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DIGITAL ECO-BRANDING OF FMCG COMPANIES

The study examines the formation of eco-brands of FMCG companies in the context of implementing Sustainable Development Goals and digital marketing. The relevance of the research is driven by the growing importance of corporate environmental responsibility, the mass production of fast-moving consumer goods, and the need to integrate sustainable development principles into the marketing activities of FMCG companies. The study hypothesises that integrating sustainable development principles into the activities of FMCG companies and applying digital marketing tools contribute to the effective formation, promotion, and development of eco-brands, enhance consumer trust, and strengthen companies' competitiveness. The methodological framework combines general scientific and specialised research methods, including analysis and synthesis, systems analysis, structural and logical analysis, comparative analysis, and modelling. The study is based on scientific publications, materials of the United Nations Global

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ЦИФРОВИЙ ЕКО-БРЕНДИНГ FMCG ПІДПРИЄМСТВ

Досліджено формування еко-брендів FMCG підприємств у контексті реалізації цілей сталого розвитку та цифрового маркетингу. Актуальність теми зумовлена зростанням ролі екологічної відповідальності бізнесу, масовим виробництвом товарів повсякденного попиту та необхідністю інтеграції принципів сталого розвитку у маркетингову діяльність FMCG підприємств. Внесено гіпотезу, що інтеграція принципів сталого розвитку у діяльність FMCG підприємств та використання інструментів цифрового маркетингу сприяють ефективному формуванню, просуванню та розвитку еко-брендів, підвищенню довіри споживачів і конкурентоспроможності підприємств. Методологічною основою дослідження є комплекс загальнонаукових і спеціальних методів: аналізу та узагальнення, системний і структурно-логічний аналіз, порівняльний аналіз та моделювання. Інформаційну базу дослідження становили наукові джерела, матеріали ініціативи United Nations Global Compact, а також



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Compact initiative, and data from the official websites and management reports of the companies under study. The study substantiates the concept of eco-branding for FMCG companies in the digital environment, identifies the essential characteristics of an eco-brand, and proposes the author's definition of the concept. A conceptual model of eco-branding has been developed that covers the factors, stages, and outcomes of eco-brand formation in the digital environment. Digital marketing tools have been systematised according to the stages of the digital consumer journey: Awareness, Consideration, Conversion, Loyalty, and Advocacy. Based on the analysis of international and Ukrainian experience, the study demonstrates that digital marketing communications transform environmental value into added consumer value, contribute to the development of a positive environmental image, increase consumer loyalty, and create long-term competitive advantages for FMCG companies.

Keywords: sustainable development, eco-brand, eco-branding, FMCG companies, digital environment, digital marketing, digital eco-branding.

JEL Classification: M31, M37, Q01, L67.

дані офіційних сайтів і управлінської звітності досліджуваних компаній. Обґрунтовано концепцію еко-брендингу FMCG підприємств у цифровому середовищі, визначено сутнісні ознаки еко-бренду та запропоновано авторське визначення дефініції "еко-бренд". Розроблено концептуальну модель еко-брендингу, що охоплює чинники, етапи та результати формування еко-бренду у цифровому середовищі. Систематизовано інструменти цифрового маркетингу відповідно до етапів цифрового шляху споживача Awareness, Consideration, Conversion, Loyalty, Advocacy. На основі аналізу закордонного та вітчизняного досвіду доведено, що цифрові маркетингові комунікації забезпечують трансформацію екологічної цінності у додаткову споживчу вартість бренду, сприяють формуванню позитивного екологічного іміджу, підвищенню лояльності споживачів і створенню довгострокових конкурентних переваг FMCG підприємств.

Ключові слова: сталий розвиток, еко-бренд, еко-брендинг, FMCG підприємства, цифрове середовище, цифровий маркетинг, цифровий еко-брендинг.

Introduction

Growing attention to corporate environmental responsibility and the need to integrate sustainable development principles into companies' activities have increased the relevance of this research. These processes are particularly important for FMCG companies, whose operations involve the mass production of fast-moving consumer goods, intensive use of natural resources, and a significant influence on consumer experience. Under these conditions, eco-branding has become an important instrument for implementing marketing and branding strategies that enhance companies' competitiveness. At the same time, the rapid development of digital technologies, communication channels, and sales platforms has expanded opportunities to promote environmental values and build consumer trust in the digital environment. This creates the need to explore the theoretical and practical foundations of digital eco-branding for FMCG companies.

The existing literature demonstrates growing scholarly interest in sustainable development, environmental marketing, and the formation and development of eco-brands. The theoretical foundations of sustainable development and its key principles are discussed in the works of both Ukrainian and international researchers, as well as in the materials of the United Nations Global Compact initiative, which outlines the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and the principles of responsible business conduct. Issues related to the development and promotion of eco-brands, as well as the influence of brands' environmental characteristics on consumer behaviour, have been examined

by international scholars, including Afifa et al. (2025), Hegde et al. (2025), and Davidenko et al. (2025), who explore the relationship between environmental brand values, consumer perceptions, and the development of sustainable marketing. Ukrainian researchers, including Blazhei (2016), Bondarenko and Syazin (2024), and Chygrin and Usova (2025), focus on green marketing, eco-branding, and the application of marketing tools to develop the environmental image of companies. However, the systematic conceptualisation of eco-branding for FMCG companies, which integrates the Sustainable Development Goals with the opportunities offered by digital marketing, remains underexplored, underscoring the need for further research.

