Suffizienzförderndes Marketing von Unternehmen

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Zusammenfassung

Unternehmen sind für die aus Nachhaltigkeitssicht gebotene Veränderung der gegenwärtigen Produktions- und Konsummuster mit verantwortlich. Für die Förderung von suffizienzorientiertem Konsum bietet sich das Marketing an. Beispiele für suffizienzförderndes Marketing wie die Anzeige „Don’t buy this jacket“ des Outdoorherstellers Patagonia unterstreichen die aktuelle Relevanz für die Marketingpraxis. Jedoch ist das Wissen über die konkreten Marketinginstrumente und deren Wirkungen auf das Konsumverhalten ebenso wie über die Wahrnehmung dieses Marketingansatzes und die Motive und Barrieren auf Seiten der Unternehmen noch nicht weit verbreitet. In meiner explorativen Dissertation adressiere ich diese Forschungslücken, indem ich in insgesamt fünf Einzelpublikationen konzeptionelle und empirische Studien an der Schnittstelle von sozialwissenschaftlicher Marketing- und Konsumforschung durchführe.

Meine Ergebnisse zeigen, dass Unternehmen eine Vielzahl an Instrumenten der Elemente des Marketing-Mix zur Verfügung steht, wobei ein Schwerpunkt auf der Produkt- und Kommunikationspolitik liegt. Für die Umsetzung von suffizienzförderndem Marketing sind sowohl strategische als auch altruistische Motive handlungsleitend. Diese Motivkombination kann in Unternehmen zu einem Wertekonflikt führen, der sich in der Ambivalenz zwischen Markt- und Verkaufsorientierung einerseits und Verantwortungsübernahme für die Folgen des Überkonsums andererseits niederschlägt. Ferner belegen meine Studien, dass Konsument*innen sowohl die Inhalte als auch den Absender von suffizienzfördernder Kommunikation positiv beurteilen. Den Unternehmen werden altruistische Motive zugeschrieben und die wahrgenommene Glaubwürdigkeit der Kommunikationsaktivitäten ist hoch. Hinsichtlich der Frage, welche Rolle suffizienzförderndes Marketing für Verhaltensänderungen in Richtung Suffizienz hat, ist zunächst eine positive Wirkung auf die suffizienzorientierte Konsumintention feststellbar. In einem Laborexperiment konnten wir zudem einen kurzfristigen Effekt von suffizienzfördernder Social Media-Kommunikation auf suffizienzorientiertes Verhalten messen, während dieser Effekt für ein quasi-experimentelles Feldexperiment nicht festgestellt werden konnte.

Zu den Schlussfolgerungen für die Marketing- und Konsumforschung gehören die kombinierte Motivlage für die Umsetzung von suffizienzförderndem Marketing, die Eignung als auch die Grenzen des klassischen Marketing-Mix sowie die Frage nach wirkungsvollen Kommunikationsmaßnahmen, die angesichts der Allgegenwart von konsumstimulierender Werbung langfristige Verhaltensänderungen auslösen können. Mein Beitrag für die Marketingpraxis besteht darin, Ansatzpunkte für den Umgang mit dem Spannungsfeld zwischen Suffizienzförderung und

Unternehmenswachstum sowie organisationale Voraussetzungen für glaubwürdige und effektive Suffizienzförderung zu diskutieren. In diesem Zusammenhang wird zudem die Frage behandelt, inwieweit sich die Online-Kommunikation für Suffizienzförderung eignet und welche Schlussfolgerungen die praxistheoretische Perspektive auf suffizienzorientierten Konsum für die Weiterentwicklung von suffizienzförderndem Marketing bietet. Die Erkenntnisse meiner Dissertation sind jedoch nur begrenzt für konventionelle Unternehmen generalisierbar, da sich meine Untersuchungen ausschließlich mit nachhaltigen Unternehmen befassen.

Abstract

Companies carry some responsibility for transforming current production and consumption patterns to meet sustainability challenges. Marketing is an appropriate tool for promoting sufficiency-oriented consumption. Examples such as the "Don't buy this jacket" advertisement by outdoor manufacturer Patagonia, underline the current relevance for marketing practice. However, knowledge about the specific marketing instruments and their effects on consumer behaviour, as well as about the perception of this marketing approach and the motives and barriers on the part of companies, is not yet widespread. In my exploratory thesis, I address these research gaps by carrying out conceptual and empirical studies at the interface of social science marketing and consumer research in a total of five individual publications.

My results show that companies apply a variety of instruments of the marketing mix, with a focus on product and communication policy. For the implementation of sufficiency-promoting marketing, both strategic and altruistic motives are important. This combination of motives can lead to a conflict of values in companies, which is reflected in the ambivalence between market and sales orientation on the one hand and taking responsibility for the consequences of overconsumption on the other. Furthermore, my studies show that consumers perceive both the content and the sender of sufficiency-oriented communication in a positive light. The companies are assigned altruistic motives and the perceived credibility of the communication activities is high. With regard to the question of the role of sufficiency-promoting marketing for behavioural changes towards sufficiency, an initial positive effect on intended sufficiency-oriented consumption can be shown. In a laboratory experiment, we were also able to measure a short-term effect of sufficiency-promoting social media communication on sufficiency-oriented behaviour, while this effect could not be confirmed in a quasi-experimental field experiment.

The conclusions for marketing and consumer research include the combined motivation for the implementation of sufficiency-promoting marketing, the suitability and limits of the traditional marketing mix, as well as the question of effective communication measures that can trigger long-term changes in behaviour in view of the ubiquity of consumer-stimulating advertising. My contribution to marketing practice is to discuss starting points for dealing with the tension between the promotion of sufficiency and company growth, as well as the organizational requirements for credible and effective promotion of sufficiency. In this context, I also deal with the question of the extent to which online communication is suitable for promoting sufficiency and what conclusions a social practice theory perspective on sufficiency-oriented consumption offers for the further development of sufficiency-promoting marketing. However, the findings

of my thesis can only be generalized for conventional companies to a limited extent, as my studies deal only with sustainable companies.

Übersicht der Einzelpublikationen

I. Gossen, Maike; Ziesemer, Florence; Schrader, Ulf (2019): Why and How Commercial Marketing Should Promote Sufficient Consumption: A Systematic Literature Review. *Journal of Macromarketing*, 39 (3): 252-269.
https://doi.org/10.1177/0276146719866238
akzeptiertes Manuskript
(Abkürzung im Folgenden: JMK 2018; Seitenzahlen im Rahmentext: 56-92)

II. Gossen, Maike; Kropfeld, Maren Ingrid: "Choose Nature. Buy Less." Exploring Sufficiency-oriented Marketing and Consumption Practices in the Outdoor Industry. *Sustainable Production and Consumption,* 30: 720-736.
https://doi.org/10.1016/j.spc.2022.01.005
akzeptiertes Manuskript (veröffentlicht unter CC BY-NC-ND Lizenz)
(Abkürzung im Folgenden: SPC 2022; Seitenzahlen im Rahmentext: 93-147)

III. Gossen, Maike; Heinrich, Anneli (2021): Encouraging Consumption Reduction: Findings of a Qualitative Study with Clothing Companies on Sufficiency-promoting Communication. *Cleaner and Responsible Consumption*, 3: 100028.
https://doi.org/10.1016/j.clrc.2021.100028
akzeptiertes Manuskript (veröffentlicht unter CC BY-NC-ND Lizenz)
(Abkürzung im Folgenden: CLRC 2021; Seitenzahlen im Rahmentext: 148-178)

IV. Gossen, Maike; Frick, Vivian (2018): Brauchst du das wirklich? – Wahrnehmung und Wirkung suffizienzfördernder Unternehmenskommunikation auf die Konsummotivation. *Umweltpsychologie*. 22(2): 11-32
akzeptiertes Manuskript
(Abkürzung im Folgenden: UPS 2018; Seitenzahlen im Rahmentext: 179-208)

V. Frick, Vivian; Gossen, Maike; Santarius, Tilman; Geiger, Sonja (2021): When your shop says #lessismore. Online communication interventions for clothing sufficiency. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 75: 101595.
https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvp.2021.101595
akzeptiertes Manuskript
(Abkürzung im Folgenden: JEVP 2021; Seitenzahlen im Rahmentext: 209-257)

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Teil A – Rahmentext

1. Einführung

Problemverständnis

Das Anthropozän und der damit beschriebene Eingriff des Menschen in die natürlichen Ökosysteme haben bereits zur Überschreitung mehrerer planetarischer Grenzen geführt (Steffen u. a. 2015). Auch der jüngste Sachstandsbericht des Weltklimarats belegt erneut den vom Menschen verursachten Klimawandel und zeigt drastische Folgen etwa in Form von Extremwetterereignissen auf (IPCC 2021). Vor diesem Hintergrund sind die natürlichen Voraussetzungen für das Überleben der Menschheit bedroht. Mitverantwortlich für den gegenwärtigen Zustand der Welt ist das fortdauernde Streben nach wirtschaftlichem Wachstum (Banerjee u. a. 2021). Auch der private Konsum als Haupttreiber für den Ressourcen-, Wasser- und Landschaftsverbrauch und die CO_2-Emissionen in Ländern des Globalen Nordens wie Deutschland (Ivanova u. a. 2016) hat die gegenwärtigen globalen Herausforderungen verursacht (Wiedmann u. a. 2020). Eine **Veränderung der Produktions- und Konsummuster** ist daher unausweichlich, um eine nachhaltige Entwicklung für die wachsende Erdbevölkerung zu gewährleisten (Martin u. a. 2021).

Derzeitige Lösungsansätze, die auf Wachstum, Effizienz und technologischen Lösungen beruhen, erzielen dabei jedoch lediglich inkrementelle Verbesserungen (Alfredsson u. a. 2018; Bengtsson u. a. 2018; Mathai u. a. 2021) und stehen der Verbreitung eines ‚starken nachhaltigen Konsums' (Lorek und Fuchs 2013) insbesondere aufgrund von Rebound-Effekten und steigendem Ressourcenverbrauch entgegen. Schon seit geraumer Zeit ist evident, dass ‚grüner Konsum' unter Beibehaltung des Gesamtverbrauchs nicht die notwendigen Reduktionen von Energieverbrauch und CO_2-Emissionen erzielt (Alfredsson 2004). Demgegenüber zielt die **Suffizienzstrategie** auf freiwillig veränderte Verhaltensweisen, die weniger an technische Voraussetzungen gebunden sind und die zu der notwendigen Reduktion des absoluten Energie- und Ressourcenverbrauchs beitragen (Princen 2005; Spangenberg und Lorek 2019; Stengel 2011) und zwar ohne die Befriedigung existenzieller Bedürfnisse zu beeinträchtigen (O'Neill u. a. 2018). Vielmehr geht Suffizienz davon aus, dass das menschliche Wohlbefinden von Gesundheit, sozialen Beziehungen und Zeitwohlstand abhängt (Vita, Hertwich, u. a. 2019; O'Neill u. a. 2018). Die notwendige Begrenzung des individuellen Konsums wird auch von Konzepten wie den Konsumkorridoren (Fuchs u. a. 2021) oder der *doughnut economy* (Raworth 2017) adressiert. Sandberg (2021) folgend umfasst die Suffizienzstrategie, bezogen auf das individuelle

Verhalten, die Reduktion des absoluten Verbrauchs, eine Umstellung auf weniger ressourcenintensive Verhaltensweisen, die Erhöhung der Langlebigkeit von Produkten sowie gemeinsame Nutzungspraktiken.

Unternehmen als Förderer von suffizienzorientiertem Konsum werden erst in wenigen wissenschaftlichen Veröffentlichungen behandelt (Bocken und Short 2016; Freudenreich und Schaltegger 2019; Heikkurinen, Young, und Morgan 2019; Niessen und Bocken 2021). Die Forschung zu suffizienzorientierten Geschäftsmodellen kommt zu dem Schluss, dass diesen Geschäftsmodellen ein verändertes Verständnis von unternehmerischer Wertschöpfung zugrunde liegt, bei dem es nicht ausschließlich um Gewinnmaximierung geht, sondern sichergestellt wird, dass alle Aktivitäten eines Unternehmens und seiner Stakeholder zu Suffizienz beitragen (Bocken und Short 2016; Kropfeld und Reichel 2021). Dies macht in Folge der engeren Beziehung zu Kund*innen auch eine **Neuausrichtung des Marketings** erforderlich. Zudem legt es der kritische Diskurs über die Mitverantwortung des Marketings für den Überkonsum in Wohlstandsgesellschaften nahe (Csikszentmihalyi 2000; Stoeckl und Luedicke 2015; Varey 2010), die bestehenden, auf einen Rückgang der Konsumnachfrage abzielenden Marketingkonzepte wie *Demarketing* (Cullwick 1975; Kotler und Levy 1971) oder *Social Marketing* (Andreasen 1994; Peattie und Peattie 2009) weiterzuentwickeln. In diesem Zusammenhang gilt es zu untersuchen, welche Rolle kommerzielle Unternehmen und insbesondere ihr Marketing bei der Förderung von suffizienzorientiertem Konsum spielen. Beispiele für **suffizienzförderndes Marketing** wie die Anzeige *„Don't buy this jacket"* des Outdoorherstellers Patagonia oder die Kampagne „Kauf weniger" der Bio-Supermarktkette Bio Company unterstreichen zudem die aktuelle Relevanz für die Marketingpraxis. Auch die Tatsache, dass bestimmte Ausprägungen des Online-Marketings wie Social Media-Kommunikation, Tracking und personalisierte Werbung derzeit eher Risiken als Chancen für den suffizienzorientierten Konsum bietet (Frick, Matthies, u. a. 2021; Kasser 2020), verdeutlicht die wichtige Rolle, die ein dem Konsumismus kritisch gegenüberstehender Marketingansatz für die Förderung von nachhaltigen Produktions- und Konsummustern spielt.

Aufgrund der Neuartigkeit von suffizienzförderndem Marketing in der Praxis und dem geringen Vorwissen verfolge ich einen explorativen Forschungsansatz. Für das ganzheitliche Verständnis untersuche ich sowohl die Perspektive von nachhaltigkeitsorientierten Unternehmen als Absender des Marketings als auch die Perspektive von Verbraucher*innen als Empfänger*innen des Marketings. Damit ist die Dissertation im Kontext der nachhaltigkeitsorientierten Wissenschaft sowie an der Schnittstelle von sozialwissenschaftlicher Marketing- und Konsumforschung angelegt.

Forschungsfragen

Als Forschungsgegenstand ist suffizienzförderndes Marketing wie erwähnt noch nicht weit verbreitet. Bisherige Studien haben sich auf einzelne Kommunikationsmaßnahmen fokussiert und beispielsweise die Einstellungen gegenüber deren Inhalten und Absendern untersucht (z. B. Armstrong Soule und Reich 2015). Dabei bleibt offen, wie suffizienzförderndes Marketing in den übrigen Feldern des Marketing-Mix implementiert wird. Die Untersuchung der operativen Umsetzung von suffizienzförderndem Marketing kann vor diesem Hintergrund als Forschungslücke identifiziert werden, die wiederum zu der ersten Forschungsfrage meiner Dissertation führt: **Welche Marketinginstrumente umfasst suffizienzförderndes Marketing von Unternehmen?**

Suffizienzförderndes Marketing zielt auf individuelle Verbrauchsreduktion und alternative Verhaltensweisen ab (Bocken und Short 2016; Gossen und Schrader 2018) und steht damit im Widerspruch zum Ziel der Kaufstimulation des konventionellen Marketings (Swim u. a. 2011). Dieses paradoxe Verhältnis kann exemplarisch anhand der *„Don't buy this jacket“*-Anzeige von Patagonia aufgezeigt werden. Das Ziel der Kampagne war, Kund*innen über Reparaturmöglichkeiten und Second Hand-Angebote zu informieren und zum Kaufverzicht zu bewegen (Hwang u. a. 2016), jedoch erzielte Patagonia letztlich ein Umsatzwachstum von über 30 Prozent (Meltzer 2017). Heute zählt das Unternehmen zu den Marktführern im Outdoorausrüstungssegment (IBISWorld 2020) und wird häufig als Fallbeispiel in der Nachhaltigkeitsforschung untersucht (Hwang u. a. 2016; Khmara und Kronenberg 2018; Wang und Shen 2017). Dieses Beispiel verdeutlicht den Dualismus von suffizienzförderndem Marketing und wirft die Frage nach den Gründen auf, die Unternehmen dazu veranlassen, suffizienzorientierten Konsum zu unterstützen. Neben den Motiven sind auch die Barrieren für die Bereitschaft zur Implementierung eines suffizienzfördernden Marketings von Bedeutung. So kann angenommen werden, dass Unternehmen aufgrund der Wachstumsorientierung der Wirtschaft suffizienzförderndes Marketing als kontrovers und kontraintuitiv bewerten (Bocken und Short 2016). Relevante Erkenntnisse zu der Frage, wie Unternehmen mit diesem Widerspruch umgehen, bietet die Degrowth-Forschung (Khmara und Kronenberg 2018; Leonhardt, Juschten, und Spash 2017; Nesterova 2020; Reichel 2017). Da die Motive und Barrieren für suffizienzförderndes Marketing bisher weder systematisch noch empirisch untersucht wurden, lautet die zweite Forschungsfrage meiner Dissertation: **Was motiviert Unternehmen zu suffizienzförderndem Marketing und was hält sie davon ab?**

Neben der Analyse der unternehmensseitigen Rahmenbedingungen für suffizienzförderndes Marketing ist die Frage nach der tatsächlichen Wirkung entsprechender Maßnahmen auf das Konsumverhalten relevant. Aus der Verhaltenspsychologie ist bekannt, dass Einstellungen das Verhalten beeinflussen (z. B. reasoned action approach, Fishbein und Ajzen 2011). Daher ist zunächst von Interesse, wie die kognitiven und affektiven Einstellungen von Verbraucher*innen zu den Inhalten sowie zum Absender von suffizienzförderndem Marketing ausfallen. Zu dieser Frage haben Armstrong Soule und Reich (2015) eine empirische Studie durchgeführt und festgestellt, dass *green demarketing* mit altruistischen und strategischen Motiven des dahinterstehenden Unternehmens in Verbindung gebracht wird, während ausbeuterische Motive nicht unterstellt werden. Der Befund, dass sich suffizienzfördernde Kommunikation positiv auf die Einstellungen gegenüber dem Absender auswirken, bestätigen Ramirez u.a. (2017), die zeigten, dass entsprechende Maßnahmen in einer verbesserten Wahrnehmung von Vertrauenswürdigkeit, Marktorientierung und Umweltsensibilität des Unternehmens resultieren. In der vorliegenden Dissertation soll diese Forschung vertieft werden, weswegen die dritte Frage lautet: **Wie nehmen Verbraucher*innen Inhalte und Absender von suffizienzförderndem Marketing wahr?**

Dass Einstellungen das Verhalten beeinflussen, ist aufgrund der Komplexität der individuellen, sozialen und strukturellen Einflussfaktoren auf Konsumentscheidungen jedoch nicht zwingend gegeben (z. B. Einstellungs-Verhaltens-Lücke, Belz und Peattie 2012; Bray, Johns, und Kilburn 2011). Die Forschung zu Verhaltensänderungen in Richtung Suffizienz, die über den Energieverbrauch der privaten Haushalte hinausgehen (z. B. Moser, Rösch, und Stauffacher 2015; Thomas u. a. 2019; Ramirez, Tajdini, und David 2017), befindet sich noch in einem frühen Stadium. In einer der ersten empirischen Arbeiten zu diesem Forschungsthema konnten Hwang u.a. (2016) zeigen, dass suffizienzfördernde Werbung zu einer geringeren Absicht zum Kleidungskauf führt, als klassische Werbung. Da hinsichtlich der verbraucherseitigen Verhaltensänderungen als Reaktion auf suffizienzförderndes Marketing vertiefter Forschungsbedarf besteht, lautet die vierte Forschungsfrage: **Wie wirkt suffizienzförderndes Marketing auf die Konsumintention und das Konsumverhalten von Verbraucher*innen?**

Struktur des Rahmentexts

Im nachfolgenden Kapitel 2 wird zunächst das transdisziplinäre Forschungsdesign vorgestellt, in dessen Rahmen die Dissertation entstanden ist, woraufhin in Kapitel 3 der zugrundeliegende Forschungsstand zusammengefasst wird. Anschließend werden in Kapitel 4 die fünf Einzelpublikationen kurz beschrieben (vollständige Kopien befinden sind in Teil B) und ihre zentralen

Ergebnisse entlang der Forschungsfragen dieser Dissertation zusammengefasst. In Kapitel 5 erfolgen die Diskussion von Schlussfolgerungen für die anwendungsorientierte und nachhaltigkeitsbezogene Marketing- und Konsumforschung einschließlich zukünftigen Forschungsbedarfs sowie die Diskussion von Implikationen für die Marketingpraxis. Zudem werden die Erfahrungen mit dem transdisziplinären Forschungsdesign reflektiert. Abschließend wird in Kapitel 6 ein Gesamtfazit gezogen.

2. Transdisziplinäres Forschungsdesign

Das Ziel der Nachhaltigkeitsforschung ist nicht nur die Schaffung von interdisziplinärem Wissen, sondern im normativen Sinne auch der sozial-ökologische Wandel (Scholz 2017). Da Nachhaltigkeitsziele nur durch Kooperationen auf gesellschaftlicher Ebene erreicht werden können, sind die Zusammenarbeit und Beteiligung von Akteuren aus der Praxis sowie die Anwendung transdisziplinärer Forschungsmethoden zentrale Merkmale der Nachhaltigkeitsforschung (Brandt u. a. 2013). Transdisziplinäre Forschung zielt darauf ab, Wissen zur Bewältigung von Problemen in der realen Welt zu schaffen (Lang u. a. 2012). Dieser Forschungsansatz basiert auf der Koproduktion von Wissen, bei der es um die gemeinsame Entwicklung einer relevanten Forschungsfrage, die Integration von Forschungsmethoden aus verschiedenen Disziplinen und die Verbreitung der Forschungsergebnisse an verschiedene gesellschaftliche Akteure geht (ebd.). Zudem reflektieren die Forschenden im transdisziplinären Forschungsprozess kritisch die normative Komponente ihrer Forschung sowie ihre eigene Rolle und Subjektivität (Pohl, Krütli, und Stauffacher 2017). Die größte Herausforderung und zugleich der größte Nutzen transdisziplinären Arbeitens liegen in dem Prozess des gegenseitigen Lernens und der Integration von Wissenssystemen zwischen verschiedenen Disziplinen einerseits und zwischen Wissenschaft und Praxis andererseits (Scholz 2017). Aus transdisziplinärer Sicht können drei Arten der Wissensproduktion unterschieden werden (Hirsch Hadorn u. a. 2008): (i) Systemwissen erforscht empirische Fragen über die mögliche Entwicklung eines Problems, (ii) Zielwissen formuliert Ziele für einen besseren Umgang mit Problemen und (iii) Transformationswissen erforscht, wie bestehende Verhaltens- und Handlungsweisen verändert werden können (Pohl und Hirsch Hadorn 2006).

Meine Dissertation ist im Rahmen einer inter- und transdisziplinären Nachwuchsforschungsgruppe entstanden, die vom Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung gefördert und als Kooperation zwischen der TU Berlin und dem Institut für ökologische Wirtschaftsforschung (IÖW) umgesetzt wurde. Gemäß einem transdisziplinären Forschungsdesign haben die Zusammenarbeit mit Wissenschaftler*innen verschiedener Disziplinen aus der Nachwuchsforschungsgruppe sowie Erkenntnisse aus transdisziplinären Workshops mit Praxispartnern aus dem Bereich des nachhaltigen E-Commerce und aus Verbraucherschutzorganisationen zur Entwicklung des Forschungsdesigns sowie zur Formulierung der Forschungsfragen meiner Dissertation beigetragen. Ich habe mit den Einzelpublikationen Systemwissen über den problematischen Zustand des Überkonsums in der Wohlstandsgesellschaft und der Verantwortung des Marketings dafür generiert. Mit der konzeptionellen und empirischen Untersuchung von suffizienzförderndem Marketing als eine Lösungsmöglichkeit für den Umgang mit den Problemen der materialistischen Konsumgesellschaft habe ich zudem Zielwissen erarbeitet. Dazu zählen auch die Erkenntnisse über die unternehmensseitigen begünstigenden und erschwerenden Rahmenbedingungen für die Umsetzung von suffizienzförderndem Marketing. Ferner habe ich Transformationswissen zu den zu verändernden Praktiken auf Seiten der Konsument*innen geschaffen sowie zu den Marketingmaßnahmen, die die Veränderung der gegenwärtigen Produktions- und Konsummuster in Richtung Nachhaltigkeit und Suffizienz unterstützen.

3. Theoretisch-konzeptioneller Hintergrund

Dieses Kapitel stellt den aktuellen Forschungsstand der für die Dissertation relevanten Theorien und Konzepte vor. Zunächst wird in Kapitel 3.1. das Wissen zu suffizienzorientiertem Konsum zusammengetragen. Darauf folgt in Kapitel 3.2. ein Überblick und Vergleich bestehender Marketingkonzepte, die auf Konsumreduktion abzielen. Anschließend wird in Kapitel 3.3. die Bedeutung des Online-Marketings dargestellt und erörtert, wie sich Online-Marketing auf suffizienzorientierten Konsum auswirkt.

