overall Total	5	13	14	18	65	49	164

Source: Own elaboration.

The search results in English in the SciELO database were much more limited. There was one publication in 2020 that was found with the combined search using the term “Responsible Consumption” and one in 2018 with the words “Sustainable Consumption”.

6 CONCLUSIONS

Sustainable consumer behavior is described with different expressions, but they share the concern with the environmental impacts of individual choices, impacts that include the entire life of the product, from its production to its disposal.

Consumers aware of the immediate and future consequences of their decisions follow ethical precepts contrary to consumerism. The importance of its actions in promoting sustainable development is recognized at international conferences organized by the United Nations. In the 2030 Agenda, Sustainable Development Goal number 12 is entirely dedicated to the theme of sustainable consumption and production.

From a bibliometric analysis, the study carried out made it possible to verify the diffusion of the term sustainable consumption and also the influence of the 2030 Agenda under the aspect of sustainable consumption in the scientific bases SCOPUS and SciELO. Using the date

06/23/2021 as a reference, it was possible to conclude that the SCOPUS database represented 97.3% of the number of articles published with the search term “sustainable consumption”. After the introduction of the 2030 Agenda, the direct relationship to the term Sustainable Consumption was confirmed, especially in the English language.

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