The aim of this article is to substantiate the theoretical foundations of eco-branding for FMCG companies in the context of implementing the Sustainable Development Goals and to develop a conceptual model of eco-branding in the digital environment. To achieve this aim, the study pursues the following objectives: to examine the concept of sustainable development and identify the main directions for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by FMCG companies; to review scientific approaches to the interpretation of the concept of an eco-brand, identify its essential characteristics, and propose the author's definition of the concept of an eco-brand; to develop a conceptual model of eco-branding for FMCG companies in the digital environment; and to analyse international and Ukrainian experience in eco-branding for FMCG companies and validate the proposed model.

The study is based on the hypothesis that integrating sustainable development principles into the activities of FMCG companies and applying digital marketing tools contribute to the effective development of eco-brands, enhance consumer trust, and create additional competitive advantages for companies.

To test the hypothesis and achieve the research aim, a combination of general scientific and specialised research methods was applied. Analysis and synthesis were applied to examine scientific approaches to the interpretation of the concepts of "eco-brand" and "eco-branding". Systems analysis and structural-logical analysis were applied to identify the essential characteristics of an eco-brand and to systematise digital marketing tools for the promotion and development of eco-brands. Modelling was applied to develop a conceptual model of eco-branding for FMCG companies in the digital environment. Comparative analysis was applied to investigate international and Ukrainian experience in the digital eco-branding of FMCG companies.

The study draws on Ukrainian and international scholarly sources, including publications indexed in the Scopus database, materials of the United Nations Global Compact initiative available on the official website of Global Compact Network Ukraine, information from the official websites of Unilever and Chumak, as well as management reports of Unilever Ukraine LLC and Chumak Ukraine LLC.

The first section substantiates the concept of eco-branding in the context of sustainable development and identifies the directions for implementing the 17 Sustainable Development Goals in FMCG companies. It also defines the essential characteristics of an eco-brand and proposes the author's definition of this concept. Furthermore, a conceptual model of eco-branding for FMCG companies is developed, encompassing the key factors, stages, and expected outcomes of eco-brand development in the digital environment.

The second section presents the validation of the proposed model based on the analysis of international and Ukrainian practices of FMCG companies. It highlights the practical aspects of implementing digital eco-branding and emphasises its role in creating added consumer value and enhancing companies' competitiveness.

1. Eco-branding of FMCG companies in the context of sustainable development

1.1. The concept of sustainable development: goals and their implementation by FMCG companies

The concept of sustainable development began to emerge in the late 1960s as a response to the global crisis. During this period, members of the non-governmental organisation the Club of Rome developed approaches to analysing the crisis and identified the major socio-economic challenges facing humanity (Zaitseva, 2019). For the following three decades, the programs and initiatives associated with this concept were implemented primarily at the global and national levels. The possibility of integrating sustainable development principles into business activities at the micro level was first discussed at the World Economic Forum in 1999 during the presentation of the Global Compact initiative. In 2000, the United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan launched the United Nations Global Compact as a platform for cooperation between the United Nations and the business community, based on ten principles covering human rights, labour, the environment, and anti-corruption (Global Compact Network Ukraine, 2025b). In September 2015, all 193 United Nations Member States adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, committing to the achievement of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

In recent years, the concept of sustainable development has gained prominence due to the growing environmental, social, and economic challenges affecting societies worldwide, as well as individual countries, regions, industries, and enterprises that are structural components of national economies. For FMCG companies, the implementation of sustainable development principles involves not only corporate social responsibility but also the adoption of environmental initiatives and cooperation with public institutions and civil society organisations (*Table 1*). This approach supports the development of an eco-brand, which directly contributes to stronger customer loyalty and greater support from key stakeholder groups, thereby enhancing the company's economic performance.

Table 1

**The 17 sustainable development goals for implementation
by FMCG companies**

№	Sustainable development goals	Global Directions for implementation by 2030	Implementation directions for FMCG companies
1	No poverty	Eradicate poverty in all its forms by reducing extreme deprivation, expanding social protection, ensuring equal access to resources and services, strengthening the resilience of vulnerable groups, and reinforcing financial and institutional support mechanisms	Implement fair wage and employee social protection programs, ensure equal access to professional development opportunities, and support vulnerable groups through social partnership initiatives. These measures contribute to reducing employee poverty while strengthening the brand's positive social impact
2	Zero hunger	End hunger and all forms of malnutrition by ensuring access to safe and nutritious food, increasing the productivity and incomes of small-scale producers, promoting sustainable agricultural ecosystems, preserving genetic diversity, and fostering fair and resilient food markets	Adopt sustainable production practices, support small-scale suppliers, and provide consumers with affordable, high-quality products. These efforts contribute to reducing hunger and malnutrition while strengthening the brand's contribution to sustainable development
3	Good health and well-being	Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all by reducing mortality, combating communicable and non-communicable diseases, expanding access to quality healthcare services and essential medicines, strengthening disease prevention, supporting mental health, and minimizing the impact of environmental hazards	Ensure product safety, implement environmentally responsible solutions, support employee health and well-being, provide consumer education programs, and responsibly manage environmental impacts. These efforts contribute to improving the quality of life and promoting people's well-being while strengthening the brand's social value
4	Quality education	Ensure inclusive, equitable, and high-quality education for all by reducing inequalities, developing relevant skills, supporting inclusive and safe learning environments, and fostering the competencies required for sustainable development	Invest in employee training and professional development, support educational initiatives for young people and vulnerable groups, provide equal opportunities for career advancement, and foster a culture of lifelong learning. These efforts strengthen the brand's intellectual capital and support its long-term competitiveness
5	Gender equality	Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls by eliminating discrimination and violence, promoting participation in decision-making, ensuring equal access to resources and services, and creating conditions for the full realisation of their rights and opportunities	Ensure equal opportunities for women at all organisational levels, prevent discrimination and violence, implement diversity, equity, and gender equality policies, and support leadership development and equal access to resources. These efforts strengthen the brand's social responsibility and reputation