3.1. Suffizienzorientierter Konsum

Nicht-nachhaltige Produktions- und Konsummuster und der daraus resultierende Überkonsum können nur wirksam verändert werden, wenn neben Effizienzgewinnen durch technologischen Fortschritt auch Verhaltensänderungen zu Gunsten einer absoluten Verbrauchsreduktion von Gütern, Ressourcen und Energie umgesetzt werden (Spangenberg und Lorek 2019; Wiedmann u. a. 2020; Bjørn u. a. 2018). Dementsprechend ist es notwendig, dass sich das Verständnis eines suffizienzorientierten Konsums in allen relevanten Gruppen durchsetzt. Auf individueller Ebene definiert Sandberg (2021) mehrere Arten von Verhaltensweisen, die ein suffizienzorientierter Konsum umfasst: Reduktion des absoluten Verbrauchs, Umstellung auf weniger ressourcenintensive Konsumstile, Erhöhung der Langlebigkeit von Produkten sowie gemeinsame Nutzungspraktiken. Konkret kann suffizienzorientierter Konsum also bedeuten, freiwillig auf den Kauf neuer Produkte zu verzichten beziehungsweise – wenn Neukäufe nicht verhindert werden können – qualitativ hochwertige und langlebige Produkte zu wählen, die unter ökologischen und sozialverträglichen Bedingungen hergestellt werden. Zudem zählen dazu Verhaltensweisen wie Pflegen, Reparieren, Tauschen, Leihen, Gebrauchtwarenkauf oder die Nutzung von Rücknahmesystemen zur Verlängerung der Lebensdauer von Produkten (Kleinhückelkotten und Neitzke 2019). Viele der genannten Verhaltensweisen setzen ein Überdenken der individuellen Bedürfnisse und des Anspruchsniveaus sowie eine Reflektion über den Zusammenhang zwischen materialistischem Konsum und Lebenszufriedenheit voraus (Jenny 2016; Hélène Cherrier, Szuba, und Özçağlar-Toulouse 2012).

Mit dem Ziel absoluter Verbrauchsreduktionen weist der suffizienzorientierte Konsum Ähnlichkeiten mit bereits weitgehend erforschten Konzepten wie *anticonsumption* (Lee, Fernandez, und Hyman 2009; Chatzidakis und Lee 2013), *voluntary simplicity* (Etzioni 1998; Rebouças und Soares 2021) oder *consumer resistance* (Helene Cherrier, Black, und Lee 2011) auf. Die meisten Konzepte für Konsumreduktion basieren auf freiwilligen Entscheidungen für Verhaltensänderungen, z. B. ausgelöst durch Lebensereignisse. Dadurch kommt es zu einer Reduktion der eigenen Konsumtätigkeiten und zu einer Veränderung der Lebensgewohnheiten etwa indem die Arbeitszeiten reduziert werden. Biografische Schlüsselereignisse werden bei suffizienzorientiertem Konsum hingegen eher nicht berücksichtigt, stattdessen wird eher an die Veränderung von Konsumgewohnheiten appelliert.

Suffizienzorientierter Konsum bewegt sich in den Konsumkorridoren, die es allen Menschen erlauben, ein gutes Leben in einer Welt mit ökologischen und sozialen Grenzen zu führen (Fuchs u. a. 2021). Diese Konsumkorridore sind durch die Festlegung eines Mindestverbrauchsniveaus zur Befriedigung existentieller Bedürfnisse wie Nahrung oder Wohnraum und eines maximalen Konsumniveaus definiert, das negative soziale und ökologische Auswirkungen vermeidet, die die Chancen anderer gefährden würden ihren Mindestverbrauch zu erfüllen (ebd.). Vor diesem Hintergrund bedeutet suffizienzorientierter Konsum, mit weniger neuen materiellen Gütern als heute üblicherweise konsumiert werden zufrieden zu sein (Spangenberg und Lorek 2019).

Verhaltensänderungen in Richtung eines suffizienzorientierten Konsum in einer Wohlstandsgesellschaft setzen viel voraus, da Konsum von strukturellen Rahmenbedingungen, gesellschaftlichen Institutionen und sozialen Normen beeinflusst wird (Giddens 1984). Aufgrund der komplexen Einflussfaktoren können langfristige Verhaltensänderungen nicht ausschließlich mit Kommunikations- und Informationskampagnen erreicht werden (Kemper und Ballantine 2019). Entsprechend wird in der psychologischen Forschung konstatiert, dass intentionale Faktoren nur bedingt in der Lage sind, nachhaltiges Verhalten vorherzusagen und lediglich zu Verhaltensanpassungen mit eher geringen positiven Umweltwirkungen führen (Gatersleben, Steg, und Vlek 2002; Kleinhückelkotten und Neitzke 2019; Moser und Kleinhückelkotten 2018). Die soziologische Praxistheorie bietet als Alternative zu rationalistischen Erklärungsansätzen eine kontextbezogene Sicht auf den Konsum (Hampton und Adams 2018; Spangenberg und Lorek 2019). Dieser Ansatz erweitert die Perspektive auf menschliches Verhalten, indem er sich auf gewohnheitsmäßiges, alltägliches Verhalten konzentriert, das nicht mehr bewusst reflektiert wird (Kumar und Kumar 2008). Nach Ansicht von Shove u.a. (2015) besteht eine soziale Praktik aus mehreren Elementen, nämlich aus (i) Ideen, Bedeutungen und Verständnissen, (ii) persönlichen Fähigkeiten und Kompetenzen zur Durchführung von Praktiken sowie (iii) den Materialitäten der Praktik. Wirkungsvolles suffizienzförderndes Marketing sollte idealerweise auf alle drei Elemente abzielen und ihre Verbindungen und Dynamiken untereinander berücksichtigen.

Auch Gewohnheiten und kalkulierte Nutzenerwartungen leiten Konsumentscheidungen, ebenso wie die mit Konsum verknüpften Identitätsansprüche und symbolische Positionierungen (Brunner 2021). All dies kann einer gesellschaftlichen Verallgemeinerung von suffizienzorientiertem Konsum entgegenstehen (ebd.). Aus der aktuellen Forschung ist bekannt, dass eine wichtige Motivationsquelle, um Konsum freiwillig zu reduzieren, das kollektive Erleben und Experimentieren darstellt (Gorge u. a. 2015). Zudem empfinden diejenigen, die willentlich suffizienzorientierten Konsum praktizieren, die persönlichen Restriktionen nicht als Askese oder Verzicht (Speck 2016). Einflussgebend ist vielmehr eine ganze Bandbreite von Motiven, angefangen bei einem ausgeprägten Umweltbewusstsein oder persönlichen Charaktermerkmalen und Wertvorstellungen, aber auch individuelle Kontexte, wie etwa die eigene finanzielle Situation oder der Beruf (Ackermann, Grunder, und Reisinger 2016; Speck 2016).

Bezüglich der Frage, ob suffizienzorientierter Konsum auch tatsächlich die intendierten Umweltvorteile mit sich bringt, ist die Forschungslage nicht ganz eindeutig. Eine Studie von Kropfeld u. a. (2018) hat ergeben, dass Konsumkonzepte wie *voluntary simplicity* sogar einen geringeren ökologischen Fußabdruck mit sich bringen als Lebensstile, denen ein hohes Umweltbewusstsein zugrunde liegt. Verfuerth u.a. (2019) haben gezeigt, dass positive Suffizienzeinstellungen mit einem niedrigeren CO_2-Fußabdruck in bestimmten Konsumfeldern wie Stromverbrauch, Ernährung oder Alltagsmobilität zusammenhängen, während dieser Zusammenhang bei Flugreisen und Heizverhalten nicht nachgewiesen werden kann. Unaufwändige und weniger voraussetzungsvolle Verhaltensänderungen können also durchaus durch positive Einstellungen zu Suffizienz beeinflusst werden. Ferner haben Simulationsmodelle für Suffizienz-Szenarien ergeben, dass suffizienzorientierte Ansätze wie etwa Einschränkungen des motorisierten Verkehrs, Energieeinsparungen, Verringerung der Lebensmittelverschwendung und Erhöhung der Haltbarkeit von Kleidung und Geräten am vielversprechendsten sind, um die Umweltbelastungen der entsprechenden Sektoren in Europa zu senken (Vita, Lundström, u. a. 2019).

3.2. Marketingkonzepte für Konsumreduktion

Im vorhergehenden Abschnitt habe ich gezeigt, dass suffizienzorientierter Konsum einen geeigneten Verhaltensansatz darstellt, um dem problematischen Überkonsum in Wohlstandsgesellschaften zu begegnen. Jedoch kann dies nicht ausschließlich auf individueller Ebene erfolgen, sondern setzt neue gesellschaftliche Rahmenbedingungen voraus, die suffizienzorientierten Konsum begünstigen.

Beim Marketing geht es im herkömmlichen Sinne darum, durch die Schaffung, Kommunikation über sowie Bereitstellung von Angeboten Werte für Kund*innen und Partner des Unternehmens sowie für die Gesellschaft zu schaffen (American Marketing Association 2017). In dieser Definition wird die gesellschaftliche Verantwortung des Marketings zwar anerkannt, aber die Notwendigkeit von neuen gesellschaftlichen Rahmenbedingungen nur unzureichend eingelöst (Achrol und Kotler 2012; Stoeckl und Luedicke 2015; Varey 2010). Schon vor einem halben Jahrhundert haben beispielsweise Kotler und Levy (1969) eine konzeptionelle Neupositionierung des Marketings gefordert. Das Nachhaltigkeitsmarketing entspricht dieser Erfordernis bereits in großen Teilen, indem es einen ganzheitlichen Ansatz verfolgt, bei dem alle Marketingaktivitäten und -prozesse entlang der *‚triple bottom line'* gestaltet werden, also umwelt- und sozialverträglich sowie ökonomisch abgesichert sind, und an langfristigen Zielen und auf den Beziehungsaufbau mit relevanten Stakeholdern ausgerichtet werden (Belz und Peattie 2012). Dennoch sind dem Nachhaltigkeitsmarketing Grenzen gesetzt, etwa durch den starken Fokus auf Umweltthemen oder weil es primär auf organisationales Handeln fokussiert und dabei profitorientierte Unternehmensziele anstelle von sozial-ökologischen Anliegen priorisiert (Connelly, Ketchen, und Slater 2011). Zudem zeigt es bislang nicht die gewünschten Wirkungen in Bezug auf die Folgen des Überkonsums (Capstick u. a. 2015), weswegen alternative Ansätze benötigt werden. Vor diesem Hintergrund werden im Folgenden zwei weitere Marketingkonzepte vorgestellt, deren Zweck darin liegt, Verhaltensänderungen zu erzielen und dadurch unter anderem den individuellen Verbrauch bestimmter Konsumgüter zu reduzieren.

Das *Social Marketing* befasst sich mit sozialen Problemen der Gesellschaft und zielt auf freiwillige Verhaltensänderungen zur Steigerung des individuellen oder gesamtgesellschaftlichen Wohlbefindens (Andreasen 1994). Ein wichtiges Merkmal des Social Marketings ist die Verbraucherorientierung, die Menschen als Einzelpersonen oder innerhalb von Gemeinschaften zu Verhaltensänderungen befähigt und motiviert (McKenzie-Mohr 2011). Entsprechende Marketingstrategien werden zumeist im Gesundheitssektor angewendet und zielen darauf ab, gesundheitsgefährdende Verhaltensweisen zu verringern. Aber auch im Nachhaltigkeitskontext lässt es sich sinnvoll anwenden (Geller 1989), etwa wenn es darum geht, nachhaltiges Mobilitätsverhalten oder Energieeffizienz zu fördern (für eine Auflistung entsprechender Studien siehe Gordon, Carrigan, und Hastings 2011). In der Regel sind es staatliche und öffentliche Akteure, die als Absender von entsprechenden Initiativen auftreten, wobei sich die Beteiligung kommerzieller Unternehmen etwa in einer Partnerschaft mit zivilgesellschaftlichen Organisationen ebenfalls als erfolgreich erwiesen hat (Kotler und Lee 2008). Entsprechende Kampagnen können sogar effektiver wirken als Initiativen, die ausschließlich von gemeinnützigen Organisationen oder Regierungen umgesetzt werden (Polonsky 2017).

Peattie und Peattie (2009) schlagen vor, Social Marketing zur Förderung von Konsumreduktion einzusetzen. Dies haben Lowe et al. (2015) in einer Studie aufgegriffen, in der sie die Wirksamkeit eines Social Marketing-Programms zur Senkung des Wasserverbrauchs in Privathaushalten belegen konnten. Jedoch bleiben Social Marketing-Kampagnen zur Förderung von Konsumreduktion eher eine Ausnahme, solange die gesellschaftlichen Normen weiter einer Wachstumslogik folgen und auf Statuskonsum ausgerichtet sind (Peattie und Peattie 2009).

Beim *Demarketing* geht es um die Senkung der Nachfrage in Zeiten von Knappheit durch die Umkehr traditioneller Marketinginstrumente (Cullwick 1975; Kotler 2011). Entsprechend der Klassifizierung von Kotler und Levy (1971) kann Demarketing entweder als allgemeines Demarketing mit dem Ziel der Anpassung an eine Angebotsknappheit auftreten oder als selektives Demarketing, um bestimmte Kundengruppen partiell auszugrenzen. Bei der dritten Kategorie geht es darum, künstlich Produktknappheit zu signalisieren und dadurch eine Nachfragesenkung zu erreichen. Relativ neu ist ein Forschungszweig, bei dem das Potenzial von Demarketing zur Nachfragereduktion als Beitrag für den Umweltschutz untersucht wird (das so genannte grüne Demarketing). Armstrong Soule und Reich (2015) haben festgestellt, dass Konsument*innen dem Absender entsprechender Marketingmaßnahmen vor allem altruistische und strategische Motive unterstellen, und negative Assoziationen im Sinne von ausbeuterischen Motiven eher selten auftreten. In einer weiteren Untersuchung konnten sie belegen, dass der Einsatz von grünem Demarketing im institutionellen Kontext erfolgversprechender ist als im Produktkontext (Reich und Armstrong Soule 2016). Dass grünes Demarketing je nach Kontext unterschiedlich eingeschätzt wird, bestätigen Hesse und Rünz (2020), deren qualitative Untersuchung ergab, dass eine grüne Demarketing-Kampagne auf Unternehmensebene hohe Zustimmung erfährt. Im Hinblick auf die Wahrnehmung der Marke werden demgegenüber Bedenken artikuliert, die sich aus dem vermeintlichen Widerspruch zwischen der konsumhemmenden Botschaft und ihrem kommerziellen Absender ergeben. Mit Blick auf den Einfluss von grünem Demarketing auf Verhaltensänderungen von Konsument*innen haben Ramirez et al. (2017) gezeigt, dass entsprechende Kampagnen tatsächlich zu einer Reduzierung des Stromverbrauchs führen können.

Mit den vorhergehenden Ausführungen habe ich gezeigt, dass die Marketingforschung die Annahmen, die dem klassischen Marketing zugrunde liegen, zunehmend kritisch hinterfragt. Für die konzeptionelle und empirische Untersuchung von suffizienzförderndem Marketing von Unternehmen in dieser Dissertation stütze ich mich auf die bestehenden Erkenntnisse zu den beschriebenen Marketingkonzepten Social Marketing und Demarketing und übertrage sie auf die (normative) Zielrichtung der Suffizienzförderung. Damit beabsichtige ich bestehende Forschungslücken zu schließen und neues Wissen über die unternehmensseitige Relevanz und über Motive und Barrieren sowie die verbraucherseitige Wahrnehmung und Wirkung von suffizienzförderndem Marketing zu erarbeiten.

3.3. Bedeutung und Auswirkungen von Online-Marketing

Im Folgenden soll es darum gehen, die Bedeutung von Online-Marketing aufzuzeigen und zu erörtern, wie sich diese Entwicklungen in Bezug auf die Förderung von suffizienzorientiertem Konsum verhalten.

Für Individuen hat die Digitalisierung großen Einfluss auf nahezu alle Lebensbereiche, wovon auch der Konsum betroffen ist, dessen Phasen von der Suche bis zum Kauf zunehmend online (also via Webseiten, Plattformen, Social Media-Angeboten oder Suchmaschinen) verlaufen (Initiative D21 2021). Für Unternehmen wiederum entstehen ständig neue digitale Möglichkeiten für die Vermarktung und den Verkauf von Produkten und Dienstleistungen, wie beispielsweise Instant Shopping, Influencer Marketing und personalisierte Inhalte (Kahlenborn u. a. 2019). Dadurch kann die Präsentation des Angebots effizienter, leichter erlebbar und inklusiver gestaltet werden (Royle und Laing 2014). Im Allgemeinen ist Online-Marketing durch eine Vielzahl an digitalen Interaktionspunkten mit relevanten Stakeholdern, unmittelbare Kommunikationsmöglichkeiten sowie kostengünstige, effiziente und messbare Prozesse gekennzeichnet. Die am häufigsten genutzten Online-Kommunikationsstrategien umfassen Suchmaschinenoptimierung und -marketing, E-Mail-Marketing, Mobile-Marketing, Electronic Word of Mouth-Marketing, Content und Influencer-Marketing sowie Social Media-Marketing (Baltaci 2021). Insbesondere das Social Media-Marketing hat sich in den letzten Jahren stark ausgeweitet und integriert zunehmend neue Informations- und Kommunikationstools, wie etwa mobile Konnektivität, Blogging und audiovisuelle Funktionen (Kim, Kang, und Lee 2021).

Welcher Zusammenhang zwischen digitalen Anwendungen wie Apps, Social Media- oder Influencer-Marketing und nachhaltigem Konsum besteht, wird erst vereinzelt untersucht (z. B. Lell, Muster, und Thorun 2020; Simeone und Scarpato 2020; Mulcahy, Russell-Bennett, und Iacobucci 2020; Yıldırım 2021). Insgesamt kann festgehalten werden, dass die bisher feststellbaren Auswirkungen des Online-Marketings aus Nachhaltigkeitssicht eher negativ zu bewerten sind. Unterschiedliche Studien zu Online-Werbung zeigen etwa, dass eine verbesserte User Experience, personalisierte Werbung und Social Media-Werbung die Kaufintentionen steigern (Zhang und Benyoucef 2016; Wahnbaeck und Roloff 2017). Laut einer vergleichenden Untersuchung ist Werbung in Suchmaschinen und mittels Online-Banner wirkungsvoller als traditionelle Werbung und führt zu höheren Verkäufen (Dinner, Heerde Van, und Neslin 2014). Durch den Einsatz digitaler Techniken ist es mittlerweile möglich, sehr spezifische kundenindividuelle Präferenzen bei der Produktgestaltung zu berücksichtigen (Leeflang u. a. 2014), was ebenfalls als Konsumanreiz wirken kann. Ebenso können individuell ausgesteuerte Preise und Rabattangebote in Online-Shops die Attraktivität bestimmter Produkte erhöhen (Zander-Hayat, Domurath, und Groß 2016), wodurch zusätzlicher Konsum generiert wird. Diese Auswahl an beispielhaften Befunden zeigt, dass die in der klassischen Werbung erprobten Strategien mit dem Ziel der Verkaufssteigerung beim Online-Marketing sogar noch erfolgreicher eingesetzt werden können – und damit nachhaltigem Konsum eher entgegenwirken.

Gleichwohl bietet die Digitalisierung auch Chancen für die Vermarktung nachhaltiger Produkte und Dienstleistungen sowie die Information und Aufklärung über nachhaltigere Konsumoptionen. Beispielsweise sind Informationen zu den Herstellungsbedingungen und Umweltauswirkungen in vielzähliger Form und niederschwellig im Internet auffindbar (Atkinson 2013; Luck und Ginanti 2013), wodurch nachhaltige Kaufentscheidungen erleichtert werden. Empirische Untersuchungen haben zudem gezeigt, dass das Energiesparverhalten durch Social Media-Kommunikation gefördert werden kann (Oakley und Salam 2014; Foster et al. 2010). Ferner sind viele neuere Angebote für das ressourcenschonende Teilen, Tauschen und Leihen erst durch die Digitalisierung entstanden (Gossen, Pentzien, und Peuckert 2019). Zu guter Letzt können datengestützte Anwendungen *(big data)* durch die treffsichere Analyse der Präferenzen von Verbraucher*innen zum Beispiel den Einsatz von Nudges für nachhaltigen Konsum vereinfachen (Chandra und Verma 2021).

Diese Darstellungen zeigen die Ambivalenz, die die Entwicklungen des Online-Marketings für die Förderung von nachhaltigem Konsum bedeuten. Welche Möglichkeiten das Online-Marketing für die Unterstützung von suffizienzorientiertem Konsum bietet, bleibt zudem weitgehend offen. In meiner Dissertation steht diese Frage zwar nicht im Vordergrund, gleichwohl stellen die beschriebenen Auswirkungen des Online-Marketings einen wichtigen Interpretationshintergrund dar und werden im Rahmen der Diskussion (siehe Kapitel 5) aufgegriffen. Zudem fokussiere ich im Rahmen der empirischen Studien zur Wahrnehmung und Wirkung von suffizienzförderndem Marketing auf Online-Kommunikation (Newsletter- und Social Media-Marketing).

4. Einzelpublikationen der Dissertation

Im Folgenden werden die fünf Einzelpublikationen der Dissertation vorgestellt (Tabelle 1). In Kapitel 4.1. werden die Zielsetzungen und Methoden der jeweiligen Artikel kurz skizziert, während Kapitel 4.2. die wesentlichen Erkenntnisse im Hinblick auf die forschungsleitenden Fragen zusammenfasst und ihre Zusammenhänge verdeutlicht.

Tabelle 1: Zusammenfassende Übersicht über die Einzelpublikationen

Artikel	**Forschungsbeitrag**	**Forschungsansatz**	**Forschungsmethode**	**Untersuchungsgruppe**
JMK 2018	Analyse von Marketinginstrumenten sowie Motiven und Barrieren von suffizienzförderndem Marketing	Konzeptionell	Systematische Literaturanalyse	
SPC 2022	Analyse von Marketinginstrumenten und der intendierten suffizienzorientierten Praktiken	Empirisch	Dokumentenanalyse und qualitative Interviews	Nachhaltigkeitsorientierte Outdoorunternehmen
CLRC 2021	Analyse von unternehmensseitigen Motiven und Herausforderungen bei der Umsetzung von suffizienzfördernder Kommunikation	Empirisch	Qualitative Interviews	Nachhaltigkeitsorientierte Bekleidungsunternehmen
UPS 2018	Analyse der verbraucherseitigen Wahrnehmung von suffizienzfördernder Kommunikation und Wirkung auf Konsumintentionen	Empirisch	Quantitative Kund*innen-Befragung	Kund*innen des nachhaltigen Online-Marktplatzes Avocadostore
JEVP 2021	Analyse der verbraucherseitigen Wahrnehmung von suffizienzfördernder Kommunikation und Wirkung auf Konsumverhalten	Empirisch	Feldexperiment und Laborexperiment	Kund*innen des nachhaltigen Online-Marktplatzes Avocadostore bzw. repräsentative Stichprobe

4.1. Kurzbeschreibungen

JMK 2018: Der Artikel "Why and How Commercial Marketing Should Promote Sufficient Consumption: A Systematic Literature Review" wurde im Anschluss an ein Peer-Review-Verfahren im *Journal of Macromarketing* veröffentlicht. Er stellt die konzeptionelle und empirische Grundlage für die nachfolgenden Publikationen der Dissertation dar. In dem Artikel untersuchen wir, warum und wie kommerzielles Marketing zur Förderung von suffizienzorientiertem Konsum eingesetzt wird und welche Barrieren diesbezüglich bestehen. Zur Beantwortung der Forschungsfragen wurde eine systematische Literaturanalyse durchgeführt. Der Artikel bietet zunächst einen theoretischen Überblick über verwandte Marketingkonzepte und Verhaltensansätze und stellt dann die Vorgehensweise bei der systematischen Literaturanalyse vor. Unter Anwendung mehrerer komplementärer Suchstrategien haben wir ein vorläufiges Sample aus 89 wissenschaftlichen Veröffentlichungen gebildet, von denen im Rahmen einer vertieften Prüfung und ergänzender Suchstrategien 17 Artikel als relevant identifiziert wurden. Die inhaltsanalytische Auswertung dieser Veröffentlichungen bietet Antworten auf die Frage nach den Motiven und Barrieren von suffizienzförderndem Marketing sowie den konkreten Marketingmaßnahmen entlang des traditionellen Marketing-Mix (Produkt-, Preis-, Vertriebs- und Kommunikationspolitik). Im Rahmen der Diskussion ordnen wir die Erkenntnisse in die Marketing- und Konsumforschung ein und benennen weiteren Forschungsbedarf.

