

Responsible Marketing and Socially Responsible Marketing: A Systematic Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

This study conducts a PRISMA-guided systematic literature review of responsible marketing and socially responsible marketing (SRM), focusing on core definitions, related concepts, and SRM marketing-mix characteristics. Using thematic analysis of 52 articles published between 2004 and 2024, the review traces publication trends and conceptual development and examines how SRM is operationalised across the marketing mix (product, price, promotion, place, people, process, and physical evidence). Key themes include SRM's theoretical foundations, consumer psychology and the attitude-behaviour gap, CSR-driven branding, ethical challenges such as greenwashing, and the role of global contexts. The review provides a rigorous, cross-disciplinary synthesis and highlights SRM as a shift from profit-centred marketing to stakeholder- and sustainability-oriented practice, offering directions for future research and application.

Keywords: Responsible Marketing, Socially Responsible Marketing (SRM), Ethical Consumption, Sustainability, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

1. INTRODUCTION

CSR has evolved in the last few decades from being a more or less irrelevant and purely philanthropic matter to being a core component of corporate strategy, impacting brand equity, consumer loyalty, and long-term competitiveness (Demeke & Ravi, 2024; A. Singh & Verma, 2017). CSR is the economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic responsibility a firm owes to its stakeholders (Carroll, 1999). It is the intention to integrate social and environmental activities into the regular course of business (Ferrell & Ferrell, 2022). As organisations are subjected to growing societal pressure to do business as responsible corporate citizens, it is clear in international markets that customers increasingly evaluate brands based on the social contributions they make (Patino et al., 2014; Webb et al., 2008). From a consumer insight perspective, SRM is a marketing mix that can be construed as an extended definition of the concept of CSR. In other words, SRM examines issues related to marketing, sustainability, and corporate citizenship by utilising elements of the marketing mix: enterprises, products, prices, places, and promotions (Ferrell & Ferrell, 2022). Such issues raise the potential of giving the consumer confidence, developing brand image, and building lasting relationships (A. Singh & Verma, 2017;

Vasylyshyna et al., 2024), which means that companies stand to reap enormous benefits of social responsibility, provided that marketing value is drawn from the social responsibility-related outcomes. The association between CSR marketing and consumer behaviour is very complex, affected mostly by other variables linked with brand authenticity, self-enhancement motives, and perceived brand cause fit (Ilicic et al., 2019; Yoon et al., 2020). Laczniak & Murphy (2006) conducted the study titled “*Normative Perspectives for Ethical and Socially Responsible Marketing*” that systematically analysed the seven normative perspectives that involved multiple aspirational dimensions inherent in ethical marketing and social responsibility that are related through the combination of theorising a basic perspective, according to the tenets of normative theory.

Recently, Vasylyshyna et al. (2024) studied the development of marketing research technologies as the basis of an SRM strategy, examining the relationship between digital technologies of marketing research and directions of SRM strategy. Also, Yousfi (2024) conducted a study on “*Does CSR increase innovation? Evidence from France*”, examining the period between 2005 and 2016, which reported significant relationships between CSR performance, especially social and governance performances, and technological innovations introducing new products. Empirical evidence indicates that CSR impacts consumers’ behaviour in multiple ways. CSR activities can have positive effects on purchase intentions, perceived corporate image, and customer loyalty (Demeke & Ravi, 2024; R. Singh & Malla, 2017; Yu & Hwang, 2019). Specifically, consumers can reward socially responsible firms through brand-switching and willingness-to-pay premiums when variables of price and quality are equivalent (Webb et al., 2008). Additionally, there are cultural, demographic, and psychographic factors, such as gender, income, inner-versus-outer self-motivation, and cultural background,

that moderate consumer reactions to CSR initiatives (Patino et al., 2014; Yoon et al., 2020). The credibility of CSR communications has become an important factor in effectiveness. Research in cause-related marketing (CaRM) indicates that co-branding credibility for the company, cause, and celebrity endorsers may be a greater influence on purchase intention than simply cause brand fit (Ilicic et al., 2019). Consumer scepticism continues to be a barrier for CSR communications, and CSR initiatives that seem opportunistic or contrived in relation to the company’s core competencies are especially problematic (Davis, 2013; Jahdi, 2014a). The attitude behaviour gap presents significant marketing challenges because positive attitudes have not translated to authentic behaviour, including purchase behaviour (Carrigan et al., 2011).