Continued from the Table 1

№	Sustainable development goals	Global directions for implementation by 2030	Implementation directions for FMCG companies
6	Clean water and sanitation	Ensure universal access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation, improve water-use efficiency, enhance water quality, restore water-related ecosystems, and strengthen water resources management at all levels	Implement efficient water resource management, introduce water treatment and reuse practices in production processes, support water conservation initiatives, and engage local communities. These efforts enhance operational resilience and strengthen the brand's social responsibility
7	Affordable and clean energy	Ensure universal access to affordable, reliable, and modern energy, significantly increase the share of renewable energy sources, improve energy efficiency, and promote the development of clean technologies and sustainable energy systems	Adopt renewable energy sources, improve the energy efficiency of production processes, modernise equipment, and support the implementation of clean technologies. These efforts reduce the company's carbon footprint and reinforce the brand's commitment to sustainable development
8	Decent work and economic growth	Promote sustained economic growth, increase productivity, foster decent employment and entrepreneurship, ensure the efficient use of resources, and protect labour rights for all, including young people and vulnerable populations	Create decent jobs, invest in employee skills development, support innovation, and promote the efficient use of resources. These efforts contribute to sustainable business growth and strengthen the brand's social responsibility
9	Industry, innovation and infrastructure	Build resilient, inclusive, and sustainable infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialisation, enhance productivity, and improve access to financial and technological resources, with particular emphasis on developing vulnerable and less-developed regions	Modernize production infrastructure, improve resource efficiency, adopt clean technologies, and promote innovation and digital transformation. These efforts support sustainable manufacturing and enhance the brand's competitiveness
10	Reduced inequalities	Reduce inequalities within and among countries by increasing the incomes of disadvantaged populations, ensuring equal opportunities, protecting human rights through effective legislation, promoting inclusive participation in society, and supporting fair financial and migration policies	Ensure equal opportunities for all employees, provide fair compensation, implement inclusive policies, and support programs for vulnerable groups. These efforts contribute to reducing social inequalities and strengthening the brand's social responsibility
12	Responsible consumption and production	Ensure sustainable consumption and production through the efficient use of resources, the reduction of waste and food loss, the environmentally sound management of chemicals, and increased public environmental awareness	Adopt sustainable production practices, reduce waste and product losses, promote efficient use of resources, and ensure transparent reporting on environmental practices. These efforts improve business efficiency and strengthen the brand's reputation as a responsible business

End of Table 1

№	Sustainable development goals	Global directions for implementation by 2030	Implementation directions for FMCG companies
13	Climate action	Strengthen resilience to climate change and natural disasters, integrate climate adaptation measures into policies and strategies, and enhance public awareness and capacity to mitigate the impacts of climate change, particularly among vulnerable populations	Implement climate adaptation measures, reduce the company's carbon footprint, adopt environmentally responsible production processes, and provide educational programs for employees and consumers. These efforts enhance business resilience and reinforce the brand's commitment to environmental responsibility
14	Life below water	Conserve and sustainably use marine resources by protecting the marine environment and restoring marine and coastal ecosystems	Introduce environmentally responsible packaging, minimise waste discharge into aquatic ecosystems, support the sustainable sourcing of marine resources, and participate in projects to restore coastal and marine ecosystems. These efforts contribute to protecting marine biodiversity and strengthening the brand's environmental responsibility
15	Life on land	Protect, restore, and promote the sustainable use of forests, mountains, wetlands, and other terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems, prevent land degradation, and combat poaching and illegal wildlife trade	Promote environmentally responsible land use and sustainable raw material sourcing, support the restoration of degraded lands and reforestation, avoid sourcing materials from illegal sources, and conduct environmental awareness campaigns for employees and local communities. These efforts contribute to biodiversity conservation and strengthen the brand's environmental responsibility
16	Peace, justice and strong institutions	Promote peaceful and inclusive societies by reducing violence, protecting human rights, upholding the rule of law, strengthening transparency, accountability, and the effectiveness of public institutions, and combating corruption and illicit financial flows	Foster a safe working environment, ensure compliance with legal and ethical standards, implement zero-tolerance policies toward violence, discrimination, and corruption, provide employee training, and promote social responsibility and community engagement. These efforts strengthen corporate integrity and reinforce the brand's reputation
17	Partnerships for the goals	Strengthen global partnerships by mobilising financial, technological, and human resources, promoting international trade, facilitating knowledge sharing, and building capacity to achieve all Sustainable Development Goals	Foster strategic partnerships, leverage resources and innovation, invest in employee development, ensure transparency, and integrate sustainable development principles into all business processes. These efforts strengthen long-term collaboration and support the achievement of sustainable development objectives

Source: developed by the authors based on (Global Compact Network Ukraine, n. d. a, n. d. b).

Promoting awareness of the implementation of sustainable development principles by FMCG companies involves positioning them as eco-brands, employer brands, and other socially responsible brands. The application of branding enables companies to enhance their value for target audiences and society as a whole by creating a consistent customer experience, ultimately supporting the achievement of their strategic business objectives.