SPC 2022: Der Artikel "'Choose Nature. Buy Less.' Exploring Sufficiency-oriented Marketing and Consumption Practices in the Outdoor Industry" wurde in der peer-reviewed Fachzeitschrift *Sustainable Production and Consumption* veröffentlicht. In dem Artikel analysieren wir die Strategien und Instrumente von suffizienzförderndem Marketing nachhaltiger Outdoorunternehmen und generieren Erkenntnisse zu der Frage, welche suffizienzorientierten Konsumpraktiken dadurch unterstützt werden. Die mit Hilfe einer Dokumentenanalyse identifizierten Maßnahmen werden (analog zu der Sortierung der Marketingmaßnahmen im Rahmen des Artikels JMK 2018) den Elementen des Marketing-Mix zugeordnet. Darüber hinaus analysieren wir die Marketingstrategien und die von den Unternehmen getroffenen Maßnahmen zur Wirkungsevaluation ihrer suffizienzfördernden Marketingaktivitäten. Ein weiterer Teil des Artikels besteht in der praxistheoretischen Untersuchung von suffizienzorientierten Alltagspraktiken und den dazugehörigen Elementen, die die entsprechenden Marketinginstrumente unterstützen. Für die explorative Studie wurden öffentlich verfügbare Dokumente wie Unternehmenswebseiten, Nachhaltigkeitsberichte und Social Media-Kanäle ausgewertet sowie qualitative Interviews mit Marketingverantwortlichen der ausgewählten Outdoorunternehmen geführt. Experteninterviews haben informatorischen Charakter und werden mit Personen geführt, die über ein ausgesprochen hohes Fachwissen über das jeweilige Unternehmen verfügen und Zugang zu Bedingungen und Abläufen des Unternehmens haben, wodurch die Qualität des Interviews von der fachlichen Kompetenz des bzw. der Befragten ab hängt. Die Daten wurden inhaltsanalytisch ausgewertet. In der Diskussion gehen wir auf die theoretischen Beiträge und die praktischen Implikationen unserer Erkenntnisse ein und leiten zukünftigen Forschungsbedarf ab.

CLRC 2021: Der Artikel "Encouraging Consumption Reduction: Findings of a Qualitative Study with Clothing Companies on Sufficiency-promoting Communication" wurde in der peer-reviewed Fachzeitschrift *Cleaner and Responsible Consumption* veröffentlicht. Er baut ebenfalls auf den theoretischen Erkenntnissen des Artikel JMK 2018 auf und untersucht die dort identifizierten Motive und Barrieren empirisch unter Zuhilfenahme eines qualitativen Ansatzes. Dabei liegt der Fokus auf kommunikationspolitischen Strategien von nachhaltigen Bekleidungsunternehmen. In dem Artikel gehen wir der Frage nach, welche Motive für eine suffizienzfördernde Kommunikation bestehen, welche Herausforderungen sich aus dem Paradigma des Wirtschaftswachstums ergeben und welche Online-Kommunikationsmaßnahmen zur Förderung von suffizienzorientiertem Konsum eingesetzt werden. Für die explorative Studie haben wir qualitative Interviews mit Vertreter*innen der ausgewählten Bekleidungsunternehmen durchgeführt. Die Daten wurden inhaltsanalytisch ausgewertet. Im Rahmen der Diskussion werden die Ergebnisse in die aktuelle nachhaltigkeitsbezogene Management- und Marketingliteratur eingeordnet und offene Forschungsfragen benannt.

UPS 2018: Der Artikel „Brauchst du das wirklich? – Wahrnehmung und Wirkung suffizienzfördernder Unternehmenskommunikation auf die Konsummotivation" wurde in der peer-reviewd Fachzeitschrift *Umweltpsychologie* veröffentlicht. Er befasst sich mit der Wahrnehmung von Kund*innen hinsichtlich der Inhalte und des Absenders von suffizienzfördernder Kommunikation und untersucht, ob diese Kommunikationsform tatsächlich zu suffizienzorientiertem Konsum motivieren kann. Für die empirische Studie haben wir eine Online-Befragung von Kund*innen des nachhaltigen Online-Marktplatzes Avocadostore (N = 1626) durchgeführt. Gemäß dem gewählten Mixed-Method-Ansatz wurden die qualitativen und quantitativen Daten mit inhaltsanalytischen und statistischen Methoden ausgewertet. In der Diskussion beschäftigen wir uns unter anderem mit den methodischen Stärken und Schwächen der Studie sowie weiterem Forschungsbedarf.

JEVP 2021: Der Artikel "When your shop says #lessismore. Online communication interventions for clothing sufficiency" wurde nach einem Peer-Review-Verfahren im *Journal of Environmental Psychology* veröffentlicht. Er baut inhaltlich auf dem Artikel UPS 2018 auf, bietet durch das gewählte experimentelle Studiendesign aber eine methodische Weiterentwicklung. Mithilfe von zwei Experimenten haben wir untersucht, ob Online-Kommunikation von nachhaltigen Unternehmen suffizienzorientierten Kleidungskonsum fördern können. Die erste Studie stellt ein quasi-experimentelles Feldexperiment dar, für das eine Zufallsstichprobe unter Kund*innen des Avocadostore (N = 2113) befragt wurden. Die Intervention wurde unter dem Motto #lessismore über die Online-Kommunikationskanäle des Unternehmens (Newsletter, Instagram, Facebook) verbreitet. Für die statistische Auswertung haben wir Varianz- und Mediationsanalysen durchgeführt mit dem Ergebnis, dass sowohl die Befragten aus der Versuchs- sowie der Kontrollgruppe ihren Kleidungskonsum reduzierten. Die Intervention des Feldexperiments führte also nicht zu einer Veränderung des Kleidungskonsums. Vor diesem Hintergrund wurde die zweite Studie als Laborexperiment durchgeführt und ermöglichte daher eine repräsentative Stichprobe (N = 881) sowie eine vollständige Randomisierung. Die Teilnehmenden wurden nach dem Zufallsprinzip einer von sechs Bedingungen in einem 3 × 2 Design zugewiesen, wobei drei unterschiedliche Kommunikationsbotschaften (neutral, suffizienzfördernd und konsumfördernd) jeweils mit einfachen Instagram-Posts oder mit Instagram-Posts mit zusätzlichen Likes und Kommentaren kombiniert wurden. Das suffizienzorientierte Verhalten wurde mittels einer Gutscheinwahl gemessen (Wahl einer Spende oder eines Gutscheins für Secondhandkleidung versus eines Gutscheins für den Kauf neuer Produkte). Für die Datenauswertung haben wir Regressions-, Varianz- und Mediationsanalysen durchgeführt. Der Artikel diskutiert die Befunde beider Experimente vor dem Hintergrund der aktuellen Literatur und der jeweiligen methodischen Stärken und Schwächen und schließt mit zukünftigen Forschungsimplikationen ab.

4.2. Zusammenfassende Ergebnisdarstellung

Dieser Abschnitt veranschaulicht, welchen Beitrag die Einzelpublikationen zu den forschungsleitenden Fragen leisten (Abbildung 1). Zu diesem Zweck gebe ich im Folgenden entlang der Forschungsfragen einen Überblick über die zentralen Ergebnisse der Einzelpublikationen und zeige auf, wie sie sich zueinander verhalten.

Abbildung 1: Verknüpfung der Einzelpublikationen mit den Forschungsfragen

Forschungs-fragen:	**Welche Marketing-instrumente umfasst suffizienzförderndes Marketing von Unternehmen?**	**Was motiviert Unternehmen zu suffizienz-förderndem Marketing und was hält sie davon ab?**	**Wie nehmen Verbraucher*innen Inhalte und Absender von suffizienzförderndem Marketing wahr?**	**Wie wirkt suffizienz-förderndes Marketing auf die Konsumintention und das Konsum-verhalten von Verbraucher*innen?**

Einzel-publikationen:	**SPC 2022**	**JMK 2018**	**CLRC 2021**	**UPS 2018**	**JEVP 2021**
Foki der Einzel-publikationen:	**Nachhaltige Outdoor-unternehmen**	**Branchen- und Konsumfeld-übergreifend**	**Nachhaltige Bekleidungs-unternehmen**	**Konsum von nachhaltiger Kleidung**	**Konsum von nachhaltiger Kleidung**
	Marketing-Mix	**Marketing-Mix**	**Kommunikation**	**Social Media-Kommunikation**	**Instagram-Kommunikation**
Legende:	*Konzeptionell*		*Empirisch*		

Marketinginstrumente des suffizienzfördernden Marketings

Für die Beantwortung der ersten Forschungsfrage, *welche Marketinginstrumente suffizienzförderndes Marketing umfasst*, beziehe ich mich zunächst auf den Artikel JMK 2018, in dem wir einen Überblick über den Forschungsstand zum Marketing für Konsumreduktion vorgelegt und auf dieser Basis eine definitorische Annäherung und eine praktische Operationalisierung vorgeschlagen haben. Da bislang keine anerkannte Definition für suffizienzförderndes Marketing existiert und die Forschungslandschaft fragmentiert ist, erfordert dies eine Abgrenzung des Untersuchungsgegenstands zu verwandten Marketingkonzepten wie Social Marketing und Demarketing. In dem Artikel definieren wir suffizienzförderndes Marketing als einen Marketingansatz von kommerziellen Unternehmen zur Förderung von suffizienzorientiertem Konsum. Die intendierten Verhaltensänderungen basieren dabei auf freiwilligen Entscheidungen und tragen zur absoluten Konsumreduktion bei.

Die konkreten Marketinginstrumente haben wir entlang der 4‘s des Marketing-Mix (Produkt-, Preis-, Vertriebs- und Kommunikationspolitik) identifiziert. Im Rahmen der Produktpolitik werden beispielsweise die Qualität, Langlebigkeit und Reparaturfähigkeit von Produkten adressiert, um sie möglichst lange nutzen oder (wieder)verwenden zu können. Ferner zählen dazu zusätzliche Dienstleistungen wie Verleih- oder Mietmodelle und Reparaturangebote, um die Produktlebensdauer zu erhöhen. Hinsichtlich der suffizienzfördernden Preispolitik konnten in der Literatur vor allem Premiumpreise, der Verzicht auf Rabattaktionen und lange Gewährleistungsgarantien identifiziert werden. Unter den vertriebspolitischen Maßnahmen finden sich direkte Kundenkontakte und innovative Erlebnisangebote wie Kleidertauschpartys. Als Maßnahmen der Kommunikationspolitik werden Inhalte, die den Überkonsum in Frage stellen und zu kritischem Konsum anregen, sowie Bildungs- und Informationskampagnen zur Bewusstseinsbildung angeführt.

Im Artikel SPC 2022 untersuchen wir vor dem Hintergrund der Erkenntnisse aus der systematischen Literaturanalyse des Artikels JMK 2018, welche Marketingstrategien und -maßnahmen in der Unternehmenspraxis aufzufinden sind. Die untersuchten Outdoorunternehmen verfolgen mit ihrem Marketing durchweg die Vision, Outdoorerlebnisse zu ermöglichen und gleichzeitig die natürliche Umwelt zu schützen. Eine Gemeinsamkeit der jeweiligen Marketingstrategien besteht in dem Fokus auf Langlebigkeit und Qualität der Produkte zur Unterstützung von suffizienzorientiertem Konsum. Entsprechend können die meisten Marketingmaßnahmen, die wir in der Dokumentenanalyse identifiziert haben, auch der Produktpolitik zugeordnet werden. Die Unternehmen haben hohe Anforderungen an das Produktdesign und sind bestrebt, möglichst recyclebare, langlebige, multifunktionale, reparierbare und zeitlose Produkte anzubieten. Das Angebot wird um Dienstleistungen ergänzt, die die Nutzungsdauer der Outdoorkleidung und Ausrüstungsgegenstände verlängern, wie etwa Reparaturwerkstätten, Secondhand-Verkäufe, Leihangebote oder Pflege- und Reparaturanleitungen. Im Rahmen der Online-Kommunikation geben die Unternehmen Anregungen, den Konsum kritisch zu hinterfragen, bieten Tipps für den suffizienzorientierten Umgang mit ihren Produkten sowie Sachinformationen zum Thema nachhaltiger Konsum beziehungsweise Konsumreduktion. In der Preis- und Vertriebspolitik weisen die untersuchten Unternehmen allerdings nur wenige suffizienzfördernde Maßnahmen auf. Auch ist erkennbar, dass die aufgeführten Aktivitäten in erster Linie Konsumpraktiken unterstützen, die auf eine Verlängerung der Produktlebensdauer abzielen, gefolgt von reduziertem beziehungsweise weniger ressourcenintensiven Konsumpraktiken und Praktiken der gemeinsamen Nutzung. Eine Wirkungsmessung der Marketingaktivitäten ist bei den untersuchten Outdoorunternehmen bisher größtenteils nicht vorhanden.

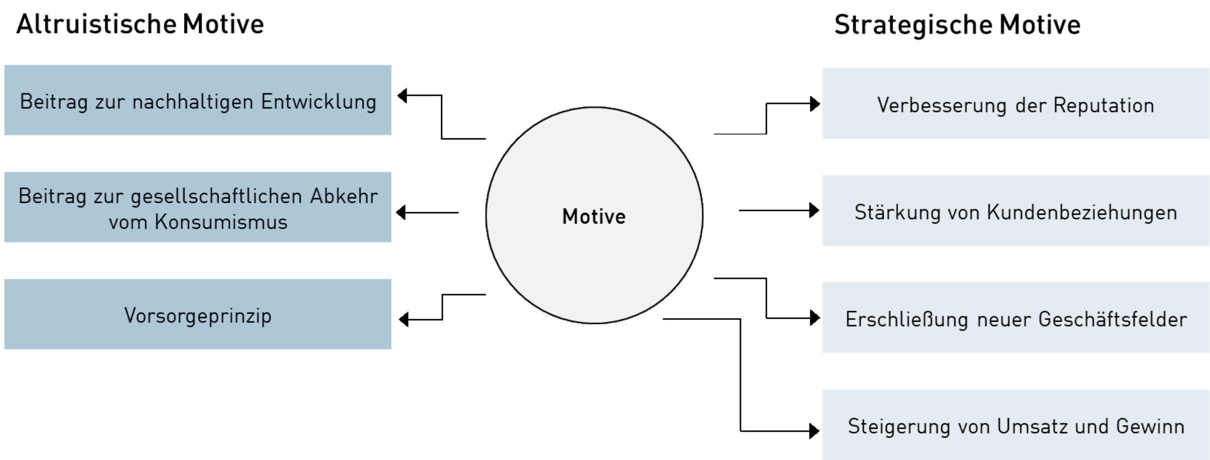
Die vorangehenden Ausführungen zeigen zum einen die Bandbreite der möglichen Marketingmaßnahmen zur Förderung von suffizienzorientiertem Konsum entlang der vier Elemente des Marketing-Mix auf. Zum anderen liefert insbesondere der Artikel SPC 2022 theoretische Belege für die Eignung der identifizierten Aktivitäten zur Förderung von suffizienzorientierten Praktiken am Beispiel des Konsums von Outdoorkleidung und -ausrüstung.

Unternehmensseitige Motive und Barrieren für suffizienzförderndes Marketing

Die Beantwortung der zweiten Forschungsfrage, *welche Motive und Barrieren handlungsleitend für suffizienzförderndes Marketing sind*, steht im Fokus von zwei Publikationen. Ich stütze mich im Folgenden auf die Erkenntnisse der Literaturanalyse des Artikels JMK 2018 sowie auf die empirischen Befunde des Artikels CLRC 2021.

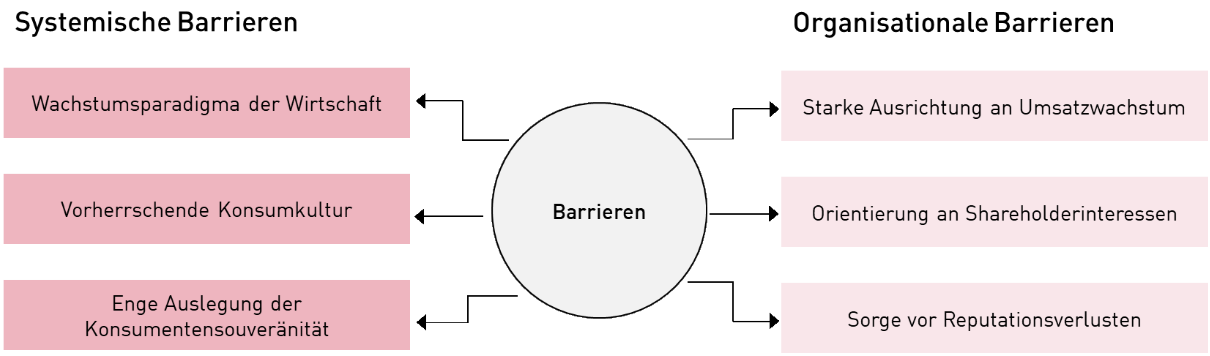
Die systematische Literaturanalyse des Artikels JMK 2018 hat zwei übergeordnete Begründungskategorien für die Umsetzung von suffizienzförderndem Marketing ergeben – altruistisch und strategisch –, die jeweils aus mehreren Motiven bestehen. Zu den altruistischen Motiven zählt die normative Überzeugung, dass ein Beitrag zur nachhaltigen Entwicklung und zur gesellschaftlichen Abkehr von der materialistischen Konsumgesellschaft geleistet werden kann. Eine stärkere Betonung von Suffizienz kann zudem im Sinne des Vorsorgeprinzips zukünftige Belastungen und Schäden reduzieren. Aus strategischer Sicht können Unternehmen suffizienzförderndes Marketing nutzen, um ihre Reputation zu verbessern, Kundenbeziehungen zu stärken, neue Geschäftsfelder zu erschließen und den Umsatz zu steigern. In der Abbildung 2 werden die Motive zusammenfassend dargestellt.

Abbildung 2: Unternehmenseitige Motive für suffizienzförderndes Marketing



Ferner haben wir Barrieren für die Umsetzung von suffizienzförderndem Marketing identifiziert, die ebenfalls in zwei Kategorien – systemisch und organisatorisch – gruppiert werden können. Als systemische Barrieren treten die Wachstumsorientierung der Wirtschaft und die vorherrschende Konsumkultur auf, die im Widerspruch zu Suffizienz stehen. Darüber hinaus kann suffizienzförderndes Marketing von Unternehmen im Falle einer engen Auslegung der Konsumentensouveränität kritisch bewertet werden, wenn damit Einschränkungen der Wahlfreiheit und Beeinflussung des wettbewerblichen Marktgeschehens in Verbindung gebracht werden. Auf der Organisationsebene sind eine starke Ausrichtung an Umsatzzielen, die Orientierung an Shareholderinteressen und die Sorge vor Reputationsverlusten als hemmende Faktoren zu nennen. In der Abbildung 3 werden die Barrieren zusammenfassend dargestellt.

Abbildung 3: Unternehmenseitige Barrieren für suffizienzförderndes Marketing



In dem Artikel CLRC 2021 untersuchen wir mit Hilfe von qualitativen Interviews auf dieser theoretischen Grundlage, inwieweit die identifizierten Motive und Barrieren bei nachhaltigen Bekleidungsunternehmen auftreten. Hinsichtlich der Motive liefern wir eine empirische Bestätigung für die Unterscheidung in altruistische und strategische Motive. Es sind vor allem nachhaltigkeitsorientierte Werte und Prinzipien und das Anliegen, zu einer Abkehr von der materialistischen Konsumgesellschaft beizutragen, die die untersuchten Unternehmen zur Umsetzung von suffizienzfördernder Kommunikation motivieren. Daneben hat aber auch die Verkaufssteigerung als strategisches Motiv ein starkes Gewicht, ebenso wie die Erhöhung von Bekanntheit und Reputation des jeweiligen Unternehmens beziehungsweise der Marke. Hinzu kommt, dass die befragten Unternehmen das Thema Suffizienz als Alleinstellungsmerkmal und damit als strategische Abgrenzungsmöglichkeit in ihrem Wettbewerbsumfeld begreifen. Hinsichtlich der Barrieren beschränken wir uns in dem Artikel CLRC 2021 auf die Analyse der durch die ökonomische Wachstumsorientierung bedingten Herausforderungen bei der Umsetzung von suffizienzfördernder Kommunikation. Der Widerspruch zwischen Suffizienzförderung und Unternehmenswachstum ist den untersuchten Unternehmen sehr bewusst, und sie entwickeln Strategien zum Umgang mit dieser Dualität, etwa indem sie ihr Produktangebot an Prinzipien wie Langlebigkeit, Zeitlosigkeit und Reparaturfähigkeit ausrichten oder ihr Geschäftsmodell diversifizieren und zusätzliche Dienstleistungen wie Verleih, Miete oder Gebrauchtkauf in ihr Angebotsportfolio aufnehmen. Diese Befunde korrespondieren mit den Erkenntnissen des Artikels SPC 2022, die die Bedeutung der suffizienzfördernden Produktpolitik unterstreichen (siehe nächster Abschnitt). In den Fällen, in den in Folge der suffizienzfördernden Kommunikation steigende Verkaufszahlen registriert werden, legitimieren die betreffenden Unternehmen dies damit, dass im Gegenzug Schrumpfungseffekte bei anderen nicht-nachhaltigen Unternehmen auftreten. Sie vertreten damit die Auffassung, dass der Konsum auf einem gleichbleibenden Niveau stagniert, jedoch mit höheren Marktanteilen von nachhaltigen Produkten.

Die qualitativen Befunde des Artikels CLRC 2021 bestätigen also im Wesentlichen die theoretischen Erkenntnisse des Artikels JMK 2018. Es können jedoch auch Unterschiede ausgemacht werden, die aus den getroffenen Vorannahmen und empirischen Schwerpunktsetzungen resultieren (siehe auch Abbildung 1). Für die Literaturanalyse des Artikels JMK 2018 haben wir zwar als Selektionskriterium einen Bezug zu Nachhaltigkeit definiert, jedoch beziehen sich die identifizierten Motive und Barrieren nicht ausschließlich auf nachhaltigkeitsorientierte Unternehmen. Demgegenüber wurden bei der qualitativen Interviewstudie im Rahmen des Artikels CLRC 2021 lediglich Bekleidungsunternehmen mit einer eindeutigen Nachhaltigkeitsorientierung befragt. Die Befunde sind vor diesem Hintergrund nicht allgemeingültig interpretierbar. Übergreifend kann festgehalten werden, dass einige, aber nicht alle der im Rahmen der Literaturanalyse identifizierten Motive und Barrieren auch in der Praxis tatsächlich von Bedeutung sind. Ferner wird deutlich, dass für Unternehmen insbesondere das Spannungsfeld zwischen Suffizienzförderung und Unternehmenswachstum als Hindernis oder mindestens als Herausforderung relevant ist.

Verbraucherseitige Wahrnehmung von suffizienzförderndem Marketing

Zwei weitere Publikationen der Dissertation befassen sich mit der Perspektive von Verbraucher*innen auf suffizienzförderndes Marketing und haben zum Ziel, die dritte Forschungsfrage, *wie Verbraucher*innen suffizienzförderndes Marketing wahrnehmen,* zu beantworten.

In dem Artikel UPS 2018 untersuchen wir mit einem Mixed-Methods-Studiendesign, wie Kund*innen des nachhaltigen Marktplatzes Avocadostore suffizienzfördernde Kommunikation bewerten und kommen zu dem Ergebnis, dass entsprechende Inhalte positiv aufgenommen werden. Die offene Abfrage im Rahmen der Befragung ergab, dass insbesondere Anregungen zur Reflektion des persönlichen Kaufverhaltens und Hinweise auf Alternativen zum Neukauf oder zum Kaufverzicht positiv bewertet werden. Auch hinsichtlich der Wahrnehmung des Absenders der suffizienzfördernden Kommunikation überwiegen die positiven Äußerungen. Besonders positiv wahrgenommen werden die Uneigennützigkeit und Glaubwürdigkeit des dahinterstehenden Unternehmens. Zudem wird die Kommunikation des Unternehmens als übereinstimmend mit dem nachhaltigen Unternehmensimage wahrgenommen. Diese qualitativen Äußerungen werden durch die quantitativen Ergebnisse der Befragung unterstützt. Demnach werden die Glaubwürdigkeit sowie die wahrgenommenen altruistischen und strategischen Motive des Unternehmens hoch bewertet.

Auch in dem Artikel JEVP 2021 haben wir im Rahmen des Laborexperiments untersucht, wie Social Media-Kommunikation eines fiktiven Bekleidungsunternehmens wahrgenommen wird. Die Einstellung gegenüber den Inhalten der suffizienzfördernden Kommunikation ist positiv. So stimmen die Befragten zu, dass die Inhalte z. B. ansprechend, leicht verständlich und informativ sind. Im Vergleich zu den beiden anderen Bedingungen des Experiments – neutrale und konsumfördernde Kommunikation – schneidet die suffizienzfördernde Kommunikation sogar besser ab, das heißt sie wird positiver wahrgenommen. Auch das fiktive Bekleidungsunternehmen als Absender der suffizienzfördernden Kommunikation wird positiv bewertet. Hinter dieser Einschätzung verbirgt sich die Zuschreibung von altruistischen Motiven anstelle von strategischen und ausbeuterischen Motiven. Auch hier fällt die Wahrnehmung in der suffizienzfördernden Bedingung positiver als bei den anderen beiden Bedingungen aus.