In the past few decades, society has increasingly expected that companies should conduct themselves in ways that balance the desire to be profitable as a business with their ethical, social, and environmental responsibilities. This societal change has facilitated the rise of the concepts of SRM and Socially responsible consumption behaviour (SRCB), based on the thought that marketing should be a process of satisfying the needs of customers as well as long-term intentions for societal good (Kotler, 2000; G. Laczniak & Shultz, 2021a). The SRM framework rights the ship from a focus on shareholder wealth to a stakeholder-orientated view of marketing by including the self-authentic interests of multiple individuals and groups in the strategy development process (Maignan et al., 2005, 2011a). Based on the normative-ethical perspective, SRM builds upon notions of corporate citizenship, social and ecological sustainability, and notions of distributive justice and acknowledges that firms have an implied social contract to engage in marketing practices that are proactive and not discretionary in promoting human well-being (G. Laczniak & Shultz, 2021a; Sheth & Parvatiyar, 2022). These perspectives formally recognise that the excellence of

marketing is not based simply on financial performance but on its promotion of societal flourishing, environmental stewardship, and fair value distribution, especially for marginalised and vulnerable stakeholders (Santos, 2022)

In terms of consumers, SRCB (Socially Responsible Consumer Behaviour) is defined as purchasing and consumption decisions made with the goal of minimising negative environmental or social consequences and maximising positive societal outcomes (Webb et al., 2008). Empirical studies indicate that consumers with self-transcendence values, which are typified by values of benevolence and universalism, are much more likely to participate in SRCB (e.g., recycling, buying environmentally friendly products, not buying unethical brands) than individuals with self-enhancement values, which are driven by social rank and personal advantage (Golob et al., 2008; Lee & Cho, 2019). In addition, demographic factors, including age and gender, also influence SRCB engagement, with older adults and women engaging in SRCB considerably more than younger adults and men (Ali & Mandurah, 2016; Lee & Cho, 2019). When considered from a strategic marketing perspective, socially responsible activities can improve brand reputation, provide a stronger attachment to the brand, and impact purchase intentions, provided the activities are communicated transparently and genuinely (Mandal & Banerjee, 2019; Wibowo et al., 2019). Stakeholders in society, including consumers, the community, etc., are increasingly calling for real action, not symbolic or “greenwashing” actions in support of social issues. Therefore, organisations must genuinely address CSR behaviour that is directly connected to the core brand and can be communicated with credibility (Andrianova & Yeletsikh, 2012; Polonsky & Jevons, 2006). Furthermore, as organisations develop effective SRM strategies in both global and local contexts, they must also gain a greater awareness of many complex social issues, the

corresponding cultural contexts, and the varying expectations of their stakeholders, whilst also marketing to, with and for marginalised and impoverished communities in inclusive and equitable ways (Santos, 2022).

This research will focus on responsible marketing and SRM, which entail ethical considerations that emphasise the well-being of consumers, the health of the environment, and the welfare of the community rather than merely maximising profits as dictated by the market. On a global scale, organisations employing SRM contribute to addressing societal challenges, such as climate change and social inequality, and create customers who trust them and become loyal for the long term (Kotler, 2000). The increase in the number of studies related to SRM has made it necessary to examine their contents and evolution over time. To conduct this SLR of the body of knowledge on responsible marketing and SRM, it will be conducted guided by these research questions.

- Research Question 1: What are the core definitions of responsible marketing and SRM and its related concepts?
- Research Question 2: What Are the Key Characteristics of the SRM Mix Elements?

To maximise coverage and consistency, a literature search will be conducted using the Scopus database. The review examines peer-reviewed scholarly articles published in English from 2004 to 2024 related to the terms ‘responsible marketing’ and ‘socially responsible marketing’. Scopus was chosen over other reviews of the literature databases based on its breadth of indexing high-quality peer-reviewed journals in three disciplines, including business, management, and accounting; social science; and arts and humanities. The article is arranged as follows. The next section will describe the systematic literature review protocol and the methodological decisions made throughout the analysis. The results follow, starting with publication trends and themes in the literature. The article closes with a discussion of practical implications and limitations.

2. SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE AND METHODOLOGY

SLR studies were developed in industries and fields of research, predominantly in the area of healthcare. Nonetheless, more recently, SLR research papers have been published in various disciplines, such as social science and management. Recent literature observes the reporting of SLR studies; SLR reporting is often guided by reporting frameworks such as PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses). PRISMA is a framework that contains a checklist as part of the reporting structure. PRISMA is an updated version of the QUOROM (Quality of Reporting of Meta-analyses) guidelines with its extension PRISMA-P. The PRISMA methodology was first suggested by Moher et al. (2009). Shamseer et al. (2015) Further explained and updated the PRISMA methodology in 2015; Palmatier et al. (2018) This means that SLRs can be categorised as domain-based, theory-based, and method-based reviews. Paul et al. (2021) categorised other forms of SLR methods, such as structured theme-based reviews, framework-based reviews, bibliometric reviews, hybrid reviews, conceptual reviews, meta-analytical reviews and meta-systematic reviews. They also created the SPAR-4-SLR Framework (Scientific Procedures and Rationales for Systematic Literature Reviews), which aligns with the “3A’s”: Assemble, Arrange, and Assess, as published in the International Journal of Consumer Studies. Moreover, Paul et al. (2024) presented a comprehensive,

detailed and extensive framework for developing impactful SLRs and should contribute to theory building, under the title *Frameworks for Developing Impactful Systematic Literature Reviews and Theory Building: What, Why and How?*

The current study is based on the SLR approach to identify literature in responsible marketing with a focus on SRM, from Dangelico & Vocalelli (2017), “*Green Marketing: An Analysis of Definitions, Strategy Steps, and Tools through a Systematic Review of the Literature,*” published in the Journal of Cleaner Production. Using an SLR method, this research examines the knowledge of responsible marketing, responsible marketing practices, and SRM, based on the business and management perspective. The study focuses on peer-reviewed journal articles published from 2004 to 2024. These dates were chosen to capture the most current developments and insights regarding responsible marketing and its related practices from the field.