1.2. Eco-branding of FMCG companies in the digital environment

Within the concept of sustainable development, considerable attention is devoted to environmental issues, providing a foundation for the implementation of environmental initiatives by FMCG companies. This involves integrating the principles of resource efficiency, waste reduction, and energy efficiency into all business processes. As contemporary consumers increasingly prefer environmentally responsible companies, the adoption of sustainable development practices by FMCG companies contributes to building consumer trust and strengthening customer loyalty. In this context, the development of eco-brands has become a strategic necessity for FMCG companies, as it enables them to systematically demonstrate their environmental responsibility, reflect it in their products and marketing communications, and thereby strengthen consumer trust and loyalty while creating a sustainable competitive advantage.

Against this background, it is important to establish clear conceptual definitions of the terms eco-brand and eco-branding in order to clarify their essence and identify the key stages in the development, promotion, and growth of an eco-brand for FMCG companies.

The analysis of the scientific literature indicates that the concepts of "eco-brand" ("ecological brand") (Deynega et al., 2025) and "green brand" (Loučanová et al., 2021; Zinchenko et al., 2023) are used interchangeably, as both describe brands that offer products with minimal environmental impact and implement environmental initiatives based on sustainable development principles. For the purposes of this study, the term "eco-brand" has been adopted to ensure conceptual consistency, owing to its conciseness, terminological neutrality, and widespread use in both contemporary academic literature and business practice. Unlike the term "green brand", which often carries metaphorical or predominantly communication-oriented connotations, the term "eco-brand" is more universal and better suited to academic analysis because it encompasses not only the environmental characteristics of products but also the value-based and strategic dimensions of brand management.

Based on a content analysis of the scientific literature (Blazhei, 2016; Loučanová et al., 2021; Zinchenko et al., 2023; Lopes et al., 2024; Hegde et al., 2025; Deynega et al., 2025; Chygrin & Usova, 2025), the essential characteristics of the "eco-brand" concept were identified:

- *integration of sustainable development principles into business activities*, combining environmental, social, and economic dimensions;

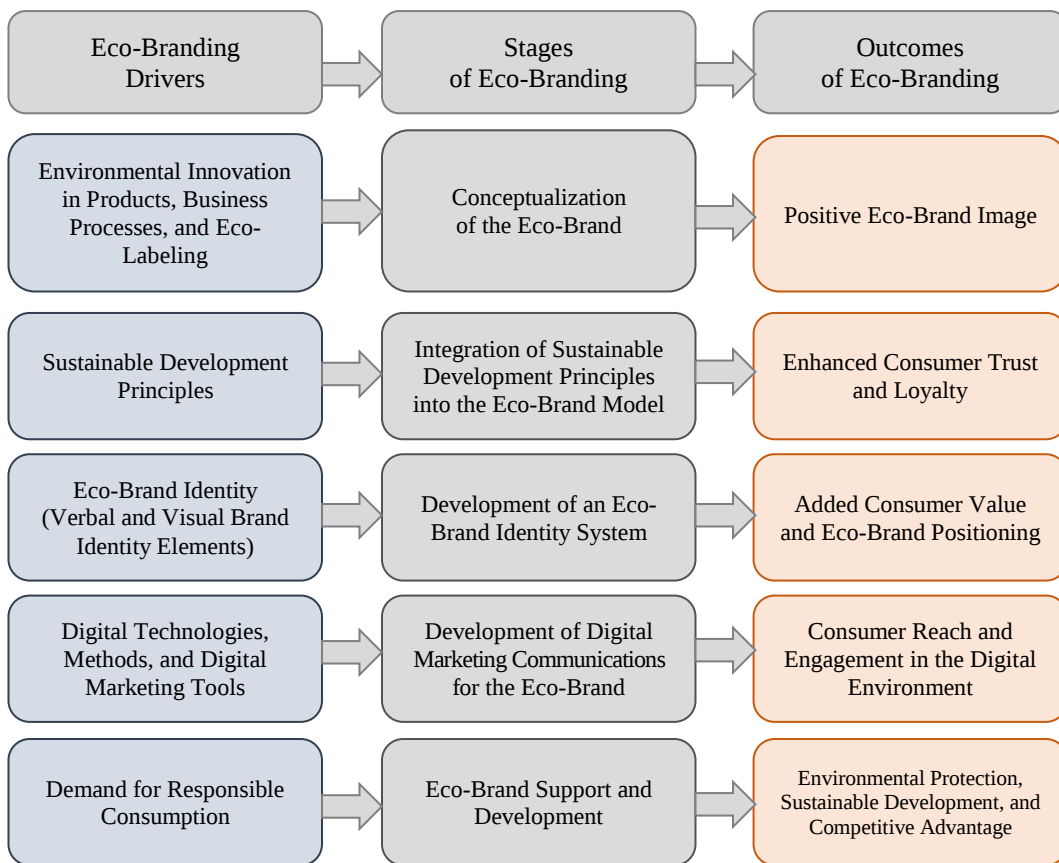
- *environmental orientation of business operations*, aimed at minimising environmental impacts through environmentally responsible products, technologies, and business processes;
- *a system of environmental values and brand identity*, including eco-brand positioning, a corresponding creative concept, and a coherent system of eco-brand identity elements;
- *environmentally oriented communication through eco-labelling*, transparent communication, and socially responsible promotion that informs stakeholders about the company's environmental initiatives;
- *the development of positive consumer perceptions* by creating an environmental brand image that fosters trust, evokes positive emotions, and influences consumer attitudes and behaviour;
- *consumer engagement in environmental practices* through the development of communities and encouragement of participation in environmental initiatives;
- *the creation of added consumer value and competitive advantages* derived from the environmental attributes of the brand.