Wirkung von suffizienzförderndem Marketing auf Verhalten

Forschungsleitend für die empirischen Studien in den beiden Artikel UPS 2018 und JEVP 2021 war die Frage nach der Wirkung von suffizienzfördernder Kommunikation. Die beiden Artikel beantworten daher die vierte Forschungsfrage, *wie suffizienzförderndes Marketing auf die Konsumintention und das Konsumverhalten von Verbraucher*innen wirkt*. Die Kundin*innen-Befragung im Rahmen des Artikels UPS 2018 belegt zunächst den positiven Effekt von suffizienzfördernder Kommunikation auf intentionale Verhaltensänderungen. Den offenen Antworten zufolge kann diese Art der Kommunikation zu suffizienzorientiertem Konsum motivieren, indem sie dazu anregt, das eigene Konsumverhalten zu überdenken. Dieser qualitative Befund wird durch die quantitativ abgefragte motivierende Wirkung unterstützt.

In dem Artikel JEVP 2021 haben wir darauf aufbauend mit Hilfe von zwei Experimentalstudien untersucht, welche Wirkung Social Media-Kommunikation eines fiktiven Unternehmens auf den Kleidungskonsum hat. Die erste Studie, ein Feldexperiment mit Kund*innen des Avocadostore, hat ergeben, dass Teilnehmende sowohl in der Experimental- als auch in der Kontrollgruppe ihren Kleidungsverbrauch reduzierten, es also keinen Unterschied macht, ob sie die Intervention gesehen haben oder nicht. Daraus kann gefolgert werden, dass die suffizienzfördernden Inhalte das Verhalten nicht im intendierten Sinne beeinflussen. Dieser fehlende Zusammenhang kann unterschiedliche Ursachen haben. Beispielsweise könnte der Fragebogen selbst suffizienzfördernd gewirkt haben, etwa wenn die Teilnehmenden während des Ausfüllens kritisch über ihren Kleidungsverbrauch nachgedacht haben. Zudem ist vorstellbar, dass die inhaltliche Botschaft der Intervention nicht eindeutig genug und die ausgewählten Social Media-Aktivitäten im Rahmen der Intervention zu schwach waren.

Im Vergleich dazu konnte im Laborexperiment ein kurzfristiger Effekt der suffizienzfördernden Instagram-Kommunikation auf suffizienzorientierten Konsum gemessen werden. Ein entscheidender Einflussfaktor darauf ist ein geringerer Wunsch nach neuer Kleidung, wohingegen andere Variablen wie die personale oder soziale Norm nur einen geringen oder keinen Einfluss auf die Entscheidung haben. Für konsumfördernde Kommunikation ist die Wirkung auf Konsumentscheidungen jedoch nicht nachweisbar.

Die Ergebnisse beider Artikel belegen das Potenzial von suffizienzfördernder Kommunikation, sowohl Konsumintentionen als auch Konsumverhalten in Richtung Suffizienz zu beeinflussen. Gleichzeitig zeigen sie die Grenzen insbesondere von Social Media-Kommunikation auf, wenn es um langfristige Verhaltensänderungen geht.

5. Diskussion und Reflektion

Ziel dieses Kapitels ist es, übergreifende und verallgemeinerbare Schlussfolgerungen aus den Einzelpublikationen abzuleiten. In Kapitel 5.1. werden vor dem Hintergrund der theoretisch-konzeptionellen Grundlagen (siehe Kapitel 3) Schlussfolgerungen sowie zukünftiger Forschungsbedarf für die anwendungsorientierte und nachhaltigkeitsbezogene Marketing- und Konsumforschung abgeleitet. Darüber hinaus werden in Kapitel 5.2. praktisch-normative Handlungsempfehlungen für Unternehmen entwickelt und in Kapitel 5.3. die Erfahrungen mit dem transdisziplinären Forschungsdesign reflektiert.

Hinsichtlich der Verallgemeinerbarkeit der für die Forschung sowie die Marketingpraxis relevanten Erkenntnisse gibt es jedoch Grenzen. Entsprechend der Fokussierung auf Bekleidungs- und Outdoorunternehmen im Rahmen der empirischen Arbeiten dieser Dissertation sind lediglich Aussagen über die Relevanz und Praktikabilität von suffizienzförderndem Marketing für Unternehmen dieser Branchen möglich. Ferner beziehen sich meine Befunde ausschließlich auf solche Unternehmen, die bereits eine starke Nachhaltigkeitsorientierung aufweisen. Somit ist die Verallgemeinerbarkeit für konventionelle Unternehmen ebenfalls eingeschränkt. Auch beziehen sich die meisten meiner empirischen Forschungsergebnisse auf Kommunikationsmaßnahmen zur Suffizienzförderung, weswegen Rückschlüsse auf die Eignung der anderen Elemente des Marketing-Mix nur bedingt erfolgen können. Die nachfolgenden Ausführungen sind zudem vor dem Hintergrund einzuordnen, dass es sich bei dem Dissertationsthema um ein vergleichsweise junges Forschungsfeld handelt, zu dem für die Überprüfung und Fundierung der explorativen Erkenntnisse weitere Forschung nötig ist. Trotz dieser Limitationen können die Ausführungen die Entwicklung zukünftiger Forschungsfragen inspirieren und relevante Anregungen für Vertreter*innen der Marketingpraxis liefern.

5.1. Schlussfolgerungen für die Marketing- und Konsumforschung

Kombinierte Motivlage bei suffizienzorientiertem Marketing

Ein zentraler Beitrag dieser Dissertation besteht darin, die Voraussetzungen und Rahmenbedingungen für suffizienzförderndes Marketing konzeptionell und empirisch zu untersuchen. Nicht zuletzt aufgrund der Neuartigkeit und Unkonventionalität des Untersuchungsgegenstands (Bocken und Short 2016) ist es wichtig, die Motive, Barrieren und Erfolgsbedingungen besser zu verstehen, die die Umsetzung von suffizienzförderndem Marketing determinieren. So konnte ich zeigen, dass sowohl strategische als auch altruistische Motive für Unternehmen handlungsleitend sind. Diese Kombination von Verantwortungsübernahme ist aus der Forschung zur Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) bekannt. Vidaver-Cohen und Simcic Brønn

(2008) fanden auf Basis einer Befragung von norwegischen Unternehmen heraus, dass ihr Engagement sowohl aus pragmatischen als auch moralischen Gründen erfolgt. Dies deckt sich mit dem Befund meiner Dissertation, dass suffizienzförderndes Marketing auf einer strategisch-altruistischen Motivlage basiert. Auch in der Wahrnehmung von Konsument*innen engagieren sich Unternehmen für Nachhaltigkeitsziele entweder aus fremdnützigen (wertorientierten, intrinsischen, der Gesellschaft dienenden) Motiven oder aus eigennützigen (geschäftsorientierten, dem Unternehmen dienenden) Motiven (Kim und Lee 2012; Barone, Miyazaki, und Taylor 2000; Foreh und Grier 2003). Zukünftige Forschung könnte sich mit der Frage beschäftigen, in welcher Relation die beiden Motivkategorien idealerweise zueinanderstehen und ob eher ein ausgewogenes oder ein ungleichmäßiges Verhältnis die Initiierung und dauerhafte Implementierung von suffizienzförderndem Marketing unterstützt.

Praktikabilität des Marketing Mix

In den Publikationen meiner Dissertation habe ich die Operationalisierung von suffizienzförderndem Marketing mit Hilfe des klassischen Marketing-Mix (Kotler und Armstrong 2018) vorgenommen. Sowohl die in der Literatur identifizierten Marketingaktivitäten als auch die empirische Untersuchung von in der Praxis vorhandenen Marketinginstrumenten haben ergeben, dass die klassische Unterteilung in die 4 P's (Produkt-, Preis-, Vertriebs- und Kommunikationspolitik) eine praktikable Heuristik für die Analyse von suffizienzförderndem Marketing bietet. Andererseits ergeben sich Grenzen und Herausforderungen, die der Untersuchungsgegenstand für die Marketingforschung aufwirft. Insbesondere für die Förderung von Konsumreduktion als das anspruchsvollste Zielverhalten innerhalb der unterschiedlichen Ausprägungen von suffizienzorientiertem Konsum (Sandberg 2021) erscheint der herkömmliche Marketing-Mix nur begrenzt geeignet. Konsumentscheidungen, bei denen bewusst auf den Neukauf materieller Dinge verzichtet wird, können nur bedingt durch Inhalte unterstützt werden, die sich auf die materiellen Eigenschaften eines physischen Produkts beziehen. Dies rückt die Bedeutung von Informations-, Bildungs- und Kommunikationsmaßnahmen für ein wirkungsvolles suffizienzförderndes Marketing in den Fokus, da diese Maßnahmen für die Bewusstseinsbildung und Bedürfnisreflektion besonders geeignet scheinen. So haben andere Studien gezeigt, dass Kommunikationsaktivitäten mit einem hohen Praxisbezug und Anschlussfähigkeit zum Alltag der Konsument*innen wie beispielsweise eine ‚*Detox Challenge*' dazu beitragen können, den Kleidungskonsum zu reduzieren (Ruppert-Stroescu u. a. 2015). In der aktuellen Literatur zu verwandten Marketingkonzepten (siehe Kapitel 3.2.) wird die Eignung der 4 P's und unterschiedlicher Marketingmaßnahmen jedoch nicht nähergehend untersucht. Vor diesem Hintergrund stellt sich für zukünftige Forschung beispielsweise die Frage, wie ein weiterentwickelter

Marketing-Mix aussehen könnte, der auf die Besonderheiten von suffizienzorientiertem Konsum eingeht. Erste Anregungen dazu habe ich im Rahmen der Dissertation in dem Artikel JMK 2018 gegeben mit dem Vorschlag, zwei weitere P's, nämlich *policy* und *partners*, für die Operationalisierung von suffizienzförderndem Marketing hinzuzunehmen. In ähnlicher Weise haben Belz und Peattie (2012) mit den 4 C's den Marketing-Mix an die Anforderungen des Nachhaltigkeitsmarketings angepasst und der Orientierung an Kund*innen-Bedürfnissen sowie an Lösungen von sozial-ökologischen Problemen dabei einen größeren Stellenwert eingeräumt.

Positive Wahrnehmung und kurzfristige Wirkung von suffizienzfördernder Kommunikation

Meine empirischen Befunde zur verbraucherseitigen Wahrnehmung von suffizienzfördernder Kommunikation untermauern die bisherige Forschung in diesem Bereich (Armstrong Soule und Reich 2015; Reich und Armstrong Soule 2016; Ramirez, Tajdini, und David 2017), in der Form, dass die suffizienzbezogenen Inhalte wie auch der Absender der Kommunikation positiv beurteilt werden. Diese Aussage ist jedoch nur für nachhaltige Unternehmen generalisierbar, da die in den Einzelpublikationen untersuchten realen und fiktiven Fallbeispiele ausschließlich als nachhaltige Unternehmen positioniert waren. Daraus ergibt sich weiterer Forschungsbedarf zur Wahrnehmung von suffizienzförderndem Marketing konventioneller Unternehmen, bei denen die Passung zum Kerngeschäft nicht so eindeutig gegeben ist, wie bei nachhaltigen Unternehmen. Dass dadurch die Glaubwürdigkeit entsprechender Bemühungen beeinträchtigt werden kann (Thummes 2019), führe ich im Abschnitt 5.2. weiter aus.

Meine Erkenntnisse zur Wirkung von suffizienzförderndem Marketing auf das Konsumverhalten liefern ebenfalls einen wichtigen Forschungsbeitrag. In den Experimenten des Artikels JECP 2021 konnten zwar kurzfristige Effekte von suffizienzfördernder Social Media-Kommunikation gemessen, aber langfristige Einflüsse nicht identifiziert werden. Mit diesem Ergebnis replizieren wir das Ergebnis von Young u.a. (2017), deren Social Media-Intervention darauf abzielte, Lebensmittelverschwendung zu reduzieren, aber ebenfalls keine dauerhaften Auswirkungen zeigte. Es scheint, dass Social Media-Kommunikation nicht effektiv genug ist, um langfristige Verhaltensänderungen in Richtung Suffizienz zu unterstützen. Dies kann unter anderem damit erklärt werden, dass Konsument*innen konsumfördernden Inhalten in der Online-Werbung viel stärker ausgesetzt sind als suffizienzfördernden Botschaften (Frick, Matthies, u. a. 2021). Die teils erklärungsbedürftigen Befunde meiner Untersuchungen verdeutlichen, dass empirische Studien zu wirkungsvollen Interventionen für suffizienzorientierte Verhaltensänderungen ein relevantes Betätigungsfeld für zukünftige Forschung darstellen. Dabei ist es wichtig, Konsumverhalten und nicht nur Intentionen zu untersuchen sowie nachhaltige Verhaltensänderungen mit Längsschnittbefragungen zu messen. Zudem empfiehlt sich die Anpassung und Entwicklung von geeigneten Messinstrumenten für suffizienzorientierten Konsum, da den bislang in der Konsumforschung verwendeten Messskalen meistens ein begrenztes Rollenverständnis von Konsum zugrunde liegt (Geiger, Fischer, und Schrader 2018). Indem Konsument*innen häufig nur als Ausführende von Kaufentscheidungen gesehen werden, werden suffizienzorientierte Verhaltensweisen wie die geteilte Nutzung oder der pflegliche Umgang mit existierenden Gütern bisher nicht ausreichend in den verbreiteten Befragungsinstrumenten eingeschlossen.

Förderung von suffizienzorientierten Praktiken

In der Untersuchung von suffizienzfördernden Marketingmaßnahmen von Outdoorunternehmen im Rahmen des Artikel SPC 2022 haben wir praxistheoretische Annahmen über menschliches Verhalten (Reckwitz 2002; Shove, Watson, und Spurling 2015) zugrunde gelegt. Das Ziel war, Aktivitäten zu identifizieren, die auf die Veränderung sozialer Praktiken abzielen. Es hat sich gezeigt, dass die ganze Bandbreite suffizienzorientierter Verhaltensweisen nach der Definition von Sandberg (2021) gefördert werden. Dabei wird das Bedeutungselement einer suffizienzorientierten Praktik zum Beispiel durch Botschaften gestärkt, die die emotionale Bedeutung von Produkten als geliebte und gut zu pflegende Gegenstände betonen. In Hinblick auf das Element der Fähigkeiten werden Anleitungen und Tutorials angeboten, die die Entwicklung von neuen Fähigkeiten für die Pflege und Reparatur von Produkten unterstützen. Auf das dritte Element Materialitäten zahlt das Angebot von langlebigen, hochwertigen und reparierbaren Produkten ein. Gleichwohl stimmen die meisten identifizierten Marketingmaßnahmen nicht mit einer praxisorientierten Perspektive überein, da sie eher sporadisch ansetzen und einen behavioristischen Schwerpunkt auf individuelle Entscheidungen legen (Parekh und Klintman 2021). Ferner können wir nur Aussagen darüber treffen, welche suffizienzorientierten Praktiken vermutlich gefördert werden sollen, woraus sich zukünftiger Forschungsbedarf ergibt.

5.2. Implikationen für die Marketingpraxis

Spannungsfeld zwischen Suffizienzförderung und Unternehmenswachstum

Die Kombination aus strategischen und altruistischen Motiven für die Umsetzung von suffizienzförderndem Marketing (siehe Kapitel 5.1.) kann in Unternehmen zu einem Wertekonflikt führen, und zwar dann, wenn die gesellschaftlichen mit den wirtschaftlichen Interessen kollidieren (Waddock und Googins 2011). Einige der in der Dissertation untersuchten Unternehmen haben dies als Spannungsfeld beschrieben, zwischen der Notwendigkeit, Wertschöpfungssteigerungen zu erzielen und damit die Existenz des eigenen Unternehmens abzusichern, und gesellschaftliche Verantwortung für die Folgen des Überkonsums zu übernehmen. Sie gehen mit dieser Dualität unterschiedlich um: entweder diversifizieren und dematerialisieren sie ihr Geschäftsmodell und bieten zusätzliche Produkt-Dienstleistungs-Systeme (Tukker und Tischner 2006) beziehungsweise eigentumsersetzende Dienstleistungen (Schrader 2001) wie Verleih- oder Mietmodelle an, um Umsätze zu generieren, die nicht aus dem reinen Produktverkauf stammen. Alternativ setzen insbesondere die jungen Unternehmen aus der Untersuchungsgruppe auf zeitlich begrenztes Unternehmenswachstum (Reichel 2017) in der Annahme, dass die temporär steigenden Verkaufszahlen zu einer Schrumpfung der Marktanteile von nicht-nachhaltigen Unternehmen führt (Reichel 2018; Bocken, Morales, und Lehner 2020). Die Erkenntnis, dass Umsatzeinbußen in der Folge von suffizienzförderndem Marketing durch zusätzliche Dienstleistungen oder moderate Wachstumsstrategien zunächst ausgeglichen werden können, kann andere Unternehmen zur Umsetzung von suffizienzförderndem Marketing motivieren. Welchen Umgang konventionelle Unternehmen mit der Dualität zwischen Suffizienzförderung und Unternehmenswachstum finden, kann mit den vorliegenden Befunden nicht beantwortet werden. Ganz grundsätzlich kann in Frage gestellt werden, inwieweit suffizienzförderndes Marketing mit dem Unternehmenszweck und Geschäftsmodell eines konventionellen Unternehmens vereinbar ist.

Für nachhaltige Unternehmen erscheint es hingegen als eine geeignete Perspektive, suffizienzförderndes Marketing mit einer Degrowth-Strategie zu verbinden. Gemeinsamkeiten zwischen suffizienzorientierten Geschäftsmodellen und Degrowth-Geschäftsmodellen treten beispielsweise bei der Verlängerung der Produktlebensdauer durch ein zeitloses, modulares und reparierfähiges Design zu Tage (Khmara und Kronenberg 2018; Hankammer u. a. 2021; Niessen und Bocken 2021). Darüber hinaus finden Degrowth-Unternehmen Wege der Wertschöpfung, die unabhängig von Wachstum sind (Banerjee u. a. 2021), oder wenden sich gänzlich von dem Prinzip der Gewinnmaximierung ab (Nesterova 2020). Dies bedeutet für das Marketing, auf konsumfördernde Werbung zu verzichten (Spash und Dobernig 2017) und anstelle dessen die Interaktion mit Stakeholdern für ein besseres Verständnis über die tatsächlichen Bedürfnisse von Kund*innen zu intensivieren (Nesterova 2020). Diese Hinwendung zu Gemeinschaften setzt einen tiefgreifenden Wertewandel in den Unternehmen voraus (Nesterova 2021). Die in der Dissertation untersuchten Unternehmen haben bereits eine Vielzahl von Strategien umgesetzt, bei denen Synergien zu Degrowth-Unternehmen erkennbar sind, wie etwa die Unterlassung von aggressiver Werbung und Schlussverkaufsangeboten oder die Nutzungsdauerverlängerung von Produkten. Das Outdoorunternehmen Patagonia hat sich zudem öffentlich dazu bekannt, den Unternehmenszweck vom Unternehmenswachstum zu entkoppeln (Kaufmann 2021) und das Unternehmen VAUDE hat ihr Werbebudget zugunsten von mehr Investitionen in klimafreundliche Strategien reduziert. Damit auf diese Beispiele weitere Unternehmen folgen, benötigt es der Unterstützung der Politik (Heikkurinen, Young, und Morgan 2019), etwa in Form von wirtschaftspolitischen Maßnahmen, die die Suffizienzförderung durch Unternehmen flankieren (Kropfeld und Reichel 2021; Reichel 2017). Gute Beispiele in diesem Zusammenhang sind der ermäßigte Mehrwertsteuersatz für Reparaturdienstleistungen in Schweden (Dalhammar u. a. 2020) und der Reparatur-Index in Frankreich (Heinz und Meyer 2020). Auf lokalpolitischer Ebene besteht darüber hinaus die Möglichkeit, Werbung im öffentlichen Raum für umweltschädliche Produkte wie von fossilen Energien angetriebene Fahrzeuge oder Auslandsflüge zu verbieten oder einzuschränken (Gillett 2021). Städte wie Amsterdam oder Grenoble machen davon bereits Gebrauch. Um suffizienzorientierten Konsum zur sozialen Norm in der Gesellschaft zu machen, sollten Unternehmen zudem Partnerschaften untereinander aber auch mit Akteuren aus Politik und Zivilgesellschaft eingehen (Sandberg 2021). Konzertierte Aktionen, die von einer breiten gesellschaftlichen und wirtschaftlichen Basis getragen werden, können dem Prinzip der Suffizienz in der gegenwärtigen Konsumkultur eine größere Bedeutung verschaffen.

Organisationale Voraussetzungen für glaubwürdige und effektive Suffizienzförderung

Wenngleich es nicht im Fokus der Dissertation steht, können Schlussfolgerungen über die Relevanz zwischen suffizienzförderndem Marketing und dem suffizienzorientierten Geschäftsmodell von Unternehmen gezogen werden. Eine erste wichtige Erkenntnis besteht darin, dass eine hohe Passung zum Kerngeschäft gegeben sein sollte, wenn suffizienzförderndes Marketing von Konsument*innen als glaubwürdig und legitim wahrgenommen werden soll (Fricke und Schrader 2014). Daraus lässt sich folgern, dass auch das dahinterstehende Geschäftsmodell konsequenterweise eine Suffizienzorientierung aufweisen sollte (Bocken und Short 2016; Nesterova 2020; Niessen und Bocken 2021). Aus der Forschung zu CSR-Kommunikation ist zudem bekannt, dass Glaubwürdigkeitsurteile über Unternehmensverantwortung nicht nur durch die inhaltliche Passung zum Kerngeschäft beeinflusst werden, sondern auch durch das Ausmaß des durch die Verantwortungsübernahme erzielten Effekts (Schmitt und Röttger 2011). In der Praxis spielt die Wirkungsmessung des Marketings bislang nur eine untergeordnete Rolle, woraus geschlossen werden kann, dass die Unternehmen nur über rudimentäre Informationen zu den Effekten ihrer Marketingbemühungen verfügen.

Es wurde bereits vielfach festgestellt, dass inkonsistente und damit unglaubwürdige Kommunikation (Du, Bhattacharya, und Sen 2010) die Einstellungen gegenüber einem Unternehmen negativ beeinflusst und damit die Reputation des Unternehmens gefährden kann (Schrader 2005; Grappi, Romani, und Barbarossa 2017). Zweifel an der Ernsthaftigkeit gesellschaftlichen Engagements von Unternehmen sind eng mit dem Vorwurf des Greenwashings verbunden (Lyon und Montgomery 2015). Dahinter verbirgt sich die Vermutung, dass Unternehmen suffizienzförderndes Marketing nur betreiben würden, um den Anschein gesellschaftlicher Verantwortlichkeit zu wahren. Entsprechend hat eine Studie gezeigt, dass Bedenken von Konsument*innen hinsichtlich der Glaubwürdigkeit von suffizienzförderndem Marketing einer Fluggesellschaft kontextbezogen auftreten können (Hesse und Rünz 2020). Um solchen Vorwürfen vorzubeugen, sollten sich Unternehmen um eine authentische, transparente, konsistente und vielstimmige Kommunikation bemühen (Thummes 2019). Dies wird durch eine positive Beurteilung durch Konsument*innen und eine Stärkung von Reputation und Kundenbindung honoriert, wie meine empirischen Untersuchungen zeigen.

Zudem empfiehlt es sich, ein suffizienzförderndes Produkt- und Dienstleitungsangebot als Basis für alle sonstigen operativen Marketingaktivitäten zu begreifen. Die im Rahmen der Dissertation untersuchten Unternehmen legen einen Fokus auf die Langlebigkeit, Qualität und Zeitlosigkeit ihrer Produkte. Daneben konnte ich einen Schwerpunkt auf Kommunikationsmaßnahmen zur Suffizienzförderung feststellen. Hinsichtlich der konkreten Ausgestaltung von Kommunikationsmaßnahmen bietet sich einerseits die klare und eindeutige Formulierung der Botschaft an, etwa zu den Vorteilen von suffizienzorientiertem Konsum wie finanzielle Einsparungen, Zeitgewinne oder die Reduktion von Eigentumspflichten. Gleichzeitig ist ein sensibler Umgang mit dem Thema Konsumverzicht wichtig, um nicht als bevormundend wahrgenommen zu werden und sozial schwächer gestellte Menschen, für die Konsum vorrangig der Befriedigung existenzieller Bedürfnisse dient, zu diffamieren. Dass suffizienzorientierter Konsum auch Praktiken des Selbermachens und Reparierens einschließt, bietet die Chance, die Aneignung handwerklicher Fähigkeiten zu unterstützen und dadurch die Selbstwirksamkeit und Selbstermächtigung von Konsument*innen zu stärken. Dies würde gut an die Lifestyle-Trends Minimalismus (Kang, Martinez, und Johnson 2021; Meissner 2019) oder *Decluttering* (Sandlin und Wallin 2021) anschließen.