2.1 Data Collection

Authors only focused on these studies of Scopus databases with *Boolean search* or *search strings* using the keywords “*Responsible*” OR “*Responsibility*” AND “*Marketing*” AND “*Responsible Marketing*” AND “*Socially Responsible Marketing*” with inclusion criteria for years, subject area, document types, publication stage, source type, and language. Details of the search options are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Database and search options

Database	Search options	
Scopus	Search in	Article Title, Abstract
	Data range	2004 to 2024
	Publication stage	Final
	Document type	Article
	Source type	Journal
	Subject area	Business, Management and Accounting, Social Science, Arts and Humanities
	Keywords	Responsible, Responsibility, Marketing, Responsible Marketing, Socially Responsible Marketing.
	Language	English
	Search string	“Responsible” OR “Responsibility” AND “Marketing” AND “Responsible Marketing” AND “Socially Responsible Marketing”

Source: Author’s own work

2.2 Screening and Selection Process

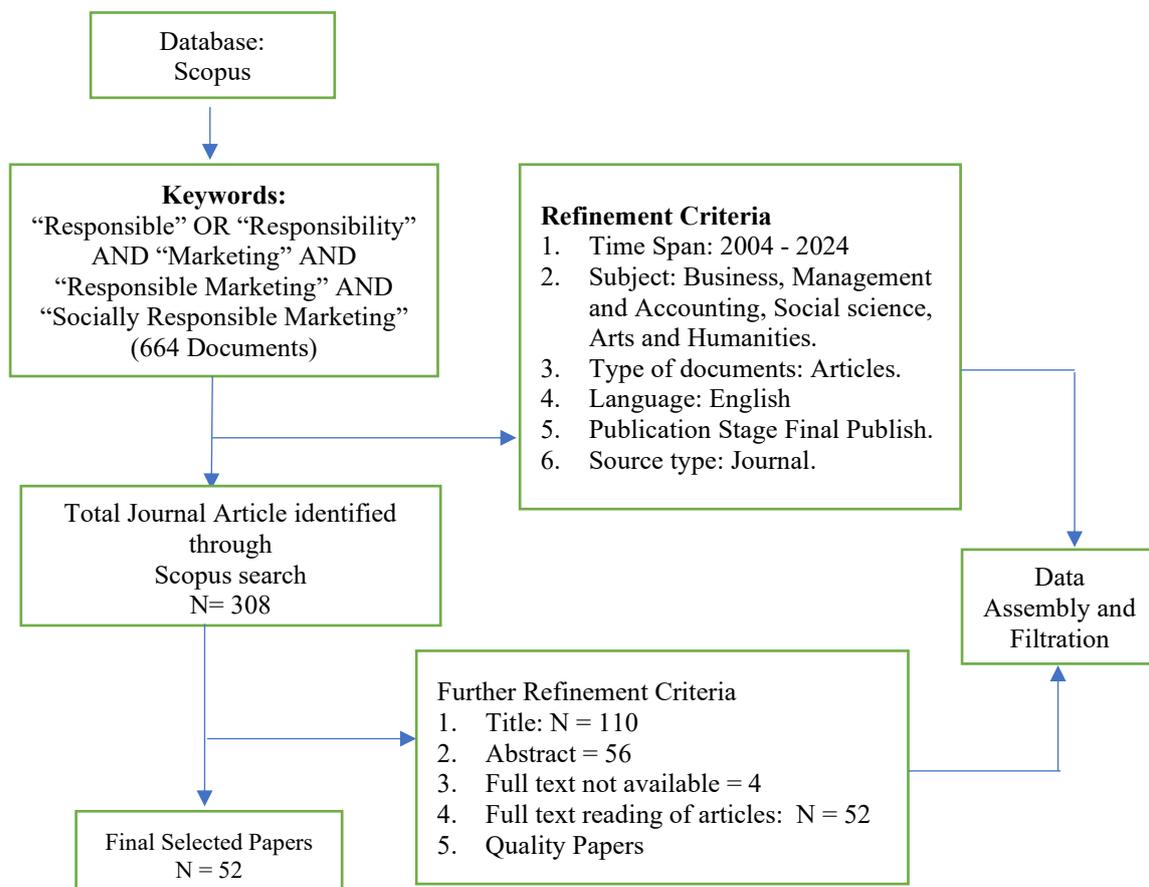
The screening process was conducted in multiple stages to filter relevant studies rigorously. The steps of the study selection process are reported in Fig. 1.

1. Initial Screening: From the 664 documents, duplicates were removed, and only articles with final publication status were considered, reducing the pool to 308 journal articles.
2. Title Screening: Articles whose titles indicated direct relevance to responsible marketing were retained, resulting in 110 articles.
3. Abstract Screening: Abstracts of these 110 articles were reviewed to assess alignment with the research focus, narrowing the selection to 56 articles.
4. Full Text Availability: Four articles were excluded due to the unavailability of full text.
5. Full Text Review: The remaining 52 articles were subjected to in-depth full-

text reading to ensure methodological rigour, topical relevance, and quality.