The identification of these essential characteristics enabled the authors to formulate their interpretation of the concept under study. An eco-brand is a brand built upon a company's environmental and social responsibility and the environmental characteristics of its products and business processes. It integrates sustainable development principles into the brand's values, identity, and communications, thereby creating a positive environmental brand image and added consumer value.

The scientific novelty of the proposed definition lies in broadening the concept of an eco-brand by considering it not merely as a carrier of environmentally friendly product characteristics or a tool for green positioning, but as the outcome of integrating a company's environmentally and socially responsible activities with the environmental characteristics of its products and business processes. Unlike existing approaches, the proposed definition emphasises the integration of sustainable development principles into the brand's values, identity, and communications. It also highlights the role of an eco-brand in creating a positive environmental brand image and enhancing consumer value.

The application of the eco-brand concept by FMCG companies involves integrating environmental principles into product policy, production processes, packaging, and brand communications, thereby creating added consumer value and strengthening consumer trust. Taking these features into account not only helps reduce environmental impacts but also creates long-term competitive advantages for brands in the fast-moving consumer goods market. In this context, digital marketing tools play a pivotal role by enabling the effective promotion of the brand's environmental values in the digital environment and further strengthening the positive image of an eco-brand through the creation of added consumer value.

To better understand the essence of an eco-brand, it is necessary to examine the process of its creation, promotion, and development within the operations of FMCG companies in today's digital environment. In this context, an eco-brand is viewed as the outcome of purposeful managerial and marketing activities aimed at integrating environmental values into the brand system. Accordingly, further attention should be given to the concept of eco-branding as a process of creating, promoting, and developing brands based on the principles of environmental responsibility and sustainable development. A content analysis of the literature on eco-branding (Boyenko, 2019; Gavrylets et al., 2022; Bondarenko & Syazin, 2024; Davidenko et al., 2025; Hegde et al., 2025; Chygrin & Usova, 2025) made it possible to identify the key drivers, stages, and outcomes of eco-branding and to adapt them for application by FMCG companies in the digital environment (*Figure*).



Conceptual model of eco-branding in the digital environment

Source: developed by the authors.

The drivers of eco-branding influence the development of an eco-brand. The systematic implementation of the stages of eco-branding ensures its effective market positioning. The key outcomes of the proposed conceptual model reflect both consumer and environmental value. The effectiveness of the model is enhanced through the application of digital

technologies, methods, and digital marketing tools to support the promotion and development of the eco-brand in today's digital environment. Consideration of the essential characteristics of an eco-brand, together with the drivers, stages, and outcomes of eco-branding, contributes to enhancing the competitiveness of FMCG companies.

2. Validation of the eco-branding model in the digital environment

2.1. International experience in eco-branding: the case of unilever

To demonstrate the practical applicability of the proposed conceptual model of eco-branding in the digital environment (see *Figure*), the model was validated using the example of *Unilever*, one of the world's leading FMCG companies operating in the food, personal care, and home care markets. Over several decades, the company has systematically developed its brand as environmentally and socially responsible, guided by the principles of sustainable development and committed to ambitious goals to improve environmental sustainability and quality of life. *Unilever* introduced its Sustainable Living Plan in 2010 (Unilever, 2010). Since then, the company's approach to sustainable development has continuously evolved in response to emerging environmental, social, and economic challenges, requiring ongoing adaptation of its business model to the changing global environment. At the core of this strategy is the integration of sustainable development principles into every aspect of the company's operations, which serves as a key driver of its competitiveness.

As Rebecca Marmot, Chief Sustainability Officer at *Unilever*, stated: "We've made deliberate strategic choices about where to focus and have achieved encouraging early progress toward our goals. At the same time, we are increasing our focus on systemic sustainability challenges to drive changes that benefit both our business and society" (Darley, 2025).

To enhance business performance while expanding its positive impact on society and the environment, *Unilever* is implementing a comprehensive business transformation centred on four strategic priorities: addressing climate change, protecting natural ecosystems, reducing plastic pollution, and improving livelihoods. These priorities form the foundation of the company's environmental and social responsibility strategy and demonstrate its commitment to combining economic performance with long-term environmental and societal value.

The analysis of *Unilever*'s activities demonstrates a high level of corporate responsibility reflected in the systematic integration of the environmental, social, and economic dimensions of sustainable development into all business processes. The company effectively implements the full eco-branding cycle in accordance with the conceptual model presented in *Figure* (Table 2).