Eignung von Online-Kommunikation für die Suffizienzförderung

Ich konnte in der Dissertation zeigen, dass Unternehmen insbesondere die Online-Kommunikation für die Verbreitung von suffizienzbezogenen Botschaften als besonders geeignet einschätzen, unter anderem aufgrund der zeit- und ortsunabhängigen Erreichbarkeit, der Steigerung der Kosteneffizienz, der erhöhten Reichweite und den direkten Dialog- und Interaktionsmöglichkeiten. Gleichwohl erschwert die große Anzahl sowie Allgegenwärtigkeit konsumstimulierender Inhalte im digitalen Raum, dass suffizienzfördernde Botschaften zu Konsument*innen durchdringen (Frick, Matthies, u. a. 2021). Wenngleich die manipulativen Absichten konsumfördernder Werbung (Heath und Chatzidakis 2012) natürlich nicht ausschließlich für digitale Umgebungen gelten, wird diese Wirkung durch Phänomene verstärkt, die spezifisch für das Online-Marketing sind, wie zum Beispiel die (unerwünschte) Bannerwerbung oder die algorithmisch gesteuerte Voraussage von individuellen Präferenzen auf Social Media-Plattformen (Kasser 2020). Als Empfehlung für suffizienzfördernde Kommunikation könnte vor diesem Hintergrund abgeleitet werden, dass tracking-gestützte Anwendungen eher sparsam eingesetzt werden sollten. Zudem könnten die Erkenntnisse zum Nudging (Thaler und Sunstein 2008) auf die Förderung kurzfristiger suffizienzorientierter Konsumentscheidungen übertragen werden, etwa indem die Anregung eines Onlineshops, die eigenen Konsumwünsche zu reflektieren oder gänzlich auf den intendierten Kauf zu verzichten, kurz vor Kaufabschluss angezeigt wird. Gegenwärtig haben die meisten digitalen Angebote eine gewinnorientierte Grundausrichtung (Frick, Gossen, u. a. 2021). Suchmaschinen, Online-Nachrichtenmedien und Social Media-Plattformen finanzieren sich in der Regel durch die Schaltung von Werbung und den Handel mit persönlichen Daten (Kingaby 2021). Daraus ergeben sich logische Grenzen für suffizienzförderndes Marketing im Rahmen der Online-Kommunikation.

Praxistheoretisch informierte Weiterentwicklung von suffizienzförderndem Marketing

Zu guter Letzt bieten sich praktische Schlussfolgerungen aus der von der Praxistheorie geleiteten Analyse der Marketingaktivitäten ausgewählter Outdoorunternehmen an. Ähnlich wie in dem Artikel SPC 2022 meiner Dissertation haben auch Parekh und Klintman (2021) die Aktivitäten von zivilgesellschaftlichen Organisationen zur Förderung von Praktiken des nachhaltigen Ernährungskonsums untersucht. Sie kommen zu dem Schluss, dass die meisten Maßnahmen nicht mit einer praxisorientierten Perspektive übereinstimmen, aber durchaus das Potenzial haben zu praxisorientierten Strategien für nachhaltigen Ernährungskonsum weiterentwickelt zu werden. Auch im Falle des suffizienzorientierten Marketings kann gegenwärtig eine eher behavioristische Auffassung von Konsumverhalten festgestellt werden, bei dem ein starker Fokus auf individuelle Entscheidungen gelegt wird. Das praxistheoretische Verständnis von Konsum als Bündel alltäglicher Praktiken (Reckwitz 2002) scheint in der Marketingpraxis noch nicht weit verbreitet, und entsprechende auf Praktiken abzielende Ansätze eher zufällig und limitiert zu sein. Eine entscheidende Voraussetzung für zielgerichtete, von der Praxistheorie inspirierte Marketingaktivitäten ist, dass Unternehmen die Komplexität des Alltagslebens anerkennen und Maßnahmen kontinuierlich und reflexiv einsetzen (Spurling und McMeekin 2015).

5.3. Reflektion des transdisziplinären Forschungsdesigns

Der transdisziplinäre Forschungsrahmen der vorliegenden Dissertation war mit einigen theoretischen und methodischen Herausforderungen verbunden, bereicherte aber gleichermaßen den Forschungsprozess.

Insbesondere die interdisziplinäre Zusammenarbeit mit der Umweltpsychologin aus der Nachwuchsforschungsgruppe und die gemeinsame Entwicklung, Durchführung und Auswertung der empirischen Studien im Rahmen der Artikel UPS 2018 und JEVP 2021 erweiterte den Möglichkeitsrahmen und dadurch die Relevanz dieser Dissertation für die nachhaltigkeitsorientierte Marketing- und Konsumforschung. Auch die Kooperation und Co-Autor*innenschaft mit weiteren Wissenschaftlerinnen im Rahmen der Einzelpublikationen brachte inhaltliche und methodische Kenntnisse sowie unterschiedliche Denk- und Sichtweisen gewinnbringend zusammen. Die interdisziplinäre Forschungskooperation kann aber auch anspruchsvoll und herausfordernd sein (Scholz 2017). Insbesondere die Diskussionen und Kooperationen mit den Kolleg*innen aus der Nachwuchsforschungsgruppe, die aus der Umweltpsychologie, Volkswirtschaftslehre, Ingenieurswissenschaften und Soziologie stammen, haben hohe inhaltliche Integrationsanforderungen in unterschiedlichen Fachsprachen, Wissenschaftsverständnissen und Methoden mit sich gebracht (Klein 2005; Stehr und Weingart 2018). Indem wir in der Nachwuchsforschungsgruppe intensive, mit ausreichender Zeit ausgestattete Austausch- und Lernprozesse etablierten und zumindest punktuell eine prozessorientierte Begleitforschung durchführten, haben wir einen geeigneten Rahmen für die Reflektion der Herausforderungen interdisziplinären Arbeitens geschaffen.

In der transdisziplinären Zusammenarbeit zeigten sich ebenfalls einige Herausforderungen. Für die vorliegende Dissertation war vor allem die Zusammenarbeit mit dem nachhaltigen Online-Marktplatz Avocadostore maßgeblich. Im Vorfeld der empirischen Erhebungen für die Artikel UPS 2018 und JEVP 2021 haben wir jeweils Konzeptionsworkshops mit Vertreter*innen des Unternehmens durchgeführt. Die Entwicklung und Umsetzung der Studien erfolgten in enger

Zusammenarbeit mit dem Unternehmen. Insbesondere bei der Entwicklung des Feldexperiments konnten wir aber nicht alle aus Forschungssicht sinnvollen Vorgaben durchsetzen, da die Unternehmensrealität bei Avocadostore mit einigen Wechseln bei den verantwortlichen Ansprechpersonen und agileren Arbeits- und Entscheidungsstrukturen eine vollständige Integration unserer Anforderungen und Vorstellungen erschwerten. Daraus resultierten methodische Limitierungen, die die Qualität und Aussagekraft unserer Daten eingeschränkt haben.

6. Fazit

Das übergeordnete Ziel dieser Dissertation bestand darin, das bestehende Wissen zu suffizienzförderndem Marketing zu erweitern und neue Erkenntnisse über dessen operative Ausgestaltung sowie über Motive und Hindernisse für dessen Umsetzung in Unternehmen zu generieren. Zudem galt es, die verbraucherseitige Wahrnehmung und Wirkung von suffizienzförderndem Marketing näher zu bestimmen. Mit einem transdisziplinären Forschungsverständnis habe ich mehrere qualitative und quantitative Studien zur Beantwortung der Forschungsfragen der Dissertation durchgeführt und in insgesamt fünf Einzelpublikationen zusammengefasst.

Aufgrund der Neuartigkeit des Untersuchungsgegenstands ist die Dissertation als explorativer Beitrag einzuordnen. Meine empirischen Erkenntnisse sollten in zukünftiger Forschung unterschiedlicher Disziplinen und Richtungen überprüft und weiterentwickelt werden. So bietet meine Arbeit einen Ausgangspunkt für die nachhaltigkeitsorientierte Marketing- und Konsumforschung, die sich fragen sollte, ob die bestehenden Marketingansätze tatsächlich geeignet sind, um zukunftsfähige Lösungen für den Überkonsum in Wohlstandsgesellschaften zu fördern. In diesem Zusammenhang erscheint es zentral, die Entstehung von nicht-nachhaltigen Lebensstilen besser zu verstehen und die Verantwortung und institutionelle Macht des Marketings zu untersuchen. Zudem treffen meine Erkenntnisse lediglich auf nachhaltige Unternehmen zu, weswegen generalisierbare Aussagen zur Bedeutung von suffizienzförderndem Marketing für konventionelle Unternehmen auf dieser Basis nicht getroffen werden können.

Aus einer eher praktischen Sicht geben die in der Dissertation untersuchten Pionierunternehmen aus der Bekleidungs- und Outdoorbranche wertvolle Einblicke in die Herausforderungen und Chancen von suffizienzförderndem Marketing. Gleichzeitig sind diese Beispiele angesichts der Dominanz von konsumstimulierenden Inhalten und absatzorientierten Instrumenten des Marketings weiterhin eine Ausnahme. Die Frage, welche Wirkung suffizienzförderndes Marketing in einer wachstumsorientierten Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft langfristig entfalten kann, bleibt vorerst unbeantwortet.

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8. Darstellung des Eigenanteils an den Einzelpublikationen

Nachfolgend werden die in Co-Autor*innenschaft entstandenen Artikel dieser Dissertation aufgeführt und mein Eigenanteil an diesen Publikationen gemäß § 2 (5) der aktuellen Promotionsordnung der TU Berlin ausführlich dargestellt. Für die übersichtliche Darstellung werden diese Angaben im Anschluss in tabellarischer Form zusammengefasst (Tabelle 2).

Die Publikation **JMK 2018**, bei der ich Erst-Autorin bin, ist in Co-Autor*innenschaft mit Florence Ziesemer von der Universität Potsdam und Ulf Schrader von der TU Berlin entstanden. Die Idee für den Artikel stammt aus der anfänglichen theoretischen Beschäftigung mit alternativen Marketing- und Konsumkonzepten im Rahmen der Dissertation. Nachdem ich die ersten inhaltlichen und methodischen Ideen für den Artikel in einem Konzept inkl. Methodik zusammengefasst und mit Ulf Schrader diskutiert habe, hat sich Florence Ziesemer, die zum damaligen Zeitpunkt als Doktorandin der Universität Potsdam zu einem ähnlichen Thema forschte, bereit erklärt, als Autorin mitzuwirken. Ab diesem Zeitpunkt haben wir den Artikel zu gleichen Teilen weiterentwickelt und verfasst. Die Durchführung der systematischen Literaturanalyse, die Verschriftlichung der Ergebnisse und das Verfassen des Originalentwurfs haben wir zu gleichen Teilen geleistet. Ulf Schrader hat beratend mitgewirkt, Ideen und Argumente strukturiert und die verschiedenen Manuskriptentwürfe kommentiert. Die Finalisierung und Erst-Einreichung beim *Journal of Macromarketing* des Artikels hat Florence Ziesemer (während meiner Elternzeit) in der Rolle des so genannten corresponding author übernommen. Der Artikel durchlief nach der Begutachtung im Peer-Review-Verfahren zwei Überarbeitungsschleifen. Die Überarbeitungen des Manuskripts erfolgten zu gleichen Teilen durch Florence Ziesemer und mich, wobei wir erneut durch Beratung und Kommentierung von Ulf Schrader unterstützt wurden.

Der Artikel **SPC 2022** ist in Kooperation mit der Doktorandin Maren Ingrid Kropfeld von der Universität Oldenburg entstanden. Wir haben zu gleichen Teilen zu dieser Publikation beigetragen. Die erste Idee für den Artikel haben wir auf der internationalen Konferenz ERSCP 2019 diskutiert und in den Folgemonaten konzeptionell und inhaltlich weiterentwickelt. Alle Arbeiten an dem Artikel wurden in gleichen Teilen von uns beiden geleistet (Konzeption, Methodik, Datenanalyse, Literaturrecherche, Schreiben des Originalentwurfs, Projektadministration). Die Kostenübernahme für die Open Access-Publikation sowie alle Unterstützungsdienstleistungen im Forschungsprozess wurden aus dem Sachkostenbudget meiner Nachwuchsforschungsgruppe finanziert. Der Artikel wurde zeitgleich mit der Abgabe dieses Rahmentextes bei der peer-reviewed Zeitschrift *Sustainable Production and Consumption* eingereicht. Eine Rückmeldung des Herausgebers der Zeitschrift ist noch ausstehend.

Den Artikel **CLRC 2021** habe ich ebenfalls in Kooperation mit einer externen Doktorandin (Anneli Heinrich von der HWR Berlin) verfasst. Die Idee für die Publikation ist entstanden, nachdem wir festgestellt haben, dass sich unsere jeweiligen Dissertationen mit dem Untersuchungsgegenstand des suffizienzfördernden Marketings befassen. Die Festlegung auf das Thema und die Methodik haben wir gemeinsam getroffen. Während Anneli Heinrich vor allem für die Datenerhebung und -auswertung und das Verfassen einzelner Kapitelentwürfe verantwortlich war, habe ich die Projektadministration, Konzeption des Artikels, Literaturrecherche und das Verfassen des Originalentwurfs verantwortet und bei der Datenauswertung mitgewirkt. Ferner habe ich die Einreichung bei der Zeitschrift sowie das Begutachtungsverfahren durchgeführt. Vor diesem Hintergrund bin ich Erst-Autorin dieser Publikation. Der Artikel wurde nach Durchlaufen einer ersten Überarbeitungsschleife bei der Zeitschrift *GAIA* abgelehnt und ist dann nach einem Peer-Review-Verfahren bei *Cleaner and Responsible Consumption* erschienen.

Der Artikel **UPS 2018** ist ein Produkt der inter- und transdisziplinären Zusammenarbeit im Rahmen der Nachwuchsforschungsgruppe. Als Ko-Autorin hat Vivian Frick wesentlich dazu beigetragen. Die Konzeption und Methodik des Artikels sowie die Durchführung der Kund*innen-Befragung bei dem Praxispartner Avocadostore haben wir gemeinsam durchgeführt, während die qualitativen Analysen in meiner Verantwortung lagen und die quantitativen Analysen von Vivian Frick durchgeführt wurden. Die Literaturrecherche und das Verfassen des Originalentwurfs haben wir gleichmäßig unter uns aufgeteilt. Für die Projektadministration war ich zuständig. Das Manuskript haben wir bei einem Call for Papers der Zeitschrift *Umweltpsychologie* für eine Ausgabe zum Thema „Umweltschutz bei Unternehmen" eingereicht und im Rahmen eines Peer-Review-Verfahrens überarbeitet.

Die Publikation **JEVP 2021** ist ebenfalls im Rahmen der Nachwuchsforschungsgruppe und gemeinsam mit Vivian Frick erschienen, die als Erst-Autorin unter anderem für die Projektadministration zuständig war. Die Konzeption, Methodik und Literaturrecherchen für den Artikel haben Vivian Frick und ich gemeinsam durchgeführt. Die quantitativen Datenanalysen hat Vivian Frick erbracht, während das Schreiben des Originalentwurfs und die Überarbeitung des Manuskripts wieder bei uns beiden lag. Ferner hat Sonja Geiger bei Methodik und Datenanalyse beratend unterstützt und das Originalmanuskript sowie die überarbeitete Manuskriptversion kommentiert. Der Ko-Autor Tilman Santarius hat ebenfalls die unterschiedlichen Manuskriptversionen kommentiert. Das Manuskript haben wir im *Journal of Environmental Psychology* eingereicht und nach zwei Überarbeitungsschleifen im Peer-Review-Verfahren dort veröffentlicht.

Tabelle 2. Übersicht über die Co-Autor*innen und Eigenanteile an den Einzelpublikationen

Artikel	**Co-Autor*innen**	**Eigenanteil**
JMK 2018	**Maike Gossen**, Florence Ziesemer, Ulf Schrader	Konzeption, Methodik, Datenanalyse, Literaturrecherche, Schreiben des Originalentwurfs, Überarbeitung des Manuskripts, Projektadministration
SPC 2022	**Maike Gossen**, Maren Ingrid Kropfeld	Konzeption, Methodik, Datenanalyse, Literaturrecherche, Schreiben des Originalentwurfs, Projektadministration
CLRC 2021	**Maike Gossen**, Anneli Heinrich	Konzeption, Methodik, Datenanalyse, Literaturrecherche, Schreiben des Originalentwurfs, Überarbeitung des Manuskripts, Projektadministration
UPS 2018	**Maike Gossen**, Vivian Frick	Konzeption, Methodik, Datenanalyse, Literaturrecherche, Schreiben des Originalentwurfs, Überarbeitung des Manuskripts, Projektadministration
JEVP 2021	Vivian Frick, **Maike Gossen**, Tilman Santarius, Sonja Geiger	Konzeption, Methodik, Literaturrecherche, Schreiben des Originalentwurfs, Überarbeitung des Manuskripts

9. Danksagung

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Ich danke meinen Freunden, meinen Eltern und meiner Schwester, die mich in stressigen Phasen mit Ablenkung und Ausgleich unterstützt haben. Stellvertretend danke ich meiner Freundin Caro, die mich kurz vor der Abgabe mit „unseren Klassikern“ bei Laune gehalten hat. In großem Maße danke ich meinen Eltern, die immer an mich geglaubt haben. Nicht zuletzt ihre Fremdsprachenkenntnisse in Latein und das Lektorat waren für diese Arbeit sehr wichtig ;-)

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10. Eidesstattliche Erklärung

Hiermit erkläre ich an Eides statt, dass ich die vorliegende Dissertation selbstständig und nur unter Zuhilfenahme der im Literaturverzeichnis genannten Quellen und Hilfsmittel angefertigt habe. Alle Stellen der Arbeit, die anderen Werken dem Wortlaut oder dem Sinn nach entnommen wurden, sind kenntlich gemacht.

Für die Arbeiten, die in Zusammenarbeit mit anderen Wissenschaftler*innen entstanden sind, sind die jeweiligen Namen der Co-Autor*innen sowie mein Eigenanteil an den jeweiligen Arbeiten gemäß § 2 (5) der Promotionsordnung deklariert.

Ich versichere außerdem, dass ich die beigefügte Dissertation nur in diesem und keinem anderen Promotionsverfahren eingereicht habe und dass diesem Promotionsverfahren keine endgültig gescheiterten Promotionsverfahren vorausgegangen sind

Berlin, 19. April 2022

Maike Gossen

Teil B – Einzelpublikationen

I. Why and How Commercial Marketing Should Promote Sufficient Consumption: A Systematic Literature Review

Zusammenfassung

Although marketing strategies are often accused of stimulating overconsumption, businesses increasingly show potential as enablers of sufficiency. The concept of sufficiency contributes to sustainable development through the absolute reduction of resources and energy used for consumption by questioning the level of demand. This study analyses reasons and potential practices for commercial marketing to promote sufficiency through a systematic literature review of scientific publications, guided by the following research questions: Why should commercial marketing promote sufficiency? How can commercial marketing promote sufficiency? Which barriers for promoting sufficiency occur? The content-based study of 17 publications in the final review sample delivers recommendations for how to practically implement marketing for sufficiency, and theoretical considerations for strengthening the discourse within macromarketing and beyond.

Schlüsselwörter: sustainable consumption, sufficiency, marketing management, macromarketing, systematic literature review

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Autor*innen: Maike Gossen, Florence Ziesemer, Ulf Schrader

Introduction

Global sustainability concerns challenge the consumption and production levels of a growing well-endowed population segment who overexploit Earth's resources. Current efforts to reduce resource usage, cut CO2 emissions, and decrease social inequality focus on securing economic growth and material living standards through technology-based and efficiency-driven strategies. Yet, human consumption continues to exceed the planetary boundaries and stresses the common pool resources (Duffy, Layton, and Dwyer 2017). Efficiency-driven strategies fail in the aspect of "doing more and better with less" (United Nations 2015), because they ignore rebound effects (Sorrell 2007; Santarius 2016) and tackle a reduction of consumption levels only in relative terms, giving the delusive promise that environmental protection and materialistic lifestyles are compliable.

Therefore, sufficiency is a much-needed concept in meeting sustainable consumption levels (Hansen and Schrader 1997; Schaefer and Crane 2005; Brown and Vergragt 2016; Fuchs et al. 2016). The purpose of this article is to investigate potentials of the counterintuitive approach to foster sufficiency through commercial marketing. By conducting a systematic literature review, we offer an analysis of motives, barriers and techniques of commercial marketing to encourage sufficient consumption. The aim is to provide a common framework for scholars and develop future research directions.

Although sufficiency lacks a universally agreed upon definition, we understand the concept as the avoidance of over- and underconsumption, which implies a reduction of material consumption levels in absolute terms in affluent societies. It aims at ensuring human well-being while securing ecological stability through reducing the use of scarce natural resources and energy (Princen 2005; Gorge et al. 2015).

Examining sufficiency requires the consideration of the broader societal, political, technical, and economic settings. The way these settings form needs, individual attitudes, and beliefs has been studied as the dominant social paradigm (DSP) in macromarketing (Kilbourne, McDonagh, and Prothero 1997; Gollnhofer and Schouten 2017). The DSP impedes the reduction of individual consumption, because such reductions oppose the mainstream rhetoric of materialism, consumerism, technological progress, and economic growth (Kilbourne et al. 2009; Gorge et al. 2015). The business sector and its profit-oriented marketing practices are often criticized for driving excessive consumption and causing negative ecological and social consequences (Assadourian 2010; Varey 2010; Achrol and Kotler 2012; Stoeckl and Luedicke 2015;

McDonagh and Prothero 2014). Commercial marketing, therefore, is one of the spheres requiring a radical transformation to overcome the DSP (Kilbourne 2004). Yet, marketing also holds the means for changing behaviour towards sufficient consumption. Companies such as Patagonia, which asked consumers to reflect their needs and create awareness for the environmental impact of consumption through its 2011 campaign “Don’t buy this jacket”, prove the existence of opportunities for experimentation and the viability of commercial marketing techniques to support the adoption of sufficient lifestyles (Hwang et al. 2016).

This article addresses the questions of why and how commercial marketing should be used for an absolute reduction of individual consumption levels. We focus on commercial marketing, because marketing is the preferred tool to create and maintain customer relationships and can thus have a targeted influence on consumer decisions towards sufficiency. Our research adds a specific focus to existing work on sufficiency-driven business models (Bocken and Short 2016; Bocken 2017) by investigating not only practical marketing techniques but also the reasons for and against encouraging sufficient consumption from a marketing perspective. We conducted a systematic literature review (SLR) on publications in international scientific peer-reviewed journals and books, which present specific implications for commercial marketing to support the voluntary absolute reduction of consumption levels for sustainability. This approach serves the critical macromarketing discussion on strategies for fostering sufficiency (Varey 2010; Gorge et al. 2015; Sandberg 2017), while also considering the potential of micro-structures within a company. Consequently, three main research questions guide our exploratory research:

RQ 1: Why should commercial marketing promote sufficiency?

RQ 2: How can commercial marketing promote sufficiency?

RQ 3: Which barriers for promoting sufficiency through commercial marketing occur?

The next chapter provides a comparison of different behavioural concepts and marketing approaches related to sufficient consumption. The methodology applied to the SLR and its qualitative data analysis follows. Findings to the research questions are then provided and complemented with a discussion of relevant themes occurring in the sample which induce future research directions. A summary of implications and outlook conclude the article.

The Link Between Sufficient Consumption and Marketing

Behavioural Concepts Related to Sufficient Consumption

Sufficiency as the avoidance of over- and underconsumption through a reduction of material consumption levels does not necessarily imply “less” in a negative sense, but rather a notion of "enough" as an intuitive, individually correct measure of consumption without entailing sacrifice (Princen 2005). Some scholars, combining the concepts of sufficiency and "a good life", suggest that a simplistic and less materialistic lifestyle predicated on richness in time and social interaction contributes to personal happiness and well-being (Dittmar et al. 2014; Kasser et al. 2014; Seegebarth et al. 2016). On an individual level, sufficient consumption involves rethinking personal needs for changing excessive consumer behaviour (Jenny 2016) and reflecting on the relation between affluent consumption and life fulfilment (Cherrier, Szuba, and Özçaglar-Toulouse 2012). Three behavioural categories lead to sufficiency's immanent absolute reduction of consumption levels: (1) reducing the purchase of new resource-intense goods, (2) choosing goods that are smaller or of lower capacity, and (3) using resource-intense goods and services less often (Jenny 2016).

Different behavioural concepts dealing with materially reduced consumption patterns can be summarized by sufficient consumption as an umbrella term. Adopting Lim's (2017) approach of combining multiple theoretical perspectives for a comprehensive understanding of sustainable consumption, we include these concepts in our literature review search process and explain their relation to sufficiency, summarized in Table 3. While obligatory sufficiency exists (Gorge et al. 2015), this article focuses on voluntary activities as potential subjects of commercial marketing, including voluntary simplicity, frugality, downshifting, anti-consumption, mindful, slow, ethical, and responsible consumption.