2.3 Data Extraction and Analysis

Data extraction took place for each of the final 52 articles included for review. Table 2 reports these findings journal-wise. The information extracted included authorship, year of publication, journal, research objectives, research methods, main results, and conclusions related to responsible marketing and SRM. The information extracted was qualitatively synthesised to identify key themes associated with the theoretical approaches and trends in the research. Thus, the methodological approach provides a comprehensive and critical overview of the development and current state of responsible marketing and SRM literature by identifying gaps and future research opportunities that can enhance understanding and practice within the discipline.



Source: Author's own work

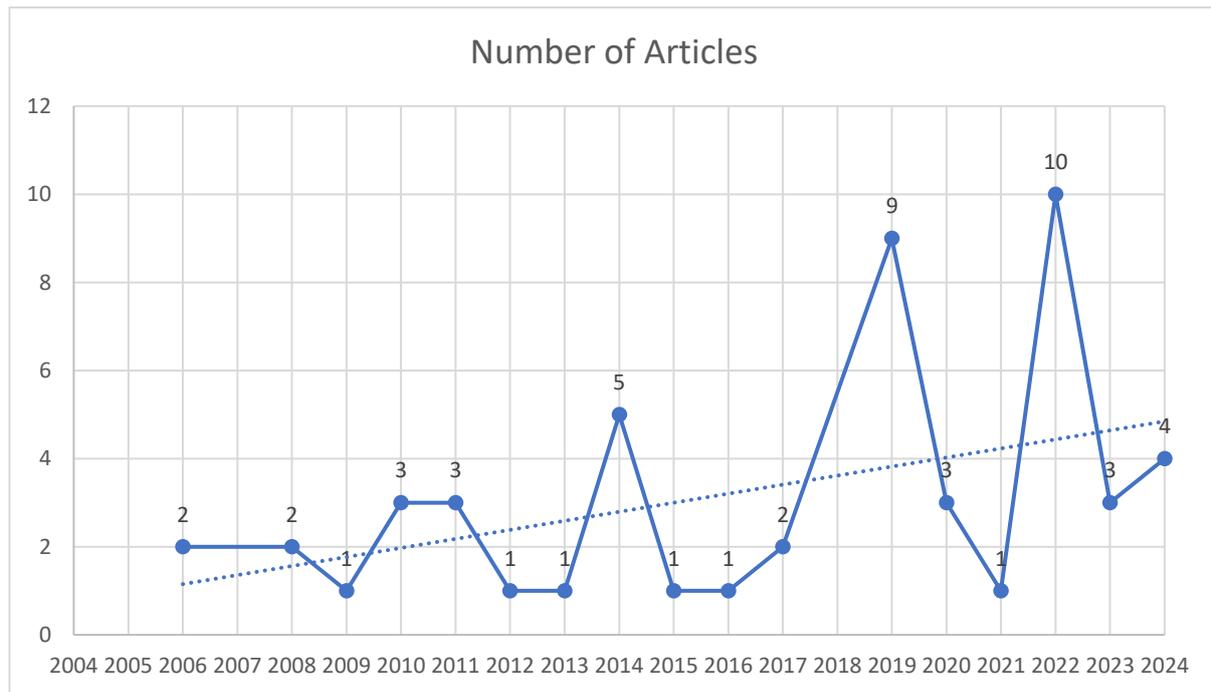
Fig. 1. Steps of the study selection process

3. ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

3.1 Publication Trend Analysis

The dataset indicates the annual number of published articles from 2004 to 2024. Going back to 2006–2013, the output of articles was quite low, averaging between one and three articles per year. In 2014, there was a slight increase in publications (5 articles), but in 2015, 2016, and 2017, there was a decrease

in fewer articles being published (refer to Fig. 2). The dataset does indicate that articles published have been increasing since 2019, with a peak of publications in 2021 (9 articles) and the highest number of published articles (10) in 2022. This trend of increasing published articles, along with a growing interest in conducting research, contributes to the overall enhancement of the research area.



Source: Author's own work

Fig. 2. Publication trends on responsible marketing and socially responsible marketing from 2004 to 2024

Different academic journals have published a total of 52 research articles on responsible marketing and SRM. As a whole, they will push the discourse around ethical, sustainable and socially conscious marketing practices forward. The Journal of Micromarketing is the leading publisher, having published 8 research articles that examine various aspects of responsible marketing from a micro or consumer focused perspective. The next closest journals, Sustainability (Switzerland) and Journal of Non-profit and Public Sector Marketing, contributed 3 articles too, focusing primarily on the integration of sustainability practices and the non-profit sector perspective of responsible marketing.

The topics presented in some of the articles include issues such as integrating CSR, exploring ethical marketing practices, consumer behaviour towards socially responsible initiatives, and marketing's contribution to sustainable development goals. Articles in other journals (Journal of Business Ethics, Journal of Business Research, and Journal of Marketing Communications) present a diversity of theoretical frameworks, empirical studies, and case studies that offer their contributions to responsible marketing, too. Additionally, a wide array of other journals also includes single articles, indicating that research in this area crosses disciplinary boundaries. Some of these journals are Creativity and Innovation Management, Corporate

Communications, Journal of Brand Management, and CSR and Environmental Management.

