

DO YOU TRUST THEM?

Thematic Analysis of UK Energy Brands' Sustainability Report

Poster presented by Emmanuel Mogaji at the University of Greenwich 2019 ECR Poster Competition

BACKGROUND

Across the globe, consumers are increasingly becoming aware of the environmental damages and degradation harmful effects of their consumptions (Panda, et al., 2020). Consumers' awareness of environmental sustainability is also increasing as is evident from their commitment to protecting the environment with events such as the school climate strike and Extinction Rebellion Protests. Customers anticipate that companies will comprehensively create a balance between the current environmental situation and their business interests (Chatterjee, 2009).

Energy is an important issue to be considered in the achievement of sustainable development as it affects all aspects of environmental, social and economic development (Martí-Ballester, 2017). Energy is found as the necessary resources for industries and very important for all the consumers in the world however it is found to be generating environmental and social damage (Martí-Ballester, 2017).

This study evaluates the sustainability initiatives of the biggest energy companies in the United Kingdom to understand how they are positioning their brands in the context of their sustainability initiatives.

METHODOLOGY

- 1 Identifying the Big Six**
They are the largest energy companies that supply most of Britain's gas and electricity. They are British Gas, EDF Energy, E.ON UK, npower, ScottishPower and SSE.
- 2 Identifying their Sustainability Report**
This report is a compendium of the annual performance of the company in the area of sustainable development, of its strategy in this regard, and of the principal activities and projects are undertaken. The dataset is publicly available, downloaded from the companies' websites
- 3 Identifying the Key Themes**
The downloaded reports were thematically analysed using NVivo12, a qualitative content analysis tool. Thematic analysis is the search for emerging themes that best describe the phenomenon. The six phases of analysis established by Braun and Clarke (2006) were adopted for the analysis.

FINDINGS

GRI

The companies are using the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) Standards for their sustainability reporting. The standard features a modular, interrelated structure which allows a standardised form of reporting economic, environmental and social impacts by the companies. This reporting standard covers the Organisational Profile which includes their strategies, ethics and integrity, corporate governance and stakeholder engagement.

SDGs

The companies recognised the importance of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and as a guide, mapping the challenges facing society against their capabilities, to better understand they can make the greatest contribution. Each of the company has a selected number of SDGs to which they work with.



TBLF

Companies are adopting the triple bottom line framework - Evaluating the economic, social and environmental impact of all their activities.

Economically

The companies recognise that their business activities benefit countries, regions, and local communities

Socially

The companies recognise that society is becoming more and more diverse and they see the cultural change as an opportunity to improve their workforce, especially with regards to the gender pay gap.

Environmentally

They recognise that higher energy consumption is a burden on the environment and increases costs.

Do we trust them?

IMPLICATIONS

- 1** Insight into what sustainability means to the UK energy companies and the varying interpretations.
- 2** Contributes to branding identity and reputation research, with specific focus on energy companies.
- 3** Sustainability is clearly a matter of strategic importance, Companies should take make an effort in documenting their initiatives
- 4** It is essential to keep the customers informed about brands' sustainability initiative.
- 5** Build Trust. Do what you say you will do.