Not necessarily led by sustainability motivations, but avoiding overconsumption through highly disciplined purchase behaviour and sacrifices by denying short-term shopping whims (Lastovicka et al. 1999), frugality may cause sufficient consumption unintentionally. Voluntary simplicity is described as a consumer movement (Etzioni 1998; Alexander and Ussher 2012) aiming at an increase in life satisfaction and meaning through focusing on non-material aspects of life instead of owning non-essential products and services (McDonald et al. 2006; Huneke 2005; McGouran and Prothero 2016). Downshifting refers to the process of consciously deciding to work less and reducing personal consumption due to lower income (Etzioni 1998), with the aim of leading a less stressful and more qualitatively rich life (Chhetri, Stimson, and Western 2009). Simplifiers and downshifters connect to sufficiency because they share the motivation to reduce material consumption for increased life satisfaction (Shaw and Newholm 2002; Ballantine and Creery 2010). Voluntary simplifiers do not eschew market interactions but use the market system to create and practice more ethical and environmentally friendly lifestyles for themselves (Shaw and Moraes 2009). On the contrary, anti-consumers consciously and deliberately reject, avoid, reclaim, and reduce only specific products, brands, and commercial transactions in opposition to the market system (Lee, Fernandez, and Hyman 2009; Chatzidakis and Lee 2013). Their practices relate to sufficiency because they are often rooted in sustainability, potentially decrease the use of natural resources and waste (Black and Cherrier 2010; Kropfeld, Nepomuceno, and Dantas 2018), and increase individual well-being (Lee and Ahn 2016; Seegebarth et al. 2016). A marketing concept for mindful consumption is built around temperance in acquisitive, repetitive, and aspirational consumption, motivated by a sense of caring for one's self, community, and nature (Sheth, Sethia, and Srinivas 2011). Mindfulness activities potentially increase consumers' awareness of their own consumption habits and thus relate to sufficiency, as mindful consumption motivated by nonmaterialistic values may cause a decrease in aspirations to consume (Bahl et al. 2016; Fischer et al. 2017). Slow consumption means the avoidance of excessive consumption and accelerating production cycles, trends, and inferior quality, thereby extending the product life span of household goods and reducing waste and resource usage (Cooper 2005; Bocken and Short 2016). Ethical and responsible consumption are often studied in an overlapping manner, with both referring to consumption decisions based "on a desire to minimize or eliminate any harmful effects and maximize the long-term beneficial impact on the environment and society" (Lim 2017, p. 72). This desire may cause consumers to withdraw from the market through collective actions (Özçaglar-Toulouse 2009) and therefore potentially reduce their absolute levels of consumption (Newholm and Shaw 2007).

This rather scattered landscape of knowledge about sufficiency and consumer behaviour determines the terms to include in our review search process. Research also shows that in practice, sufficient consumption appears through individually and situationally combined activities that do not necessarily take place outside the market system (Özçaglar-Toulouse 2009; Shaw and Moraes 2009) or subvert social norms (Sandberg 2017), and which can therefore be shaped by marketing.

Table 1. Behavioural concepts related to sufficient consumption.

	Relation to Sufficiency	**Motivation**
Voluntary Simplicity	Overall reduced consumption for increased life satisfaction	Focusing on non-material aspects of life instead of owning non-essential products and services
Downshifting		Consciously deciding to work less and reducing personal consumption due to lower income
Frugality		Self-interested motivations, highly disciplined purchase behaviour, and sacrifices by denying short-term shopping whims

Anti-Consumption	Consciously and deliberately reject, avoid, reclaim, and reduce only specific products, brands, and commercial transactions	Reasons against consumption (ethical, environmental, or societal concerns, consumer resistance)
Mindful consumption	Decrease of aspirations to consume	Temperance in acquisitive, repetitive, and aspirational consumption, motivated by a sense of caring for one self, community, and nature
Slow Consumption	Producing less waste and reduced resource usage	Avoidance of excessive consumption and accelerating production cycles, trends, and inferior quality
Ethical and Responsible Consumption	Potentially includes the decision to reduce the absolute levels of consumption	Minimum harmful and maximum long-term benefit for the environment and society

Marketing Concepts Related to Sufficient Consumption

Marketing usually focuses on the stimulation of demand and the acquisition of material goods or commercial services to satisfy consumer needs (Kotler 2018). In this regard, sustainable or green marketing is no exception as it "was almost entirely geared towards trying to persuade consumers to buy more (if different and environmentally sounder) products, or to dispose of them more responsibly" (Peattie and Peattie 2009, p. 2). Although marketing is often accused of driving growth in global consumption (Jackson 2009; Peattie and Peattie 2009), the research discipline offers approaches for consumption reduction. Fisk (1973) was one of the first marketing scholars to discuss the need to limit consumption, followed by several studies investigating the role of macromarketing for consumption reduction (e.g. Kilbourne, McDonagh, and Prothero 1997; Kjellberg 2008; Varey 2012). Two alternative concepts offer a good fit between marketing and consumption reduction: social marketing and demarketing, which seek to discourage customers from consuming certain products or services.

Social marketing addresses public social problems and promotes a voluntary behaviour change of target audiences to increase the well-being of individuals or society (Andreasen 1994) and to pursue an effective, efficient, equitable, fair, and sustained social transformation (Saunders, Barrington, and Sridharan 2015). The principles of social marketing are transferable to promote sustainable behaviour (Geller 1989), proven by the emergence of studies on recycling, sustainable transport use, or energy efficiency (Gordon, Carrigan, and Hastings 2011). Peattie and Peattie (2009) examine the potential of a health-oriented social marketing campaign to contribute to consumption reduction, thereby relating it to sufficiency. While often critically discussed (Deshpande 2016), the involvement of companies through corporate social marketing potentially benefits individuals, the society, and firms (Lee 2016; Polonsky 2017).

Demarketing aims at the suppression of demand in times of shortage by reversing traditional marketing tools (Cullwick 1975; Kotler 2011). It can either occur as general demarketing (to adjust to supply shortage), selective demarketing (to support segmentation strategy) or ostensible demarketing (to signal product scarcity) (Kotler and Levy 1971). The concept of demarketing is applied and studied across a wide variety of contexts (see Ramirez, Tajdini, and David 2017 for an overview). Yet, sustainability is usually not the motivation for demand suppression and few pro-environmental demarketing studies exist (Heath and Chatzidakis 2012).

Although both concepts provide references for consumption reduction, they have not been far-reaching enough for the goal of sufficiency. Social marketing initiatives are primarily implemented in the health sector (Peattie and Peattie 2009) and by public policy institutions, while demarketing is mostly not designed to achieve sustainable consumption. Furthermore, companies rarely apply these marketing concepts, due to their commitment to profit, growth, and increased consumption, and tend to reject any responsibility for negative consequences of high consumption levels (Lorek and Fuchs 2013; Brown and Vergragt 2016). Thus, if marketing discourses acknowledge sufficiency at all, it is often seen as an individual consumer preference rather than a company's responsibility (McDonald et al. 2006). Commercial marketing to promote sufficiency operated by businesses with the aim of reducing absolute consumption levels is a "missing link" that combines aspects of social marketing and demarketing for the purpose of sufficient consumption.

Methodology

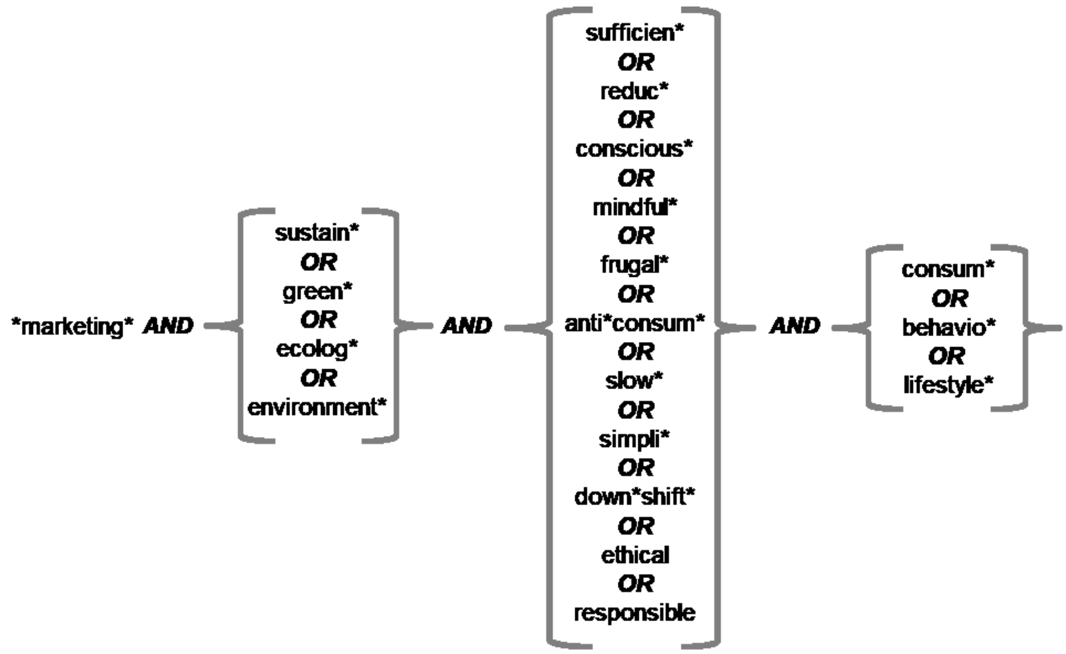
Prompted by the untapped potential in connecting commercial marketing and consumption reduction, the present study adopts an SLR approach to identify the state-of-the-art of the research field.

Data Collection

An SLR is a structured approach to identify, evaluate, and interpret the existing body of academic research on a specific topic through an organized and reproducible analysis (Fink 2014). SLRs provide transparency through an audit trail of the reviewers' decisions, procedures, and conclusions (Tranfield, Denyer, and Smart 2003). Through confirming, rejecting, contrasting, and complementing previous research outcomes, SLRs are a scholarly contribution in their own right which provide ground for subsequent research (Seuring and Gold 2012). Our procedure followed for the SLR meets the recommendations of usual guidelines for reviews in the fields of health, social science, and management (Moher et al. 2009; Higgins and Green 2011; Institute of Medicine 2011) and is divided into three main phases: planning the review, conducting the review, and reporting and dissemination. The activities of phase 2 (conducting the review) include three search techniques based on recommendations by Fischer et al. (2017), who reviewed a similar topic (mindfulness and sustainable consumption): database, supplementary, and conclusive search.

For the database search, we first constructed a search string using four keywords linked by the Boolean operator AND: marketing, sustainability, sufficiency, and consumption. Within the sustainability, sufficiency, and consumption components, the Boolean operator OR includes several related terms derived from existing literature. Wildcards (*) take alternatives or synonyms of the terms into account. The full search string reads as pictured in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Search string.



Second, the formal search parameters for the database search were defined, clarified, and refined. For the initial sample, studies to be included in the review were identified in the databases Web of Science Core Collection, Emerald Insight, and EBSCO Business Source Complete. The

SLR focuses on peer-reviewed journal articles and book chapters in English to meet the highest standards of recent academic work, including both conceptual work and empirical studies. We restricted the database search only by date (December 31, 2017). Table 4 provides the formal criteria of the database search.

Table 2. Formal criteria for the first step of database search.

Criterion	Sample inclusion	Sample exclusion
Search scope	Web of Science Core Collection, Business Source Complete, Emerald Insight	Other databases
Source	Peer reviewed journal articles, book chapter	Any other source, e.g. conference papers or dissertations
Type of research	Empirical and conceptional work	No exclusion
Time period	Publications published until December 31, 2017	Publications published after December 31, 2017
Search parameters	Search string terms appear in the title, abstract, or author-supplied keywords	Search string terms do not appear in title, abstract or author-supplied keywords
Language	English	Any other language

The Web of Science Core Collection search led to 1075 hits, the Emerald Insight search to 1904 hits and the EBSCO Business Source Complete search to 529 hits. After subtracting duplications, the initial sample of 3081 publications underwent a practical screening of titles and abstracts against content-related criteria by two independent researchers. The content-related criteria as described in Table 5 refer to the thematic relevance for this review's scope. Publications fit the requirements when they (1) consider sufficiency in terms of an absolute reduction of consumption levels in favour of sustainability, (2) consider commercial marketing as a potential enabler for consumption reduction, and (3) nominate specific business-to-consumer marketing implications for consumption reduction. The researchers marked all sample titles as (a) definitely fitting the final sample, (b) possibly fitting the final sample, or (c) definitely not fitting the final sample. The researchers compared and discussed their ratings to settle on a preliminary sample, with a third senior researcher deciding in case of disagreement. Options (a) and (b) make up the preliminary sample of 89 publications.

Table 3. Content criteria for the database search.

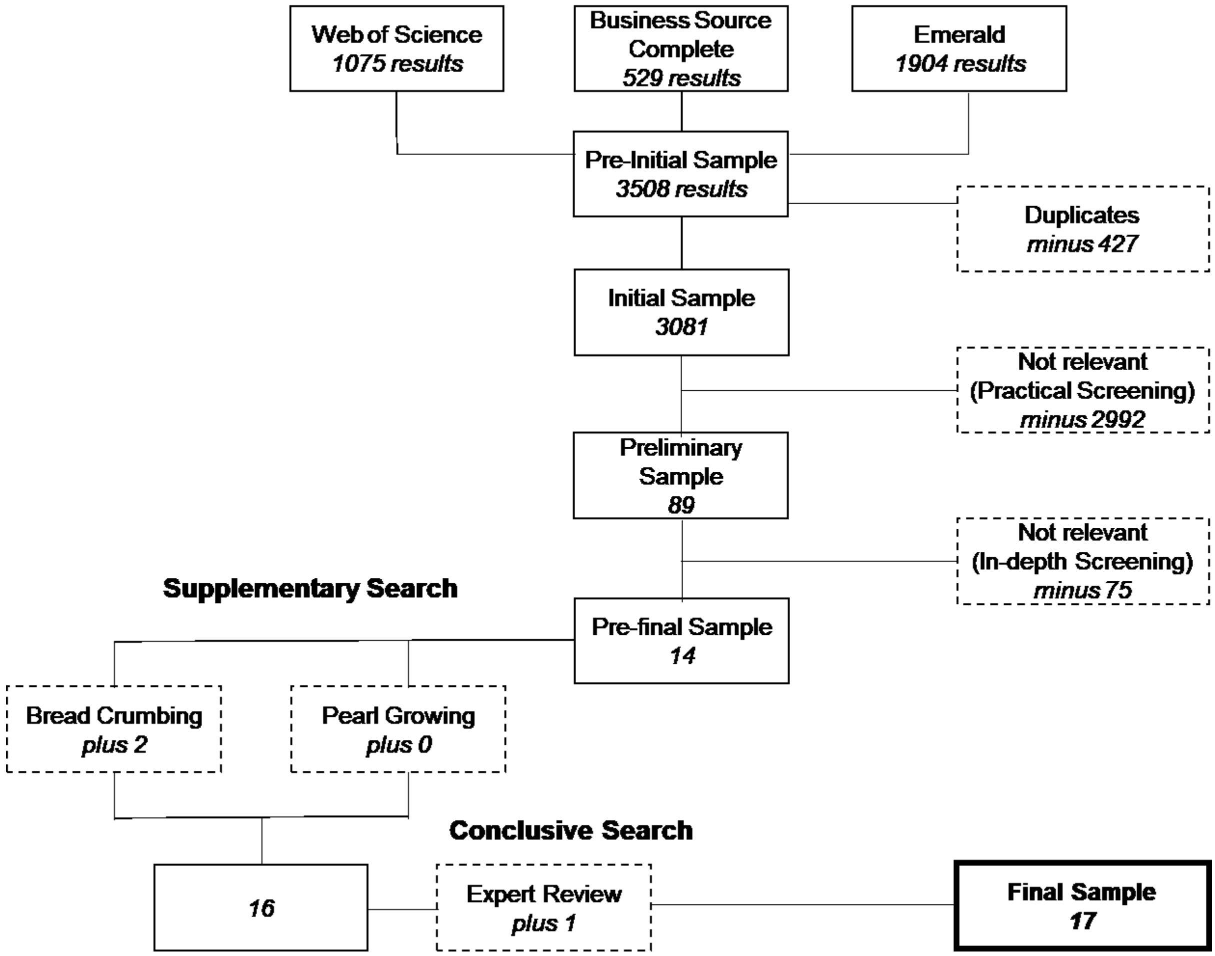
Criterion	Sample inclusion	Sample exclusion

Definition of sufficiency	Absolute reduction of consumption levels for sustainability	No clear definition of sufficiency; sustainability means choice of "greener" product option
Business perspective	Commercial marketing as enabler for consumption reduction	No consideration of commercial marketing as enabler for consumption reduction
Marketing implications	Specific implications for commercial marketing for consumption reduction	No specific implications for commercial marketing for consumption reduction

This preliminary sample of the database search entered in-depth screening, where the full texts of all publications were checked for the content criteria in detail and discussed by the researchers. 14 publications passed this selection to form the pre-final sample. By performing supplementary searches on the pre-final sample through the citation mining strategies "bread crumbing" and "pearl growing", we identified further relevant publications. In a bread crumb search, the reference section of a publication is screened for further eligible publications. In a pearl growing search, citation reference databases are used to identify further publications that are citing an already selected paper (Fischer et al. 2017). 248 publications (29 identified through bread crumbing and 219 through pearl growing) entered the initial sample and underwent the standard procedure, i.e. practical screening followed by in-depth screening. This supplementary search yielded two relevant publications.

In the conclusive search, the pre-final sample (N = 16) was submitted to three senior experts in the field of sustainable consumption and sustainable marketing, asking them to complement the selection with relevant publications. The expert review took place in November 2018 and identified one further publication. The final sample comprised 17 publications (see Table 6). The steps of the iterative search process and its results are reported in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Steps of the search process.



Data Analysis

We conducted a qualitative content analysis on the final data set, an effective method for analysing a sample of research documents in a systematic and controlled way following step by step models (Mayring 2000). The analysis was performed on the full texts of all selected publications using MAXQDA, a software that allows organizing, categorizing, and coding of qualitative data. The central instrument of analysis constitutes a category system, which contributes to the intersubjectivity of the procedure, helping others to reconstruct or repeat the analysis (Mayring 2014). To classify the reviewed material, the coding framework is based on a procedure of inductive-deductive coding. To guarantee the validity and reproducibility of results, the intercoder-reliability (i.e. the accordance of the coding of several coders) was examined (Mayring 2000). The objectivity was ensured by the exact operationalization of the terminology used, which in turn allowed the intersubjective traceability of the analysis (Berelson 1971). Each publication was individually analysed and independently coded by two researchers. When they disagreed about a classification, they discussed the publication in cooperation with a senior researcher until an agreement was reached.

Table 4 presents the final sample of 17 publications, sorted by publication year.

Table 4. Final sample.

#	Authors	PY	Title	Journal	Research Step
1	Fisk G.	1973	Criteria for a theory of responsible consumption	Journal of Marketing	Database Search
2	Schaefer, A.; Crane, A.	2005	Addressing Sustainability and Consumption	Journal of Macromarketing	Bread Crumbing
3	Sheth, J. N.; Sethia, N. K.; Srinivas, S.	2011	Mindful consumption: a customer-centric approach to sustainability	Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science	Database Search
4	Sodhi, K.	2011	Has Marketing Come Full Circle? Demarketing for Sustainability	Business Strategy Series	Bread Crumbing
5	Heath, M. T. P; Chatzidakis, A.	2012	Blame it on marketing': consumers' views on unsustainable consumption	International Journal of Consumer Studies	Database Search
6	Ertekin, Z. O.; Atik, D.	2015	Sustainable Markets: Motivating Factors, Barriers, and Remedies for Mobilization of Slow Fashion	Journal of Macromarketing	Database Search
7	Gorge, H.; Herbert, M.; Oezcaglar-Toulouse, N.; Robert, I.	2015	What Do We Really Need? Questioning Consumption Through Sufficiency	Journal of Macromarketing	Database Search
8	Lowe, B.; Lynch, D.; Lowe, J.	2015	Reducing household water consumption: a social marketing approach	Journal of Marketing Management	Database Search
9	Armstrong Soule, C. A.; Reich, B. J.	2015	Less is more: is a green demarketing strategy sustainable?	Journal of Marketing Management	Database Search
10	Bocken, N. M. P.; Short, S. W.	2016	Towards a sufficiency-driven business model: Experiences and opportunities	Environmental Innovation and Societal Transitions	Database Search
11	Hwang, C.; Lee, Y.; Diddi, S.; Karpova, E.	2016	Don't buy this jacket: Consumer reaction toward anti-consumption apparel advertisement	Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management	Database Search

12	Jung, S.; Jin, B.	2016	From quantity to quality: understanding slow fashion consumers for sustainability and consumer education	International Journal of Consumer Studies	Database Search
13	Reich, B. J. Armstrong Soule, C. A.	2016	Green Demarketing in Advertisements: Comparing "Buy Green" and "Buy Less" Appeals in Product and Institutional Advertising Contexts	Journal of Advertising	Database Search
14	Seegebarth, B.; Peyer, M.; Balderjahn, I.; Wiedmann, K.-P.	2016	The Sustainability Roots of Anti-Consumption Lifestyles and Initial Insights Regarding Their Effects on Consumers' Well-Being	Journal of Consumer Affairs	Expert review
15	Yakobovitch, N.; Grinstein, A.	2016	Materialism and the Boomerang Effect of Descriptive Norm Demarketing: Extension and Remedy in an Environmental Context	Journal of Public Policy & Marketing	Database Search
16	Bocken, N. M. P.	2017	Business-led sustainable consumption initiatives: impacts and lessons learned	Journal of Management Development	Database Search
17	Ramirez, E.; Tajdini, S.; David, M. E.	2017	The Effects of Proenvironmental Demarketing on Consumer Attitudes and Actual Consumption	Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice	Database Search

The publication years show that until 2011, despite Fisk's early outlier from 1973, marketing for sufficiency was no subject of scholarly interest. The recently growing interest in in the 21st century might be due to the occurrence of alarming data on environmental effects of overconsumption and manifestation of business cases for sufficiency marketing. We found four conceptual papers, and nine empirical studies which pick up existing business examples as a basis for experiments or surveys, most prominently Patagonia's "Don't buy this jacket" campaign. The sample represents a diverse research community with a focus on marketing, management, and consumer behaviour journals (possibly due to our search criteria).

The following sections present the research findings of the publications in the final sample, structured according to the research questions.

Why should commercial marketing promote sufficiency?

All publications of the final sample mention reasons why businesses should engage in fostering sufficiency. These reasons concern two perspectives: a societal demand to pursue sufficiency as an external perspective for companies, and a company-internal perspective on altruistic and strategic motives to act as sufficiency catalysers.

Societal Demand

Most sample publications document an external demand for companies to take holistic responsibility. As companies create and fulfil needs through the provision of products and services, they play a significant role in society. In the same manner as they promote a consumer culture resulting in high levels of consumption, they are expected to emphasize sustainable consumption patterns and sufficiency (Heath and Chatzidakis 2012; Bocken 2017). Specifically, the marketing sphere is held responsible for operationalizing sustainability (Fisk 1973; Sheth, Sethia, and Srinivas 2011; Sodhi 2011; Armstrong Soule and Reich 2015; Bocken and Short 2016; Reich and Armstrong Soule 2016; Yakobovitch and Grinstein 2016; Ramirez, Tajdini, and David 2017; Lowe, Lynch, and Lowe 2015), "since [marketing] is the consumer interface and creates the consumer touch points and shapes product experiences" (Sodhi 2011, p. 179).

Altruistic Motives

The need for taking societal responsibility leads to altruistic motives, which originate internally from the organization itself and enclose a normative dimension, explained by Armstrong Soule and Reich (2015), who observe a "recent, growing desire and perhaps a sense of obligation among marketers to attempt to undo the ecological damage presumably caused by consumption" (p. 1407). Fourteen publications state that reaching sustainability or related goals such as environmental protection (Ertekin and Atik 2015; Ramirez, Tajdini, and David 2017; Lowe, Lynch, and Lowe 2015), saving of scarce resources (Fisk 1973; Lowe, Lynch, and Lowe 2015), waste reduction (Hwang et al. 2016; Jung and Jin 2016), or good living conditions for the present population (Seegebarth et al. 2016) and future generations (Heath and Chatzidakis 2012) are important ethical considerations for pursuing sufficiency.

Another altruistic motive is to contribute to changing the role and meaning of consumption in society, referred to by three publications in a rather general fashion (Fisk 1973; Heath and Chatzidakis 2012; Hwang et al. 2016). Bocken and Short (2016) illustrate this motive with the specific case of Riversimple, a company which intends to change the meaning of ownership through its car leasing business and marketing activities. Jung and Jin (2016) address slow fashion as a suitable way of achieving a shift in consumer mind-set from quantity to quality.

Three publications legitimize marketing measures to promote sufficiency with the precautionary principle, a sense of responsibility for operationalizing sustainability (Sheth, Sethia, and Srinivas 2011; Sodhi 2011; Bocken and Short 2016). Furthermore, a marketing approach to moderate consumption is conceived in one paper focusing on European consumers (Seegebarth et al. 2016), as an opportunity to increase individuals' well-being through avoiding over-indebtedness.