In total, these 52 research articles demonstrate the emergence of a research

agenda that examines how the domain of marketing can fit with social values, ethics, and environmental sustainability to positively change business practices and consumer-facing attitudes.

Table 2. Source of responsible marketing and socially responsible marketing articles

Publication Name	Number of Articles
Journal of Micromarketing	8
Sustainability (Switzerland)	3
Journal of Nonprofit and Public Sector Marketing	3
Social Responsibility Journal	2
Journal of Business Ethics	2
Journal of Business Research	2
Journal of Marketing Communications	2
Creativity and Innovation Management	1
WSEAS Transactions on Business and Economics	1
SAGE Open	1
Cogent Business and Management	1
Management Decision	1
Corporate Communications	1
European Journal of Business Science and Technology	1
Financial and Credit Activity: Problems of Theory and Practice	1
Eastern European Journal of Enterprise Technologies	1
European Journal of Marketing	1
Asian Social Science	1
International Journal of Consumer Studies	1
Journal of Outdoor Recreation and Tourism	1
Journal of Brand Management	1
Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management	1
Scientific Papers of the University of Pardubice, Series D: Faculty of Economics and Administration	1
International Journal of Scientific and Technology Research	1
Global Business Review	1
Prabandhan: Indian Journal of Management	1
Global Business and Economics Review	1
Journal of Business Strategy	1
International Journal of Market Research	1
Journal of Strategic Marketing	1
South African Journal of Business Management	1
European Business Review	1
Corporate Ownership and Control	1
International Journal of Emerging Markets	1
Clothing and Textiles Research Journal	1
Journal of Social Marketing	1
Journal of Consumer Marketing	1
Total	52

Source: Author's own work

3.2 Key Insights from Literature

Socially Responsible Consumption (SRC) includes actions such as ethical or fair purchasing, recycling, and not using harmful products. Although consumers are more aware of socially responsible practices, other

factors, such as price, remain a significant consideration in purchasing decisions. The measurement of SRC behaviours can be problematic, and tools such as the Socially Responsible Purchase and Disposal (SRPD) scale allow for more nuanced and advanced

measures. Numerous studies on SRC have demonstrated the strong influence of altruism, collectivism, and social and environmental consciousness on SRC behaviours.

CSR has become an important part of the marketing department and marketing strategies, even when CaRM needs to make complete sense strategically to be effective. Transparency and demonstrating CSR to consumers will allow for greater trust to be established, and consumers' level of interest in the activities or initiatives is often significant (Polonsky & Jevons, 2006). SRM is rooted in and based upon ethical and normative principles such as fairness and concern for customer and stakeholder well-being. SRM seeks to pursue marketing that is beyond profit focus; it must be sustainable and have a social impact. Social enterprises may exhibit more innovative forms of SRM in their focus on underserved markets and social needs (Bandyopadhyay & Ray, 2019; G. Laczniak & Shultz, 2021a).

In terms of consumer perceptions and behaviour, customers do demonstrate an attitude behaviour gap where they claim to desire authentic CSR but do not always act in accordance with those desires. Demographic factors such as age, gender, levels of education, and culture are just a few of the variables that can influence a customer's buying motivations when they encounter marketing advertisements featuring a socially responsible message. Real co-branding partnerships and genuine celebrity endorsements have been shown to improve the probability of customers purchasing the commercial product (Golob et al., 2008; Yan & She, 2011). CSR has also been shown to affect firm performance positively through improved customer loyalty, brand equity, and employee engagement. CSR offers organisations more than just financial benefits; it can influence social norms and mitigate social conflict. However, these various outcomes require proper performance measurement metrics, significant institutionalised managerial cognition, and modifications to address

changing challenges (Demeke & Ravi, 2024; R. Singh & Malla, 2017).

3.3 Thematic Analysis

A thematic analysis was conducted on the selected articles following the approach of Kulkov et al. (2023). This method identifies themes and subthemes derived from the existing literature, ensuring alignment with the subject under investigation. SRM is a substantial change from traditional marketing, as it brings ethics, social welfare and sustainability to marketing, which was previously absent. This section explores key conceptual themes, consumer behaviour, strategic applications, challenges, and the global context of the SRM notion. The given table shows the themes and subthemes representation in a lucid manner (Table 3).

3.3.1 Conceptual Underpinnings of SRM

SRM is based on an extensive theoretical background relating to ethics and philosophy, as well as the evolution of marketing philosophy. To engage with the first part of our theoretical background, SRM serves from two major perspectives: a normative studies approach, which prescribes ethical values that marketing should adhere to, and an instrumental approach that considers social responsibility as a platform for achieving sustainable marketing advantage. SRM also combines the micromarketing perspective, which focuses on ethical consumer behaviour and decision-making, with the marketing perspective, which examines the social and cultural dimensions and influences of marketing practices.