Table 2

Systematisation of unilever's practices according to the eco-branding Model in the digital environment

Elements of the Model	Implementation in unilever's activities
<i>Eco-branding drivers</i>	
Environmental Innovation in Products, Business Processes, and Eco-Labeling	<i>Unilever</i> systematically integrates environmental innovation into its product policy and business operations, including reducing the use of virgin plastic (by approximately 20–25% since 2019), transitioning to reusable, recyclable, or compostable packaging (targeting 100% by 2030–2035), increasing the share of recycled plastic (to approximately 20–25% across its global portfolio), developing alternative packaging formats (refill and reuse), implementing regenerative agricultural practices to improve soil health and reduce carbon emissions, and exploring alternatives to fossil-based raw materials in chemical products
Sustainable Development Principles	<i>Unilever</i> integrates sustainable development principles into its strategic management through its ESG approach and the <i>Sustainable Living Plan</i> . Key priorities include achieving net zero emissions, transitioning to sustainably sourced raw materials (approximately 75–80% of key agricultural commodities are already sustainably certified), combating plastic pollution, and ensuring living wages and livelihoods across its supply chains. The company's activities are aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goals 12, 13, and 15
Eco-Brand Identity	The company's eco-brand identity is shaped through the consistent communication of sustainable development values, including the publication of sustainability reports, the integration of environmental messages across its brand portfolio (e.g., <i>Dove</i> and <i>Hellmann's</i>), the use of eco-labelling, and a strong emphasis on social responsibility and transparency. A key element of <i>Unilever's</i> positioning is its identity as a purpose-driven business, where environmental and social commitments are embedded in the brand architecture
Digital Technologies	The company actively leverages digital technologies to enhance the transparency and effectiveness of its environmental initiatives, including digital supplier management platforms, the use of Big Data to monitor emissions and resource consumption, digital traceability tools for sustainably sourced raw materials, satellite data for monitoring agricultural practices, and interactive ESG reports and online dashboards
Demand for Responsible Consumption	The company actively responds to the global trend of rising consumer environmental awareness, particularly among Generation Z and Millennials, who are more willing to pay a premium for environmentally responsible products. In response, <i>Unilever</i> continues to expand its portfolio of sustainable brands, which consistently achieve higher growth rates than the company's other product categories
<i>Eco-branding stages</i>	
Conceptualisation of the Eco-Brand	The conceptual foundation of <i>Unilever's</i> eco-brand was established through the <i>Sustainable Living Plan</i> (2010), which defined the company's strategic commitment to combining business growth with reducing environmental impacts and enhancing the social value of its operations
Integration of Sustainable Development Principles into the Eco-Brand Model	Environmental and social objectives are integrated throughout the entire value chain, from raw material sourcing (eliminating deforestation and implementing supplier certification) to manufacturing (transitioning to renewable energy) and logistics (reducing transportation-related carbon emissions)
Development of an Eco-Brand Identity System	A global identity of a responsible brand is developed through a unified system of visual and semantic markers, including eco-packaging, labelling, communication style, and corporate reports. The brand is associated with innovation, transparency, and responsibility
Development of Digital Marketing Communications for the Eco-Brand	The company implements large-scale digital campaigns to promote sustainable consumption, making extensive use of social media, video content, interactive platforms, ESG communications, and storytelling. Particular emphasis is placed on educational content, including campaigns focused on reducing food waste and conserving water

Elements of the Model	Implementation in unilever's activities
Eco-Brand Support and Development	The company continuously updates its sustainability objectives in response to emerging global challenges, publishes regular non-financial (management) reports, participates in international initiatives, and develops partnerships with governments and businesses to maximise the impact of its sustainability efforts
<i>Eco-Branding Outcomes</i>	The implementation of eco-branding contributes to a high level of brand trust, strong global consumer loyalty, increased sales of sustainable brands, the development of a strong eco-brand image, and long-term competitive advantage. It also enhances the company's investment attractiveness and reputational capital

Source: systematised by the authors based on (Unilever, n.d.; Darley, 2025).

An important aspect of validating the proposed conceptual model of eco-branding in the digital environment is the analysis of digital marketing tools and digital marketing communications used to support the eco-brand. Unilever actively employs official digital platforms (corporate websites and sustainability dashboards), social media to promote environmental initiatives, data-driven marketing to personalise communications, and digital reporting supported by publicly available ESG data. The use of these tools enhances transparency, expands consumer reach, and strengthens engagement in the digital environment. Thus, Unilever's experience demonstrates that effective eco-branding requires the comprehensive integration of environmental initiatives and digital marketing tools throughout every stage of eco-brand development.

The scientific value of Unilever's experience lies in its practical implementation of the triple-bottom-line approach to sustainable development (economy, society, and the environment) (Unilever, 2010; Unilever, n. d.). The company demonstrates that integrating environmental performance, social equity, and economic performance creates a synergistic effect that strengthens the competitiveness of its eco-brand. A particularly innovative aspect of Unilever's approach is its commitment to developing a circular eco-brand economy, in which products, business processes, and brand communications are designed according to the principles of circular resource use, digital transparency, and collaborative ecosystems. This approach enables the company not only to minimise its environmental impact but also to transform sustainability into a source of innovation, reputational capital, and long-term consumer loyalty. Overall, Unilever's experience shows that the strategic integration of sustainable development principles into business practice can generate mutual reinforcement between environmental responsibility, social responsibility, and commercial performance, transforming the company into a globally recognised eco-brand that sets new standards for corporate culture and responsible consumption.

2.2. Digital marketing toolkit for FMCG companies

To further enhance the practical applicability of the proposed eco-branding model in the digital environment, digital marketing tools were systematized according to the stages of eco-branding using the digital consumer journey model consisting of Awareness, Consideration, Conversion, Loyalty, and Advocacy (Chukurna & Kofman, 2023; Iankovets, 2025; Tatarintseva, 2025) (*Table 3*). This approach establishes a clear relationship between the stages of eco-branding and the corresponding digital marketing tools, thereby ensuring effective brand interaction with target audiences. In addition, it supports the achievement of the intended outcomes of eco-branding for FMCG companies, particularly the transformation of environmental value into added consumer value.