Strategic Motives

Marketing for sufficient consumption may also be based on rather strategic motives. Some publications mention that communication campaigns and advertisements to promote sufficiency can create a favourable image "while positively positioning the firm in the mind of the consumer" (Ramirez, Tajdini, and David 2017, p. 300). By fostering positive word-of-mouth recommendations, the positive anticipation can even be reinforced (Bocken and Short 2016). Hwang et al. (2016) conclude that Patagonia's anti-consumption campaign "Don't buy this jacket" contributed to the company's sustainable image. Reich and Armstrong Soule (2016) show that companies find it beneficial to discourage consumption as a sign of commitment to environmental sustainability. Three publications in the SLR sample link product design decisions to a premium brand image, which stands for high quality regarding the material, design and manufacturing choices, or high levels of service and extended warranties (Bocken and Short 2016; Hwang et al. 2016; Ramirez, Tajdini, and David 2017). Ramirez, Tajdini and David (2017) state that marketing aiming at consumption reduction can improve the image of a product's quality. According to four publications, marketing attempts at demand reduction are often build on good customer relationships. Ramirez, Tajdini, and David (2017), and Yakobovitch and Grinstein (2016) find evidence that marketing to promote sufficiency positively affects consumers' attitudes towards the company and can lead to an increase in perceptions of the organization's trustworthiness. For example, the price and product strategy of the furniture manufacturer Vitsœ highly depends on the loyalty of its regular customers (Bocken and Short 2016; Bocken 2017).

Three publications observe that an appropriate strategy to respond to a discrepancy between a company's commitment to sufficiency and the pressure to increase market share and profit margins would be to develop new business areas and customer segments (Armstrong Soule and Reich 2015; Bocken and Short 2016; Jung and Jin 2016). This includes "undermining or displacing the conventional more environmentally harmful businesses" (Bocken and Short 2016, p. 57) or extending the company offer by providing repair services (Jung and Jin 2016). According to seven publications, marketing tools to promote sufficiency can create competitive advantage. The examples of Vitsœ and Patagonia demonstrate that a business or marketing strategy relying on sufficiency can lead to positive impacts on sales and profit (Bocken and

Short 2016; Hwang et al. 2016; Bocken 2017) as well as maintaining or increasing profitability (Sheth, Sethia, and Srinivas 2011; Reich and Armstrong Soule 2016). Financial benefits emerge because marketing activities for sufficiency can be carried out in an inexpensive way and consumers may be willing to pay more for a sustainable product (Ramirez, Tajdini, and David 2017) or high quality and durable designs (Jung and Jin 2016).

How Can Commercial Marketing Promote Sufficiency?

The sample offers diverse practical implications which can be structured according to the classic 4P of the marketing mix (Kotler 2018). Product, promotion, price, and place allow operationalizing a sufficiency marketing mix and provide a sometimes interdependent, but adequately distinguishable structure for our analysis.

Product

In one of the earliest papers in the sample, Schaefer and Crane (2005) doubt that business will "construct some form of green commodity that can be made to appeal to symbolic consumer needs" (p. 89) due to companies' growth imperative. Nevertheless, publications since 2011 display ideas and cases of products and services as an essential aspect of commercial marketing for sufficient consumption, longevity of products being one of them. Longevity may be achieved in the production processes through avoiding obsolescence and mandatory longer warranties (Bocken and Short 2016), using high quality materials (Ertekin and Atik 2015; Seegebarth et al. 2016), slower production terms (Jung and Jin 2016), and design focused on durability and timelessness, instead of trends (Bocken 2017; Jung and Jin 2016). Six publications name the repair and reuse of products as a means to save resources through enhanced product longevity, which is described as smart strategy (Hwang et al. 2016) and business opportunity (Seegebarth et al. 2016). This approach is, for instance, realized through a collaboration with a repair service in the case of Patagonia (Bocken and Short 2016; Bocken 2017) and as a precondition in successful product design for durability and recyclability (Ertekin and Atik 2015). Jung and Jin (2016) recommend repair services especially for consumers with conservative values who might wish to wear their clothes longer.

Four publications discuss second-hand markets. Ertekin and Atik (2015) suggest second-hand products as a contribution to sufficient consumption. Seegebarth et al. (2016) recommend further studying second-hand markets as a business opportunity, which is already used by Vitsœ and Patagonia, who encourage their customers to buy and sell used products of their brands (Bocken and Short 2016; Bocken 2017).

The addition of certain services assists consumers in avoiding unnecessary purchases according to four papers. Bocken and Short (2016) present the cases of Riversimple's sharing vehicles and Kyocera's service fee for consulting and monitoring to reduce printer and paper usage. Sheth, Sethia, and Srinivas (2011, p. 31) describe a general business opportunity connecting longevity and services, because "there will be a greater need for service, maintenance and up-grading of products". Fisk (1973), Sheth, Sethia, and Srinivas (2011) and Seegebarth et al. (2016) recommend renting or leasing options for (usually expensive) products and the inclusion of either commercial or peer-to-peer collaborative consumption platforms. Firms may assist consumers in enacting sufficiency by offering not only services, but also innovative technology tools. In the case of water conservation, Lowe et al. (2015) explain how the incentivized installation of water-saving devices increased actual saving behaviour through enabling, not just changing attitudes.

Many of these examples include the 3R (reuse, repair, recycle), which Gorge et al. (2015) differentiate from sufficiency as activities which "do not challenge consumption in itself, but rather encourage solutions that may require fewer material and energy resources" (p. 12). This suggests that many scholars and commercial marketers apply a rather pragmatic understanding of sufficiency.

Promotion

Bocken and Short (2016) find "radically different marketing initiatives and campaigns relative to industry norms – focused on moderate sales" (p. 56) as one important enabler of sufficiency-based business. Their positive impact on a company's image was mentioned as strategic motive previously. Five publications discuss the general appeal to consume less in the contexts of anti-consumption (Hwang et al. 2016) and demarketing (Sodhi 2011; Reich and Armstrong Soule 2016). Vitsœ and Patagonia directly encourage consumers to consider not buying a product through communicative measures like sewn-in labels asking wearers to repair their garment and think twice before buying (Bocken and Short 2016; Bocken 2017). Awareness-raising education for sufficiency and a consumer's responsibility is mentioned in a general matter by Ertekin and Atik (2015), Heath and Chatzidakis (2012), as well as "consumer advertising programs designed to discourage extravagant consumption" by Fisk (1973, p. 25). Gorge et al. (2015) suggest macro-environmental pedagogical tools that can help voluntarily sufficient consumers gradually decrease their consumption volume, until narrative tools, like storytelling, shape sufficiency as a positive collective process. Yakobovitch and Grinstein (2016) present the more specific case of carbon-labels on products combined with social norm messages at the point of sale. Schaefer and Crane (2005) caution that sufficiency must be carefully positioned so as not to restrict the cultural value of consumption, but to lead it into compatible frames, so consumers are not appalled by images of abstinence. Seegebarth et al. (2016) suggest that positive role-models for simplified lifestyles should be included in campaigns, as well as the highlighting of personal benefits “such as reduced debt, greater space available for storage, less time spent on shopping, and the advantages of a nonmaterialistic approach to life” (p. 91). Jung and Jin (2016) suggest emphasizing authenticity, exclusivity, and functionality, because these aspects of slow fashion appeal more to consumers than sustainability or ethical values. Pro-environmental de-marketing claims are effective for reduced private energy consumption according to Ramirez, Tajdini, and David (2017), but should not be connected to a particular product to avoid consumer confusion (Reich and Armstrong Soule 2016).

Considering that consumers rarely associate sufficiency with commercial activities, Lowe et al. (2015) advise organizations to be transparent about their goals, progress, and own sufficient resource management to strengthen their own credibility, thereby increasing consumer motivation to act, and avoiding distrust or accusations of hypocrisy.

Price

Four papers mention price-related instruments. Vitsœ offers no product discounts and no employee sales commissions, but life-long services at cost-price for installation, repair, and relocation (Bocken 2017). Bruno Cuccinelli applies premium pricing for their high-quality apparel. Bocken and Short (2016) argue for premium price models to be a more sustainable option when luxury goods “are cherished, last longer and are used more” (p. 49). Jung and Jin (2016) argue that high prices in slow fashion cause consumers who are highly fashion-involved or exclusivity-oriented to value quality over quantity, making them keep clothes longer and buy less as a result. The paper-saving business model of Reduse shows how cost savings can be generated through sufficiency (Bocken and Short 2016). Sodhi (2011) makes a claim for full-cost pricing to incorporate external effects of consumption and production in product prices.

Place

The place-related findings propose direct customer contacts and innovative experiential settings. Schaefer and Crane (2005) refer to a satisfying experience of when consumers search for ways of achieving goals with lower resource use. Ertekin and Atik (2015) suggest swapping and swishing parties for clothes as an attractive means to promote product sharing, sustainable habits, and environmental awareness. Through only selling directly via phone, their stores or own online shop, Vitsœ sacrifice short-term growth for the benefit of keeping personal contact to their customers and control over their sale techniques (Bocken and Short 2016). Yakobovitch and Grinstein (2016) derive the implication of placing high-carbon labelled products “in areas with high consumer traffic or near products with low carbon labelling to create perspective and a reference point” (p. 100).

Which Barriers for Promoting Sufficiency Occur?

Fewer publications explore barriers than motives, yet we identified two groups of barriers: systemic and organizational barriers.

Systemic Barriers

Companies operate within a growth-driven economy, so current business practices are mostly profit-oriented. Supporting sufficiency may therefore “seem very much at odds with current business practices and perhaps unviable in competitive markets” (Bocken and Short 2016, p. 43) and can result in competitive disadvantages and declines in sales (Bocken and Short 2016; Bocken 2017; Schaefer and Crane 2005).

Observed by three publications, the widespread consumerist culture can hinder companies in advertising sufficiency, as it does not overlap with what many consumers consider their social and cultural needs (Bocken and Short 2016; Schaefer and Crane 2005; Yakobovitch and Grinstein 2016). Concerning consumer sovereignty, efforts to moderate demand could be criticized because they limit the consumers’ freedom of choice and are sometimes recognized as an undue interference with competitive market operations (Sheth, Sethia, and Srinivas 2011; Heath and Chatzidakis 2012; Bocken and Short 2016). Bocken and Short (2016) further state that the promotion of sufficiency can result in consumer resistance as shifting consumer behavior is a challenging task.

Organizational Barriers

The overall economic growth paradigm often leads to a strong sales orientation on the micro business level. Four publications (Schaefer and Crane 2005; Sheth, Sethia, and Srinivas 2011; Bocken and Short 2016; Hwang et al. 2016) see this as a possible reason for companies to resist the promotion of sufficiency “because of an automatic assumption that this would mean lower profits” (Sheth, Sethia, and Srinivas 2011, p. 30). If the legal form of a causes a focus on short-term shareholder value maximization, a company unlikely implements sufficiency-orientated marketing (Bocken and Short 2016). Hwang et al. (2016) argue that activities to support sufficiency may seem hypocritical, as Patagonia was accused of grabbing public attention and thereby raising sales of outdoor products, instead of seriously trying to reduce consumption. If this leads to an image loss, companies might refrain from implementing a marketing approach which promotes sufficiency.

Table 5 summarizes the main findings regarding the leading research questions.

Table 5. Overview of findings related to research questions.

Results	Sources
RQ 1: Why should commercial marketing promote sufficiency?	
Societal demand	
External demand to take responsibility for society in general and for non-sustainable consumption in particular	Bocken 2017; Bocken and Short 2016; Fisk 1973; Heath and Chatzidakis 2012; Lowe, Lynch, and Lowe 2015; Ramirez, Tajdini, and David 2017; Reich and Armstrong Soule 2016; Sheth, Sethia, and Srinivas 2011; Sodhi 2011; Armstrong Soule and Reich 2015; Yakobovitch and Grinstein 2016;
Altruistic motives	
Reaching sustainability	Bocken 2017; Bocken and Short 2016; Ertekin and Atik 2015; Fisk 1973; Heath and Chatzidakis 2012; Hwang et al. 2016; Jung and Jin 2016; Lowe, Lynch, and Lowe 2015; Ramirez, Tajdini, and David 2017; Reich and Armstrong Soule 2016; Seegebarth et al. 2016; Sodhi 2011; Armstrong Soule and Reich 2015; Yakobovitch and Grinstein 2016;
Changing societal role of consumption	Bocken and Short 2016; Fisk 1973; Heath and Chatzidakis 2012; Hwang et al. 2016; Jung and Jin 2016
Following the precautionary principle	Bocken and Short 2016; Sheth, Sethia, and Srinivas 2011; Sodhi 2011
Increasing individuals' well-being	Seegebarth et al. 2016
Strategic motives	
Creating a favorable image	Bocken and Short 2016; Hwang et al. 2016; Ramirez, Tajdini, and David 2017; Reich and Armstrong Soule 2016;
Establishing a good customer relationship	Bocken 2017; Bocken and Short 2016; Ramirez, Tajdini, and David 2017; Yakobovitch and Grinstein 2016
Developing new business areas and customer segments	Bocken and Short 2016; Jung and Jin 2016; Armstrong Soule and Reich 2015;
Achieving positive impacts on sales and profits	Bocken 2017; Bocken and Short 2016; Hwang et al. 2016; Jung and Jin 2016; Ramirez, Tajdini, and David 2017; Reich and Armstrong Soule 2016; Sheth, Sethia, and Srinivas 2011;
RQ2: How can commercial marketing promote sufficiency?	
Product	

Maximal longevity of products	Bocken 2017; Bocken and Short 2016, Ertekin and Atik 2015; Jung and Jin 2016: Seegebarth et al. 2016;
Repairing and reusing products	Bocken 2017; Bocken and Short 2016, Ertekin and Atik 2015; Hwang et al. 2016; Jung and Jin 2016; Seegebarth et al. 2016
Second-hand products	Bocken 2017; Bocken and Short 2016; Ertekin and Atik 2015; Seegebarth et al. 2016
Addition of services	Bocken and Short 2016; Fisk 1973; Seegebarth et al. 2016; Sheth, Sethia, and Srinivas 2011
Promotion	
General appeal to consume less	Bocken 2017; Bocken and Short 2016, Hwang et al. 2016; Reich and Armstrong Soule 2016; Sodhi 2011;
Awareness-raising education	Ertekin and Atik 2015; Fisk 1973; Gorge et al. 2015; Heath and Chatzidakis 2012;
Carbon-labels on products	Yakobovitch and Grinstein 2015
Positive framing (role models, personal benefits)	Jung and Jin 2016; Schaefer and Crane 2005; Seegebarth et al. 2016
Pro-environmental demarketing claims	Ramirez, Tajdini, and David 2017; Reich and Armstrong Soule 2016
Organizational transparency	Lowe et al. 2015
Price	
Full-cost pricing	Sodhi 2011
Premium pricing	Bocken and Short 2016, Jung and Jin 2016
No discounts	Bocken and Short 2016
Product life-extending services at cost-price	Bocken and Short 2016
Place	
Emphasizing experiences	Ertekin and Atik 2015; Schaefer and Crane 2005
Direct sales only	Bocken and Short 2016
High-carbon labelled products next to low-carbon labelled products	Yakobovitch and Grinstein 2016
RQ 3: Which barriers for promoting sufficiency occur?	
Systemic barriers	
Operating within the economic growth paradigm	Bocken 2017; Bocken and Short 2016; Schaefer and Crane 2005; Yakobovitch and Grinstein 2016;
Consumerist culture	Bocken and Short 2016; Schaefer and Crane 2005; Yakobovitch and Grinstein 2016;

Orientating at the principle of consumer sovereignty	Bocken and Short 2016; Heath and Chatzidakis 2012; Sheth, Sethia and Srinivas 2011
Organizational barriers	
Orientating at increasing sales and profits	Bocken and Short 2016; Hwang et al. 2016; Schaefer and Crane 2005; Sheth, Sethia and Srinivas 2011;
Focusing on short-term shareholder value	Bocken and Short 2016
Fearing an image loss	Hwang et al. 2016

Discussion of Future Research Opportunities

In the following, we elaborate findings which occur as relevant for further developing a framework for commercial marketing to promote sufficient consumption and display future research opportunities.

Innovation for Sufficiency beyond the Status Quo

The SLR sample offers implications on how to practically strengthen sufficient consumption but leaves room for innovative thinking.

On the one hand, sufficiency practitioners do not necessarily have to reinvent the wheel but can creatively implement ideas already existing in the practice of sustainability. Virtues known from less affluent contexts, like reusing, maintaining, and sharing goods, show smart ways of dealing with a lack of resources. The product-related elaborations on sharing services (Botsman and Rogers 2010; Polonsky 2011), second-hand alternatives, and overcoming planned obsolescence (Echegaray 2016) reflect vivid rationales in the sustainability and marketing discourse.

On the other hand, to further endorse sufficiency and offer effective impulses, scholars need to be more forward-thinking and develop innovative ideas. For instance, Gorge et al. (2015), who identify a need to reshape consumer needs for challenging the DSP, suggest pedagogical processes or the creation of solidarity networks that emphasize being, rather than having, for well-being. A business opportunity lies in moving business models towards immaterially oriented services which do not rely on owning and consuming material resources, but enhance social well-being and personal abilities, such as music lessons or group activities. Further innovative, promising, and contemporary means would be digital tools and Social Media marketing. The digitalization and in particular the growing amount of personal data about customer needs, new communication and distribution channels, Social Media applications, and strategies such as search engine marketing, hold opportunities and risks for sufficient consumption. Gossen and Frick (2018) show that customers of an online retailer for sustainable goods evaluate digital marketing tools for sufficiency positively, as the retailer's online advertisement promoting sufficient clothing consumption leads to an altruistic, trustworthy, and likeable image. Moreover, experimental interventions like Herziger et al.'s (2017) research proposal on reducing excessive consumption via user-generated content are necessary. In the digital age, Social Media is becoming a growing force in consumers' decisions. While consumers may tweet and blog about a company's efforts in favour of sufficiency, these aspects are still out of scope in our sample.

A preference for rather conservative tools in marketing for sufficiency may also be rooted in traditional research trajectories and literature being bound to the economic growth paradigm, therefore nurturing a "blind spot" for sufficiency. After all, the majority of our sample publications stem from marketing and business journals. Endorsing interdisciplinary thinking in sufficiency research might be helpful for overcoming this.

Sufficiency as a Dominant Business Strategy?

The sample shows that marketing for sufficiency can benefit companies, thereby providing an incentive to actively engage for sustainability in an ambitious manner. Yet, only 5% of companies worldwide refer to ecological limits in their corporate responsibility reports, and even fewer companies use the ecological limits to define business targets that actually lead to a reduction in emissions, resource consumption, or adjustment of the product portfolio (Bjørn et al. 2017). Nevertheless, sustainable business practices play an increasingly important role for global firms (Peterson and Lunde 2016), and sufficiency is a logical path for taking sustainability seriously. Marketing itself has the means to transfer a company's vision and purpose to a target audience. Only if that purpose is fundamentally compatible with the concept of sufficiency, are marketing means void of serving greenwashing (Nyilasy, Gangadharbatla, and Paladino 2014).

Furthermore, marketing for sufficiency might have favourable effects, such as improving the image of a company. For a different company, however, it might damage its reputation, due to accusations of acting hypocritically. The occurring effect depends on the positioning and context of the business activities. Trust and reputation, deeply founded in the companies' holistic business activities and customer relationships, are key to benefiting from marketing to promote sufficiency. While our SLR focuses on the means of marketing, to be truly effective and avoid greenwashing, sufficiency must be embedded in all business activities of a company, including the business model (Bocken and Short 2016).

Most of the motives for and barriers against marketing to promote sufficiency are derived by secondary analysis or rely on case studies of selected sustainability-focused (Bocken et al.

2014) and degrowth-oriented business models (Khmara and Kronenberg 2018). We find a balanced quantitative ratio between altruistic and strategic motives in the sample. More empirical research, including the expertise of marketing practitioners, could offer deeper insights into motives, and into the applicability of specific marketing mix tools for different business models in realistic contexts. We also see further research needs regarding how altruistic and strategic motives of sufficiency-oriented companies complement or contradict each other and how companies balance profitable growth and sustainability. While research explored employees' motivation for and concerns against sustainability in their organization (Guerci et al. 2015; Law, Hills, and Hau 2017), it also remains unclear whether sufficiency as a more radical notion towards sustainability might be a motivator or barrier from an employees' perspective.

A Fifth P: Policy

Displaying a rather optimistic view with few critical comments, the publications in the sample represent commercial marketing for sufficiency as an opportunity to proactively face the necessity of prevailing in a market of increasingly scarce resources. Nevertheless, businesses are just one necessary element in the broader macromarketing dynamic to adapt the DSP in favour of consumption styles that are "enough". While our SLR focuses on voluntary sufficiency lifestyles, policy measures are also discussed in the sample.

In a critical stance, Schaefer and Crane (2005) doubt the effectivity of environmental consumer education for sufficiency, and express pessimism about regulatory tools like brand-free zones, advertising bans, and eco-taxes through governments. Sheth, Sethia, and Srinivas (2011) argue that policy or regulation are unlikely to succeed in changing patterns of consumption because of the conflicting interests of parties involved, including the protection of consumer sovereignty and competitive market operations.

Bocken and Short (2016, p. 59) argue contrastively that "reduced material consumption will not mean the end of business" and that changes for sufficiency should be introduced incrementally rather than in reaction to regulatory pressure. While mandatory longer product warranties, product bans, and choice editing against the most environmentally damaging goods are regulatory prospects, Bocken (2017) also emphasizes private-public partnerships. For instance, public procurement might serve as role-model and enabler of sufficiency business models. Lowe et al. (2015) refer to visible strategies for saving water in public institutions. Public education programs and awareness-raising campaigns are prominently featured (Heath and Chatzidakis 2012; Bocken and Short 2016; Seegebarth et al. 2016), possibly challenging materialistic values in favour of psychological well-being (Yakobovitch and Grinstein 2016).

More research on adequate policy measures for making the sufficient consumption option the more affordable one is required – regardless of whether these are regulatory, informational, or market-based instruments. As initiatives supporting sufficient consumption on a voluntary basis require consumers to value sufficiency, effective policies should be directed at processes that engender non-sustainable consumption and materialism, which are, in the first place, institutions of the Dominant Social Paradigm (Kilbourne et al. 2009).

A Sixth P: Partners

Our sample prominently emphasizes community-building structures as an appropriate tool for business and politics to support sufficiency. This approach is most strongly represented by Gorge et al. (2015). Schaefer and Crane (2005) also establish the notion that “those seeking to negotiate the difficult terrain of reducing or shifting consumption toward more responsible patterns are less likely to suffer social stigma when acting within a community of likewise individuals” (p.86). Ertekin and Atik (2015) suggest a community approach to break unsustainable habits in buying and using fashion items, while Bocken and Short (2016) present two companies which engage for their local communities. Individuals who obligatorily or voluntarily live under sufficient circumstances often feel marginalized from their families, peers, or colleagues because they diverge from conventional consumerism and social norms of the DSP. This is a main barrier for their well-being (Gorge et al. 2015). The more wide-spread sustainability activities are within a community, the easier individuals will pick them up (Meng 2015). Community structures provide opportunity to make living sufficiently easier through collectively organized projects, social interactions, and shared sufficiency values (Shaw and Moraes 2009). This compensates for the social function which conspicuous consumption established in individualized, postmodern societies Moreover, the sample publications’ emphasis on product quality and price premium raises questions on sufficiency as a luxury phenomenon and status symbol, as well as concerns about injustice, when access to goods is further determined by the economic endowment of people. How companies using collective activities for their marketing to foster sufficiency might strengthen their own positioning, but also support the re-evaluation and re-organization of satisfying needs and wants, is a promising endeavour for future research.

Some consumers, often organized in communities, engage in self-sustaining practices like growing agricultural products for their own use (subsistence farming) or by producing self-sufficient energy with home solar power. These strategies towards sufficiency avoid or even aim at transforming the traditional market system, which limits opportunities for conventional marketing (Polonsky 2017). It remains an exciting research question as to how marketing can address ways of supporting these people to find desirable consumption alternatives.

Furthermore, the potential role of retailers as intermediaries between producers and customers in marketing for sufficient consumption remains rather untapped. Morgan, Tallontire and Foxon (2017) tentatively venture into this topic by analysing large UK retailers' initiatives to reduce consumer emissions. They identify campaigns and product design to enable lower washing temperatures as initiatives for sufficiency. We argue that retailers hold stronger means to do marketing for sufficiency than those tools recommended and like to encourage further research in such matters.