3.3.2 Consumer Psychology and Behaviour

Consumer behaviour in the context of SRM has shown that there is an ongoing attitude behaviour gap, as people's ethical intentions oftentimes do not translate into ethical consumption. Some inner motivations (e.g., values and identity; psychological limitations) and some outer motivations (e.g., culture and social context; demographics) combine to influence

consumer behaviour. Any effective type of SRM strategy needs to address these layers of motivation, associating uniqueness with ethical attitudes and consumer behaviours.

3.3.3 CSR in Strategic Branding and Marketing

CSR is at the core of SRM, as it strengthens brand equity and increases consumer trust. Meaningful CSR initiatives, such as cause-related marketing and co-branding with recognised social partners, are considered strategic tools for building differentiation and emotional connections. CSR provides opportunities for companies to develop a socially responsible brand identity in an increasingly value-sensitive marketplace.

3.3.4 Operationalising CSR in the Marketing Mix

SRM seeks to redefine the marketing mix traditionally perceived as product, price, place, and promotion to integrate CSR into the marketing process. The redefined mix considers ethical and sustainable product development, fair pricing and price advantages that represent social value, distribution channels that are accessible to marginalised communities, and promotions that are transparent, honest, and clearly convey their social impact.

3.3.5 Social Marketing and Behavioural Change

SRM relies upon marketing practices to create long-term social behavioural change rather than simply (or mostly) transactional marketing. SRM seeks to create long-term social behaviour change through community engagement, environmental sustainability, and the educational development of social initiatives, such as service-learning courses. SRM's emphasis is on partnerships and co-creation with the community to generate ongoing societal benefits aligned with social and environmental goals.

3.3.6 CSR's Impact on Performance and Reputation

Research has indicated that SRM can positively impact brand reputation, customer loyalty, and financial results. Companies that engage in CSR strategies are often able to gain continually increased trust, consumer positioning, and gains in measures of KPIs (Key performance indicators): Social impact and financial return.

3.3.7 Ethical Dilemmas and Wicked Problems

Despite its value, the surrounding ethical complexities significantly implicate SRM.

- a. The risk of "greenwashing", which can delegitimise uniqueness and build distrust among stakeholders.
- b. The scope of sustainability and defining the social responsibility of an organisation, which are sometimes vague and complex when creating strategic plans.
- c. The moral dilemma about whether we should choose profit over broader community social responsibility.
- d. The pursuit of SRM necessitates governance and ethical leadership.

3.3.8 Global and Cultural Contexts

Cultural, religious, and socio-economic contexts influence and shape our social values, necessitating localisation and the correct adaptation of different ethical approaches to SRM. Companies operating in China, Asia, developing, or impoverished markets are often working with limited economic capacity, and adapting their SRM strategies to balance community benefits by integrating cultural values into community economic growth plans makes SRM efforts only more coordinated with communities addressing unemployment, economic dependency, or other socioeconomic limits that must be dealt with in developing and impoverished markets. SRM must develop global contextualisation to maintain its significance for heterogeneous market impact measures.

Table 3. Theme and subthemes of SRM

Main Theme	Subthemes	Explanation	Authors
Conceptual foundations of SRM	Definition and Evolution of SRM; Normative vs. Instrumental Approaches; Micro vs. Macro Marketing Perspectives	Outlines the theory and philosophy of SRM, from ethics and marketing theories to applied interpretations.	Kennedy & Smith (2022); G. R. Laczniak & Murphy (2006); Nill (2022); Sheth & Parvatiyar (2022)
Consumer Psychology and Behaviour	Attitude Behaviour Gap; Inner vs. Outer Motivations; Demographics & Cultural Influences	Analyses how personal values, self-identity and demography changes influence the gap between ethical beliefs and purchasing behaviour.	Ali & Mandurah (2016); Lee & Cho (2019); Yoon et al. (2020)
CSR in Strategic Branding and Marketing	CSR and Brand Equity; Co-Branding Authenticity; Cause-Related Marketing	Evaluate how CSR strategies influence brand equity and consumer perception. This includes co-branding practices and cause-related marketing initiatives.	Ilicic et al. (2019); Jahdi (2014); A. Singh & Verma (2017)
Operationalizing CSR through Marketing Mix	4Ps Reimagined for SRM; Marketing Communication for Transparency; Ethical Product & Pricing Strategies	Discusses how the marketing mix (Product, price, place, promotion) is reinterpreted to reflect social values and socially responsible practices.	Fry (2014); Mandal & Banerjee (2019); Özturan & Grinstein (2022)
Social Marketing and Behaviour Change	Community Co-creation; Environmental Advocacy; Service-Learning Applications	Describes how marketing systems are being used to influence long-term social change through partnerships, education, and segments.	Borden & Mahamane (2020); Domegan & Bringle (2010); Moyo et al. (2022)
CSR's Impact on Performance and Reputation	CSR and Financial/Brand Outcomes; Consumer Loyalty; Performance Metrics and KPIs	Discusses how CSR projects impact brand reputation, trust, and organisational performance measures.	Jin & Drozdenko (2010); Lepkowska-White et al. (2023); Moehl & Friedman (2022)
Ethical Dilemmas and Wicked Problems in SRM	Greenwashing Risk; Ambiguity in Sustainability; Strategic vs. Moral Trade-offs	Examine the complexities and ethical contradictions of CSR when attempting to implement it for social causes while maximising financial benefits.	Fodness (2015); G. Laczniak & Shultz (2022)
Global and Cultural Contexts of SRM	Localized CSR Practices; Religious & Humanistic Influences; CSR in Impoverished Markets	Culture, religion, and socio-economic settings shape SRM practices, which can reflect local needs.	Andrianova & Yeletskikh (2012); Engelland (2014); Santos (2022)