At *Unilever*, the application of digital marketing tools follows a systematic approach consistent with the proposed model. During the *Awareness* stage, the company implements global digital marketing campaigns to promote sustainable lifestyles through advertising, video content, social media, and partnership initiatives. During the *Consideration* stage, it actively employs corporate sustainability platforms, educational content, and interactive transparency tools. At the *Conversion* stage, the company utilises targeted advertising, the promotion of products with environmental attributes, and e-commerce integration. During the *Loyalty* and *Advocacy* stages, social media, communication through the company's brand portfolio, and consumer engagement in environmental initiatives (campaign engagement) play a central role. Together, these digital marketing communications ensure a complete consumer engagement cycle and serve as a key driver of effective eco-branding.

The proposed eco-branding model in the digital environment was also validated using the example of the Ukrainian company Chumak PrJSC, founded in 1996. The company was originally engaged in vegetable cultivation and the production of food products based on agricultural raw materials. Following the outbreak of the full-scale war in Ukraine, the company's manufacturing facility located in the city of Kakhovka, Kherson region, came under occupation. As a result, Chumak transitioned to contract manufacturing through the production facilities of its partner companies.

Chumak positions itself as a producer of natural, healthy, and high-quality food products, as evidenced by the "100% Natural" label displayed on its product packaging. At the same time, the company does not publicly report adherence to sustainable development principles or the integration of environmental initiatives into its corporate strategy. The company's official website contains only limited references to environmental innovation. In particular, in 1999, Chumak introduced the environmentally friendly Ekolin packaging, which combines natural calcium carbonate with plastic. The company also launched Chumak sunflower oil, which rapidly strengthened its market position and enabled it to become the second-largest producer in Ukraine's bottled sunflower oil market.

Table 3

Systematisation of digital marketing tools for eco-brands of FMCG companies

Eco-branding stage	Consumer journey stage	Objective	Digital marketing tools	Communication content	Eco-branding outcome
Conceptualisation of the Eco-Brand	Awareness	Build Awareness of the Brand's Environmental Mission and Values	Advertising: Google Ads, YouTube video advertising, Facebook and Instagram Ads, media advertising, PR campaigns, influencer marketing, brand collaborations, and special projects	Communicating Sustainable Development Values and Shaping Initial Brand Perceptions	Building a Positive Eco-Brand Image
Integration of Sustainable Development Principles into the Eco-Brand Model	Consideration	Build Trust and Interest in the Eco-Brand	Blogs, podcasts, online video reviews, Meta (Facebook/Instagram) Ads and content, Google Ads, online forums (comments, discussions, and reviews), ESG pages on corporate websites, search engine marketing (SEM), and interactive sustainability reporting	Explaining environmental initiatives and ensuring transparency	Increased Consumer Trust and Loyalty
Development of an Eco-Brand Identity System	Conversion	Encourage Brand Choice	Targeted advertising, performance marketing, search engine marketing (SEM), affiliate marketing, customer onboarding, email marketing, marketplaces, and e-commerce integrations	Demonstrating the advantages of eco-products and communicating their value proposition	Added Consumer Value and Eco-Brand Positioning
Development of Digital Marketing Communications for the Eco-Brand	Loyalty	Build Customer Loyalty	CRM systems, remarketing, email marketing, personalised offers, social media marketing, positive customer reviews, and mobile applications	Strengthening emotional connections and building trust	Expanded Reach and Consumer Engagement in the Digital Environment
Eco-Brand Support and Development	Advocacy	Foster Brand Advocacy	User-generated content (UGC), online communities, value-added customer support, responsive customer service, and promotional gifting	Encouraging consumers to advocate for the brand	Environmental Protection, Sustainable Development, and Competitive Advantage

Source: developed by the authors.

A significant contribution to the development of Ukraine's agricultural sector was the introduction of a drip irrigation system. Irrigation pipes were imported from Sweden to irrigate 20 hectares of agricultural land, where the company had leased farmland. The results were remarkable: local farmers harvested approximately 80 tons of tomatoes per hectare, five times higher than the yields typically achieved with conventional cultivation methods prior to the introduction of drip irrigation (Chumak, n. d.).

These initiatives partially correspond to Sustainable Development Goal 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure). However, due to the loss of access to its production facilities and agricultural land in the occupied territory, the company is currently unable to continue using this environmentally friendly packaging.

Since the Chumak brand is associated by consumers with natural quality, developing it as an eco-brand would strengthen consumer loyalty, enhance the company's brand image and reputation, and ultimately contribute to increased sales, improved business performance, and greater competitiveness.

From the perspective of environmental sustainability and in line with the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (Global Compact Network Ukraine, n. d. a), the following strategic initiatives are recommended for Chumak PrJSC:

- Supporting the development of the agricultural sector in Ukraine and globally (SDG 2. Zero Hunger; SDG 9. Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure). Given the company's extensive experience in agriculture and its track record of implementing innovative solutions, Chumak should strengthen its innovation-driven approach to agricultural production by scaling sustainable practices and expanding partnerships with research institutions, technology companies, and agricultural producers while considering stakeholder interests to enhance food security.

- Increasing consumers' environmental awareness through systematic educational brand communications (blogs, news, and information campaigns) aimed at fostering a culture of responsible consumption and improving understanding of the environmental consequences of pollution while considering stakeholder interests (SDG 4. Quality Education; SDG 12. Responsible Consumption and Production; SDG 13. Climate Action).

- Promoting gender equality through consistent corporate policies and communications that reflect equal opportunities, equal pay, and the equitable distribution of responsibilities while considering stakeholder interests (SDG 5. Gender Equality).