Source: Compilation from various sources

4. DISCUSSION

4.1 Definition of Responsible Marketing

Responsible marketing outlines an approach that incorporates ethical, social, and environmental aspects of business strategies and communications. Responsible marketing takes the consideration of market needs beyond merely profits or sales and encompasses expectations of social good for the larger society, as well as balancing profitability for the company, by addressing the needs and interests of several

stakeholders: customers, employees, communities, and the environment. Responsible marketing aims to promote activities that assist consumers in making ethical purchases, considering the entire consumption process from purchase to disposal, and guiding them towards decisions that support sustainable development and ethical practices throughout the consumption cycle. A responsible marketing approach involves considering ethical duties as being socially responsible, addressing social and

environmental issues in marketing decisions, creating value for both the firm and society, and promoting equity. Table 4 provides detailed definitions of responsible marketing.

Table 4. Definitions of Responsible Marketing

Definitions	Authors	Year
Responsible marketing refers to the practice of designing, implementing, and communicating marketing strategies and activities that meet not only the company's goals but also consider the ethical, social, and environmental consequences, thereby fostering sustainable and equitable value for all stakeholders.	Laczniak & Murphy	2006
Responsible marketing balances profitability with social well-being by recognising and addressing the needs of all stakeholder groups, including customers, employees, communities, and the environment.	Anthony Patino, Velitchka D. Kaltcheva, Dennis Pitta, Ven Sriram, Robert D. Winsor.	2014
Responsible marketing encourages consumer behaviours that reflect ethical, social, and environmental concerns throughout the entire consumption process, from acquisition to disposal.	Lee & Cho	2019
Responsible marketing is the practice of marketing that fulfils ethical duties towards society and supports sustainable development by embedding social and environmental concerns in marketing decisions and communications.	Kennedy & Smith	2022
Responsible marketing broadly refers to marketing practices that consider ethical, social, and environmental impacts, aiming to create value for the company and society in a socially responsible manner.	Ferrell & Ferrell	2022

Source: Compilation from various sources

4.2 Definition of SRM.

SRM is a specific orientation and practice in marketing, reflecting a marketing strategy and goals that are aligned with a commitment to social, environmental, and ethical responsibility. SRM goes beyond just trying to make the most money; it also considers the wider social and environmental resources affected by marketing, including impacts that are not just about money. SRM lets organisations and businesses perform as exemplary corporate citizens with the responsibility to participate in issues of social justice, ecological harmony, and transparent marketing communication. In many instances, this responsibility only includes

the voluntary application of social concern and environmentally responsible attitudes by the organisation or government towards the supply chain and stakeholder interactions, while also ensuring that no harm is done to society and the broader environment. Implying that marketing extends beyond this statement necessitates making explicit informed decisions regarding the commercialisation of, or support for, normative, action-oriented, and accountable stances on both social and ecological change. Definitions of socially responsible marketing are provided in Table 5, and characteristics are in Table 6.

Table 5. Definitions of SRM

Definitions	Authors	Year
SRM integrates marketing goals with a commitment to stakeholder welfare, including social justice, environmental sustainability, and corporate accountability.	Polonsky & Jevons	2006
SRM is an approach that requires companies to act as exemplary corporate citizens, promoting social justice and ecological sustainability through their marketing actions.	Laczniak & Murphy	2006
SRM is marketing that contributes positively to society by integrating cause-related marketing, social welfare, and environmental stewardship in business practices.	Jahdi	2014
SRM means marketing aligned with CSR, where companies voluntarily integrate social and environmental concerns into their business operations and interactions with stakeholders.	Singh & Verma	2017
SRM integrates corporate citizenship, stakeholder orientation, and social/ecological sustainability, providing an ethical framework for marketing actions benefiting society and the environment.	Laczniak & Shultz	2021

Marketing should incorporate societal welfare and environmental sustainability as fundamental goals along with business objectives while recognising a macro-level responsibility that extends beyond profit.	Neill	2022
SRM marketing integrates corporate citizenship, stakeholder orientation, and social/ecological sustainability, providing an ethical framework for marketing actions that positively contribute to society and the environment beyond profit maximisation.	Ferrell & Ferrell	2022
SRM is about meeting our ethical responsibilities to society and promoting sustainable development by including social and environmental issues in marketing strategies and communications.	Kennedy & Smith	2022
SRM involves transparent, honest communication and sustainable product development aimed at minimising negative social and environmental impacts.	Özturan & Grinstein	2022