- Reducing plastic use (SDG 14. Life Below Water; SDG 15. Life on Land). Chumak should transition to biodegradable, environmentally friendly packaging and implement recycling and reusable packaging practices, while considering stakeholder interests to support the protection of marine and terrestrial ecosystems.

- Strengthening environmental and social responsibility through the implementation of systematic environmental initiatives and charitable programs, including participation in environmental restoration projects,

support for volunteer environmental initiatives, funding for agroecological research, and the development of the company's own environmental philanthropy initiatives while considering stakeholder interests to restore damaged ecosystems and strengthen consumer trust (SDG 12. Responsible Consumption and Production; SDG 13. Climate Action; SDG 15. Life on Land; SDG 17. Partnerships for the Goals).

In addition, Chumak PrJSC is encouraged to introduce its own environmental philanthropy program, the "1% for Nature" initiative, under which a portion of the revenue generated from the sale of each product would be allocated to the restoration of ecosystems in southern Ukraine affected by the war and the destruction of the Kakhovka Hydroelectric Power Plant. This initiative combines environmental responsibility with social support for affected communities and is fully aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Table 4 presents the potential applications of digital marketing tools to promote and develop the Chumak eco-brand.

Table 4

Digital marketing tools for the chumak eco-brand

Digital marketing tools	Application	Core message and role in promoting and developing the eco-brand
SMM (Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, YouTube)	Developing a systematic content strategy (eco-themed content series, farmers' stories, operational transparency, charitable initiatives, and sustainability reporting)	Visualises the eco-brand identity through the consistent communication of values related to natural quality, local sourcing, environmental and social responsibility, while fostering an emotional connection with consumers
PR and Content Marketing (Blog and Media)	Educational content focused on sustainable consumption, local production, and environmental initiatives	Builds the brand's image as a trusted advocate of environmental values and increases consumer trust through education and informative communication
Email Marketing	Personalised email campaigns featuring environmental initiatives, new products, and social projects	Supports long-term engagement with consumers and reinforces the brand's values through personalised communication
Influencer Marketing	Collaboration with environmental bloggers, sustainability and food influencers, and chefs	Strengthens trust in the brand through third-party validation and positions it as modern, environmentally conscious, and relevant
Video Marketing (YouTube, Reels, TikTok)	"From Farm to Table" videos, behind-the-scenes production content, and farmers' stories	Enhances transparency by showcasing the authentic product creation process, which serves as a key driver of trust in the eco-brand
SEO and Paid Search Advertising	Promotion for eco-related search queries	Reinforces the eco-brand's positioning in the digital information space as a producer of natural, high-quality products
Community Marketing	Building online communities and engaging with consumers	Builds a community around the eco-brand and fosters the transformation of consumers into loyal supporters and brand advocates
Interactive Digital Activations	Eco-challenges, gamification, and participation in social initiatives	Increases consumer engagement and fosters the behavioural dimension of the eco-brand
ESG Platforms and Corporate Website	Publishing sustainability reports and environmental performance indicators	Ensures transparency and strengthens the rational foundation of trust in the eco-brand

Source: developed by the authors.

Digital marketing tools play a pivotal role in validating the proposed eco-branding model in the digital environment by facilitating the development of the eco-brand identity. Rather than merely communicating environmental commitments, digital marketing communications translate sustainability principles into values, meanings, and brand associations that are meaningful and understandable to consumers. In this context, particular importance is attached to the fourth stage of the proposed digital eco-branding model – the development of digital marketing communications for the eco-brand – which represents the core mechanism for transforming the product's functional attributes (natural quality and product quality) into the brand's intangible assets, including trust, loyalty, and emotional attachment.

Given that the Chumak brand currently lacks a systematic environmental communication strategy, the proposed digital marketing tools should be regarded not only as promotional channels but also as mechanisms for developing an eco-brand identity grounded in the principles of sustainable development. Accordingly, integrating digital marketing tools into the company's activities would enable it to: (1) develop a coherent eco-brand identity; (2) align the brand with contemporary consumer trends; and (3) increase consumer trust and audience engagement.

Conclusions

The concept of sustainable development provides a strategic framework for integrating environmental, social, and economic priorities into the operations of FMCG enterprises.

International and Ukrainian experience in eco-branding demonstrates the effectiveness of integrating sustainable development principles with digital marketing tools to build, promote, and develop eco-brands while simultaneously creating added consumer value. Digital brand communications foster consumer trust and contribute to the development of long-term competitive advantages for FMCG enterprises in the digital environment.

The findings of this study confirm the proposed hypothesis that integrating sustainable development principles into the operations of FMCG enterprises, together with the application of digital marketing tools, facilitates the effective creation, promotion, and development of eco-brands. This made it possible to develop and substantiate a conceptual model of eco-branding for FMCG enterprises in the digital environment, along with a corresponding system of digital marketing tools that enhances consumer trust and strengthens business competitiveness.

Future research should focus on further developing theoretical and methodological approaches to evaluating the effectiveness of eco-branding for FMCG enterprises in the digital environment, particularly by designing a system of indicators that captures the impact of digital marketing communications on consumers' environmental behaviour. Another promising direction is the investigation of the role of innovative digital technologies, particularly Big Data and artificial intelligence (AI), in developing

personalised, environmentally oriented communications. Further attention should also be devoted to examining the risks of greenwashing and developing mechanisms to enhance the transparency of eco-brands in the digital environment.

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