Source: Compilation from various sources

Table 6. Characteristics in SRM

Marketing Mix Element	Key Characteristics in SRM	Explanation / Examples	Authors
Product	Ethical and sustainable design Social and environmental value Transparency and authenticity Innovation for social good	Using eco-friendly materials, fair labour practices, or products that address social or environmental issues (e.g., fair trade products and recycled products).	G. Laczniak & Shultz (2021, 2022); Patino et al. (2014); Webb et al. (2008)
Price	Fair, value-based pricing Reflects true social and environmental costs Balancing affordability and profit Pricing transparency	Price organic products as a premium, but justify it by their health/environmental benefits; do not exploit pricing.	Boccia et al. (2019); A. Singh & Verma (2017)
Place (Distribution)	Sustainable and low-impact logistics. There should be fair access, especially for marginalised groups. Ethical partnerships and transparent supply chains	Source locally to reduce your carbon footprint while ensuring product access for underserved areas	Özturan & Grinstein (2022); Santos (2022)
Promotion	Honest and ethical communication Cause-related marketing Consumer education and stakeholder engagement Avoidance of greenwashing and other deceptive tactics	Create campaigns linking sales to charity; be transparent about your CSR initiatives on social media.	Jahdi (2014); Lepkowska-White et al. (2023); Tučková & Balcarová (2023)
People	Ethical treatment of workers and customers Focus on diversity and inclusion. Relationship building with stakeholders	The company implements employee programmes that promote diversity and social responsibility, including training programmes.	Maignan et al. (2011); Sheth & Parvatiyar (2022)
Process	Transparent, fair, and ethical business processes. Sustainable operations are implemented to minimise the impact on the environment and society	Green manufacturing policies and ethical audits of the supply chain.	G. R. Laczniak & Murphy (2006); Sheth & Parvatiyar (2022)
Physical Evidence	Eco packaging and Eco premise Certifications and eco labels to signal responsibility	The products come in eco-friendly packaging and have received ISO 26000 CSR certification.	Bandyopadhyay & Ray (2019); Ullah et al. (2024)

Source: Compilation from various sources

5. ACADEMIC AND PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

Theoretically, the research contributes to the responsible marketing and socially responsible marketing literature by proposing a synthesising thematic analysis, which is based on theoretical concepts from ethics, consumer psychology, CSR, and branding. It highlights the major gaps in the SRM literature regarding consumer attitudes and behaviours and the trade-off between profit and social responsibility intentions. These contributions offer fertile ground for empirical and conceptual exploration, thereby strengthening SRM. In practice, research indicates that authenticity, sustainability, and ethical transparency are elements to build upon for brand trust, customer loyalty, and business success. This study enriches students' understanding and supports scholars in advancing discourse on responsible marketing and SRM. Considerable operationalisation is possible, through which firms introduce or market goods that truly do something for society and are reasonably priced, equitably distributed, and rightfully justified for CSR. The study shows that ethical responsibility may work as a competitive advantage. In other words, SRM practices can bring business profits as well as social and environmental benefits.

6. LIMITATIONS

The research in the current study was limited to articles published in English and indexed in the Scopus database from 2004 to 2024, based on the subject areas of business, management and accounting, social sciences, and arts and humanities. This research only included journal publications, not including other document types such as conference papers and book chapters. These restrictions may eliminate relevant studies outside of the selected database, languages, or publication types, potentially compromising the comprehensiveness and generalisability of the findings. Expanding the scope and interdisciplinarity across other disciplines and including more sources may enhance the

limitations discussed above for subsequent research.

7. CONCLUSION

This systematic literature review synthesises the dynamic discussion of responsible marketing and SRM theoretical, empirical, and practice-based contributions over the past two decades. The results indicate that SRM is more than just a profit-in-marketing strategy; it focuses on integrating ethical principles, stakeholder welfare, and environmental sustainability strategically in a business. Authenticity, transparency, and consistency between an organisation's realities and societal brand beliefs are trigger factors across the SRM research literature. While SRM generates measurable outcomes such as brand equity, customer loyalty, and overall firm performance, it is influenced by conditions such as the attitude-behaviour gap (from consumers) and the risk of greenwashing (from organisations) as well as optimising profitability with genuine social responsibilities.

The review patterns from the literature noted a growing diversification in SRM research across disciplinary domains, along with growing recognition of the role of culture and context on both corporate practices and consumers' responses to those practices. There is also demonstrated promotion of social consumption during the marketing mix stage (e.g., RMs for new product development, fair pricing, fair distribution, and responsible promotion) as a competitive advantage for social consumption and, just as importantly, a driver of sustainability in society. Nevertheless, the literature suggests there is considerable improvement to be made to research methods aimed at establishing measurement models, an interdisciplinary stance, and localised approaches to create measurable impact outcomes that matter from SRM activity.

In the end, SRM is much more than another marketing trend; it represents a paradigm shift to a values-based perspective in which business success is tied to the success of society and the environment. Future work

will emphasise the need to close conceptual gaps, build cross-cultural understanding, and catalyse new models to align stakeholders' interests with sustainable development goals, further embedding SRM as a key aspect of contemporary marketing practice.

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