Further Research Questions

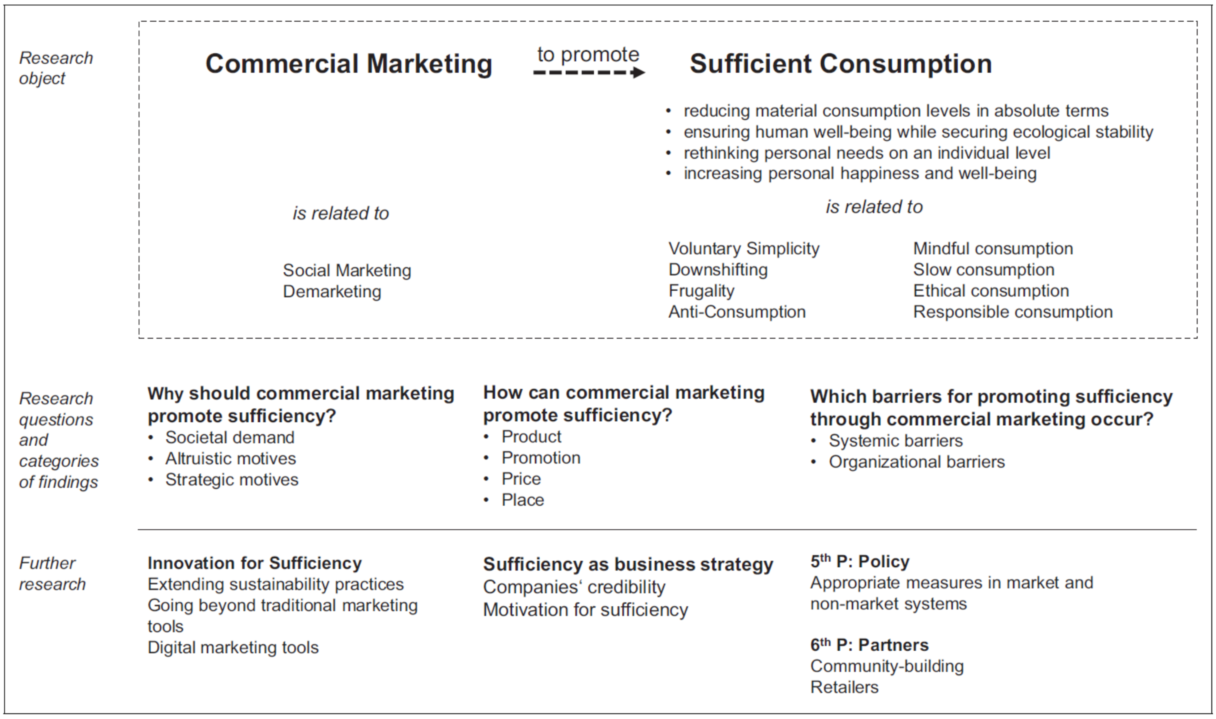
From our discussion and the elaboration of future research opportunities, we suggest the following selection of specific research questions:

- Does the increasing importance of digital marketing instruments (e.g., big data, personalization) provide an opportunity or risk for sufficient consumption?
- What motivates companies to implement marketing to promote sufficient consumption? Do they accept economic disadvantages? How can the promotion of less consumption (and consequently loss of profits) and corporate growth coexist?
- How are companies perceived by consumers, if they try to promote sufficient consumption? Do they "reward" or "punish" the commitment to sufficiency?
- Which political measures are best suited to motivate or oblige companies to promote sufficiency?
- What common values are shared in communities that support sufficiency? How can business marketing credibly support this?
- Which commercial marketing instruments can strengthen the potential role of retailers for sufficient consumption?

Conclusion

The conducted SLR presents a young and controversial research field on why and how commercial marketing should encourage sufficient consumption. Figure 3 offers an integrative framework for this research.

Figure 3. Integrative research framework.



As surprising as it may seem at first glance, several reasons for promoting sufficiency from a marketing management perspective are documented in the final sample. Business cases from diverse industries, and varied instruments for operationalizing a marketing mix to foster sufficiency featured in the final sample, offer orientation for companies that seek serious and substantial contributions to sustainability challenges. The instruments of the micromarketing mix are vehicles to reach a significant audience for sufficiency. From a macromarketing perspective, commercial marketing techniques can only be as substantial for sufficiency as the underlying business model. Also, marketing for sufficiency can only be successful within the mainstream if the DSP and economic framework allow it to be. For sufficiency to reach mainstream relevance, changes are required on the societal level, to be fuelled by public policy.

Some limitations to the SLR methodology need to be considered. We developed the search string after thoroughly considering existing literature on sufficiency and commercial marketing. Given the exploratory nature of much of the research, our search string was deliberately broad in order to identify relevant literature that did not explicitly employ the terminology of commercial marketing and sufficiency. Its comprehensiveness led to a huge initial sample, which was reduced by about 99% for the final sample of 17 publications due to several reviewing steps and implementing our strict content-related criteria. Nevertheless, as the search was restricted to three selected databases and to two specific types of sources (peer-reviewed journal publications and book chapters), we may have missed research that uses different terminology and publication media. Although not all papers and chapters in the 89-publication-strong preliminary sample satisfy all required content criteria, this extended sample is highly represented in the theoretical foundation and discussion section of our research.

We do see the relatively small number of publications in the final sample of our SLR not as a shortcoming of our study, but as a relevant result. Academia so far has widely overlooked the role commercial marketing might play in fostering sufficient consumption. This negligence might be due to the rather high amount of critical self-reflection required for the marketing discipline, as the current need for sufficiency was partly created by some of marketing’s inherent characteristics. Nevertheless, the recently increased emergence of publications on our topic shows that marketing to promote sufficient consumption may leave its niche and potentially attract more mainstream attention.

Sufficiency is highly subjective – every individual will have a personal idea of what their “enough” means, defined by needs and desires. In the review sample, examples for rather efficiency-enhancing products like trash bags made of stronger plastic are used as examples for sufficiency. We would argue that sufficiency means more than that. The lines between marketing for sufficiency, which contributes to less consumption, and green marketing, which targets a specific group with a high willingness to pay for quality goods, are blurred.

Our discussion of sufficiency focuses on affluent societies in the Global North, where sufficiency questions the economic ideal of continued growth of production and consumption and profoundly diverges from mainstream ideas of living conditions (Sachs, Loske, and Linz 1998; Princen 2005; Lloveras and Quinn 2017). Reaching sufficient consumption levels for people in scarce living conditions who have less than enough to sustain themselves is a pressing matter, but not in the scope of our research and needs to be discussed elsewhere.

Considering the inevitable sustainability challenges for companies and citizens, marketing is an essential mediator in enabling and fostering the absolute reduction of resources and energy used for consumption by questioning the level of demand and the value system of our society. A revised marketing theory inspiring practice is necessary - one that turns away from limitless satisfaction and creation of material desires, towards moderating wants and needs within the planetary boundaries. Helping consumers to increase their well-being and enhance the “enough” of consumption without wasting money, material, and energy on products that do not improve the quality of life in the long term, is the purpose of marketing for sufficient consumption. Our analysis shows that the theoretical and practical debate regarding commercial marketing to promote sufficiency is in its early days. Thus, we hope to encourage researchers in marketing and sustainability to further investigate potentials and conditions of marketing to promote sufficiency.

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II. "Choose Nature. Buy Less." Exploring Sufficiency-oriented Marketing and Consumption Practices in the Outdoor Industry

Zusammenfassung

The outdoor industry is highly exposed to the impacts of climate change and resource scarcity since its business models generally rely on an intact ecosystem. Companies in the outdoor apparel and gear in- dustry actively implement sustainability strategies based on efficiency, consistency, and more recently also sufficiency. Sufficiency aims at an absolute reduction of consumption levels and entails strategies such as decreasing purchases, modal shifts, product longevity, and sharing practices. Outdoor companies increasingly use marketing to advocate sufficiency-oriented consumption. This exploratory study inves- tigates outdoor companies' sufficiency-promoting marketing strategies and activities. The study includes primary and secondary data of six outdoor companies. The analysis focuses on the companies' sustain- ability visions, their marketing objectives and channels, and their marketing mixes. Following a social practice theory approach, we found evidence that our case companies supported all forms of sufficiency- oriented consumption practices with a strong focus on product longevity. Another central finding of our study is the emphasis placed on product and promotion policies to foster sufficiency-oriented consump- tion practices. Solely relying on these strategies will not suffice, however, to change unsustainable con- sumption practices. Achieving that change requires at least two further steps. First, companies will have to find an answer to the conflict between promoting sufficiency-oriented practices and economic growth. Second, the companies should start understanding consumption as a social practice, which would open new opportunities to create and steer their communities of practices. By changing elements or links of practices and attracting new members to their communities, companies in the outdoor industry can be drivers towards more sufficiency-oriented consumption practices. Further research should assess the im- pact of sufficiency-promoting marketing on consumer practices to estimate its potential for sustainable change.

Schlüsselwörter: Sufficiency, Sustainable consumption, Sustainable marketing, Sustainable business model, Social practice theory, Qualitative research

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Introduction

The outdoor apparel and gear industry (referred to here as the “outdoor industry”, European Outdoor Group, 2021a) is heavily exposed to the impacts of climate change and environmental damage since its business models and offerings rely on an intact ecosystem. That eco-system is fragile, and in 2021, many outdoor experiences became impossible or were greatly affected by drought, wildfire, or flooding due to extreme weather conditions diminished outdoor experiences. Such events have led outdoor companies to become more active in terms of sustainability initiatives and climate protection compared to other sec- tors (European Outdoor Group, 2021b). Examples of initiatives include as Patagonia’s 1% for the Planet initiative (Patagonia Inc., 2021a) or collaborations between private companies and civil society organizations (Deutscher Alpenverein e. V., 2021; POW Germany e. V., 2021). A few businesses already acknowledge their responsibility and commit to not only diversifying business models to “build resilience and drive sustainable practices” (Fraenkel- Eidse, 2021) but also working towards a wider socioeconomic transition for the sustainable lifestyles required to stay within planetary boundaries (IPCC, 2021; Lin et al., 2018; Wackernagel and Beyers, 2019). Case studies from the outdoor industry have gained popularity not only in the empirical research into sustainable business model approaches but also as best practice examples across various industry sectors (Böhmer, 2021; Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2017; Freudenreich and Schaltegger, 2020; Khmara and Kronenberg, 2018; W&V, 2021). Those studies underline the pioneering role of the industry and make it an interesting subject for studying novel business approaches to sustainability.

While the imperative to mitigate climate change and protect nature is significant, the number of business-driven initiatives to discourage consumption for the environment’s sake remains low. Those initiatives may “seem very much at odds with current business practices” (Bocken and Short, 2016: 43), which might hinder businesses in their support of reduced consumption. Lowering absolute consumption levels is, however, necessary for sustainable development (Vita et al., 2019) and at the core of the sufficiency strategy. Although a universal definition is lacking, sufficiency implies avoiding overconsumption while reducing the use of scarce natural resources and fossil fuel-based energy (Gorge et al., 2015; Princen, 2005). It can complement efficiency and consistency efforts on a policy, business and, individual level (Bocken and Short, 2020; Reichel, 2018). As the actual impact and possible rebound effects of sufficiency-promoting activities are not yet sufficiently researched (Reimers et al., 2021), our study follows the current research assumption that sufficiency-oriented strategies can lead to an overall reduction of resource and energy consumption (Reichel, 2018). By making use of sufficiency-promoting marketing, companies can influence consumer behavior and help to reduce consumption levels (Bocken et al., 2020; Gossen et al., 2019). Since consumption is part of our everyday practices, consumption practices are changed not (only) by persuasion or providing information but by offering more sustainable alternatives to consumers' daily practices (Spangenberg and Lorek, 2019; Warde, 2005).

Influenced by the discourse on strong sustainability, circularity, and sufficiency that is slowly reaching industry, businesses in the outdoor industry are starting to take the lead in adapting their processes and business models accordingly (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2017; Peters and Simaens, 2020). We therefore focus our research on case studies from the outdoor industry, intending to gain a better understanding of and discuss the differences between marketing approaches towards changing unsustainable consumer practices. Our work builds on the critical discourse about the responsibility of marketing for overconsumption in affluent societies (Stoeckl and Luedicke, 2015; Varey, 2010) and the limits of existing marketing concepts aiming at reduced consumer demand, such as demarketing (Cullwick, 1975; Kotler and Levy, 1971) or social marketing (Andreasen, 1995; Peattie and Peattie, 2009).

Our exploratory study of six exemplary outdoor companies contributes to the growing body of empirical research on sufficiency-promoting marketing and the role of businesses in changing consumer practices towards sufficiency (e.g., Bocken and Short, 2016; Gossen et al., 2019; Hwang et al., 2016; Jung and Jin, 2016; Niessen and Bocken, 2021). It provides insights into the main research question, concerning marketing strategies and activities outdoor companies implement to promote sufficiency-oriented consumption practices.

In the first part of this paper, we revisit the concepts of sufficiency-oriented consumption, and how sufficiency-based business models and marketing can support consumers in changing their behavior towards more sufficiency-based alternatives. We then introduce social practice theory (SPT) as the conceptual approach to our research. The method section demonstrates our qualitative empirical research approach based on secondary data and interviews conducted with representatives from outdoor companies. Our findings present our case companies' marketing strategies, marketing mixes, and promoted sufficiency-oriented consumption practices. We then discuss the contribution of our study to academic literature as well as the practical implications for sufficiency-promoting marketing and business models for sustainability. Finally, we conclude this paper by indicating its limitations and providing an outlook by suggesting recommendations for practice and research.

Literature Review

In the following, we present the state of research on sufficiency-oriented consumption and sufficiency-promoting marketing. We also introduce SPT as the heuristic approach to our research.

Sufficiency-oriented Consumption

Unsustainable production and consumption patterns can only be effectively changed if technological advancements are combined with lifestyle changes towards reducing consumption in affluent societies (Bjørn et al., 2018; Spangenberg and Lorek, 2019; Wiedmann et al., 2020). While sufficiency can complement efficiency and consistency efforts on a policy, business, and individual level, our research focuses on sufficiency strategies on the individual consumer level. Sufficiency-oriented consumption is connected to behavioral concepts such as anti-consumption (Chatzidakis and Lee, 2012; Lee et al., 2009), voluntary simplicity (Alexander and Ussher, 2012; Etzioni, 1999), or frugality (Lastovicka et al., 1999; Rick et al., 2008). It encourages a reflection on materialistic (over-)consumption and connected impacts on life satisfaction (Jenny, 2016). From a social justice perspective, the demand to reduce consumption can hardly be applied to the Global South, as restrictions on consumption there would directly threaten existential human needs. Thus, to reach a decent living standard for all, a minimum level of consumption must be ensured that allows every individual to live a good life (Fuchs et al., 2021). This approach of 'consumption corridors' intends to guarantee a set of essential material preconditions for human wellbeing, including housing, nutrition, basic amenities, healthcare, transportation, information, education, and public space (Rao and Min, 2018; Spengler, 2016).

Sufficiency-oriented consumption is defined by Sandberg (2021) as:

- Absolute reductions, i.e., reducing the amount of consumption;
- Modal shifts, i.e., shifting to a consumption mode that is less resource intensive;
- Product longevity, i.e., extending product lifespans;
- Sharing practices, i.e., sharing products among individuals.

These consumption practices cover voluntarily resisting buying new products, choosing products of high-quality that are produced under ecologically and socially favorable conditions, and engaging in activities such as repairing, clothes swapping, buying second-hand, or using return systems to extend the products lifespan (Kleinhückelkotten and Neitzke, 2019).

A study by Kropfeld et al. (2018) on the ecological impact of anti-consumption lifestyles has shown that actively resisting consumption has a lower footprint than that of the lifestyles of environmentally conscious consumers. Similarly, Verfuerth et al. (2019) found that positive sufficiency attitudes are related to a lower CO_2 footprint; however, this relationship varies between individual consumption fields and is most correlated with food. Another study has shown that sufficiency-oriented clothing consumption and the resulting extension of clothing lifespans could reduce the environmental impact of the clothing sector in Europe by two percent (Vita et al., 2019).

However, sufficiency strategies, just like efficiency measures, can lead to unintended rebound effects (Reimers et al., 2021; Schneidewind and Zahrnt, 2014). The rebound effect describes the relative gap between the potential savings (e.g., emissions, energy, material) and the actual savings (ibid). It was first mentioned in relation to energy efficiency measures and energy use (Alcott, 2005). Rebound effects can occur directly (e.g., increasing demand of energy after efficiency has increased) or indirectly (e.g., spending cost savings from energy reduction in another consumption area) (Chitnis et al., 2013; Santarius et al., 2016). Furthermore, they can be stimulated by both economic (e.g., price effects) and psychological (e.g., moral licensing) mechanisms (Reimers et al., 2021). In extreme cases, this backfiring effect may even overtake potential savings (Santarius et al., 2016). Circular economy activities can also lead to macro-level rebound effects, e.g., through price mechanisms or because of the limited ability of secondary products to substitute primary products (Bocken and Short, 2020; Zink and Geyer, 2017). On an individual level, sufficiency-oriented consumption can lead to rebound effects, by partially or fully offsetting the achieved (financial) savings in one life area with adverse behavioral responses in another (Santarius, 2016; Sorrell et al., 2018). In their literature study on indirect rebound effects induced by efficiency and sufficiency measures, Reimers et al. (2021) found that the literature in this field has so far produced diverse results, and quantifications of rebound effects across all sectors and measures vary from zero to more than 100%. Therefore, it is so far impossible to predict the overall impact of sufficiency-oriented consumption.

Although an increasing number of researchers are exploring the theoretical foundation for sufficiency-oriented consumption, a consensus on a definition is lacking and empirical investigations on sufficiency-oriented consumption remain rare (Geels et al., 2015; Sandberg, 2021; Spangenberg and Lorek, 2019). By looking at sufficiency-oriented practices in the outdoor industry, this paper addresses, in particular, the lack of scientific knowledge about specific consumption practices and related elements.

Sufficiency-promoting Marketing

Businesses can take an active role in encouraging sufficiency-oriented consumption practices (Freudenreich & Schaltegger, 2020; Heikkurinen et al., 2019). They can incentivize the avoidance of over-consumption and planned obsolescence, reduce material and resource use in both the production and consumption phase, and reuse products over time or across multiple people (Bocken & Short, 2016). Implementing sufficiency strategies in businesses requires not only lean and sustainable production processes, but also an active effort by companies to support those sufficiency-oriented consumption changes at the consumer level (Freudenreich & Schaltegger, 2020; Niinimäki et al., 2020). This includes focusing on durability, reparability, and longevity in product design, as well as offering additional services to increase the longevity and use of products (Bocken et al., 2014; Freudenreich & Schaltegger, 2020). Sufficiency-oriented business models require organizational boundary changes and alignment in the value network (Velter et al., 2020). This includes the relationship to the customer, who is not addressed by mere one-way-directed traditional marketing techniques, but rather engaged in a multilateral dialogue between the business and its stakeholders (Kropfeld & Reichel, 2021). Encouraging consumers to rethink their needs, buy less and use the things they own longer requires sufficiency-promoting marketing techniques based on degrowth business models (Nesterova, 2020).

Sufficiency-promoting marketing thus goes beyond other marketing approaches such as green marketing (Dangelico & Vocalelli, 2017) or sustainable marketing (Belz & Peattie, 2012) by enabling consumers to reduce absolute consumption levels for sustainability purposes. From a strategic perspective, it answers to external demands to assume societal responsibility and can be used to improve a company's image, boost the relationship with customers and develop new business areas (Gossen et al., 2019; Gossen & Heinrich, 2021). From an operational perspective, companies can make use of the traditional framework for the marketing mix ('the 4Ps') and adapt it to sufficiency-oriented goals. The promotion policy includes advertising, information and education to raise awareness of the need to change consumption practices and narrative interventions, such as storytelling (Gorge et al., 2015; Hwang et al., 2016). In addition, role models can strengthen sufficiency-oriented consumption as a social norm (Seegebarth et al., 2016) and publicly questioning the act of consumption, particularly in using anti-consumerist messaging, can empower customers to refuse consumption (Niessen & Bocken, 2021). A sufficiency-oriented product design philosophy focusses on longevity, high quality, durability, reparability, modularity, and timelessness. This may be achieved in the production processes through avoiding obsolescence and mandatory longer warranties (Bocken & Short, 2016), using high quality materials (Ertekin & Atik, 2015; Seegebarth et al., 2016) and slower production terms (Jung & Jin, 2016). Additional services for repair and care of products and second-hand markets, which allow to buy and sell used products, are also a means to save resources through enhanced product longevity (Bocken, 2017; Bocken & Short, 2016; Ertekin & Atik, 2015). Price-related instruments comprise avoidance of discounts, premium price models (Bocken & Short, 2016; Jung & Jin, 2016) and full-cost pricing, which incorporate external effects of consumption and production in product prices (Sodhi, 2011). Regarding the place policy, relying on direct customer contacts, engaging for local communities, and emphasizing customer experiences, for example through swapping parties (Ertekin & Atik, 2015), can further promote sufficiency-orientated consumption practices.

Research on the effectiveness of sufficiency-promoting marketing shows that being aware of a company's altruistic sufficiency-oriented motives and trusting their credibility makes consumers prone to behave more sufficiency-based themselves (Gossen & Frick, 2018). Sufficiency-promoting communication thus leads to a lower purchase intention of clothing than traditional advertisements (Hwang et al., 2016) and to more sufficiency-oriented behavior compared to neutral and consumption-promoting communication (Frick et al., 2021).

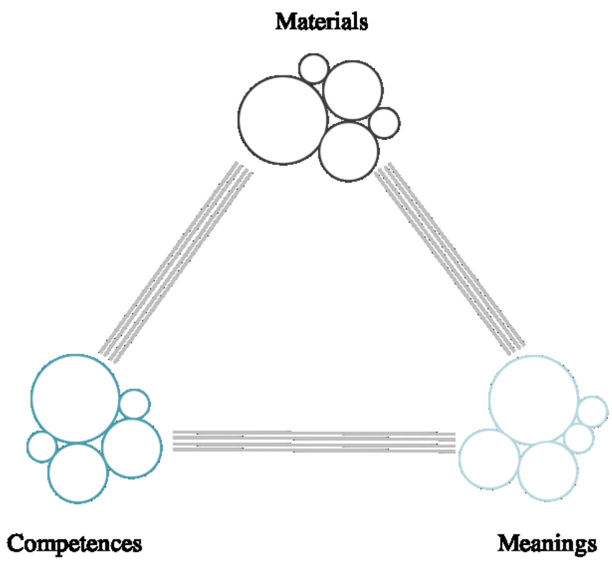
Individual companies, i. a. from the outdoor industry and small pioneers in the slow fashion sector, have been subject to recent studies on sustainable and sufficiency-oriented clothing consumption (e. g. Gossen & Heinrich, 2021; Peters & Simaens, 2020). There has been scattered but increasing research on the motivations and benefits behind sufficiency-promoting marketing (Gossen et al., 2019), also from a consumer perspective (Armstrong Soule & Reich, 2015; Hesse & Rünz, 2020; Reich & Armstrong Soule, 2016). There is, however, a lack of cross-case empirical studies of established players in the market on actual business behavior and how those companies operationally implement sufficiency-promoting marketing.

Social Practice Theory

Using marketing to change unsustainable (outdoor clothing) consumption requires overcoming the gap between pro-environmental values and actual behavior, which does not always reflect those values (Blake, 1999). Actual pro-environmental behavior is difficult to predict by solely investigating cognitive factors, and that behavior generally leads to relatively small positive environmental impacts, if any (Gatersleben et al., 2002; Kleinhückelkotten and Neitzke, 2019; Moser and Kleinhückelkotten, 2018). Theories such as the Theory of Planned Behavior explain situations of intentional and reflected behavior (Spangenberg and Lorek, 2019). However, people do not always consciously reflect their actions and choices, nor do they have access to all the information that would be necessary to do so (Klein and O'Brien, 2018). Recognizing the shortcomings of common behavioral approaches (e.g., the agency-structure dichotomy and the value-action gap), SPT offers a contextual view on consumption (Hampton and Adams, 2018; Spangenberg and Lorek, 2019). An SPT approach broadens the perspective on human behavior by focusing on ritualized, everyday behaviors, which are repeated without specific reflection (Kumar and Kumar, 2008). It includes factors beyond the control of individuals such as infrastructures or social norms (Evans et al., 2012). While SPT is not a catch-all theory, it enables a sociological and contextual approach to consumer behavior and lifestyles (Spaargaren, 2003). It connects production and consumption approaches and thus challenges the supply-demand dichotomy (Labanca et al., 2020).

A social practice is "a routinized type of behavior which consists of several elements, interconnected to one other: forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, 'things' and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge" (Reckwitz, 2002: 249). For this study, we follow the simpler, easier to operationalize, conceptualization by Shove, Watson, and Spurling (2015) and understand a social practice as consisting of (i) ideas, meanings, and understandings, (ii) personal skills and competences for carrying out a practice, and (iii) the materials of practice (Figure 1). This view allows an analysis of the dynamics between the three elements constituting a practice, making it useful for sustainability transitions research (Spotswood et al., 2015). Practices can emerge, change, stabilize, and also die out as new elements are introduced to them and links between the elements are created, reconstructed, or broken (Hargreaves, 2011; Pantzar and Shove, 2006). 'Rules' as the fourth element of social practices has so far not been taken up by most scholars. However, Gram-Hanssen (2010: 155) criticizes that the element 'competences' is "overly simple, as the authors do not distinguish between the two main types of competences: know-how or nonverbal knowledge and explicit, rule-based, or theoretical knowledge". Other perspectives suggest that rules are already part of the material or even the competence dimension (Shove et al., 2015). For the purpose of this empirical study, we focus on the three elements as suggested by Shove, Watson, and Spurling (2015), while returning to 'rules' as a fourth dimension in the discussion section.

Figure 1. Elements of a Social Practice (own illustration based on Pantzar & Shove, 2010)



SPT has mainly been applied to observe everyday behavior or to describe policy interventions (Kropfeld, 2019). On a business level, supporting more sustainable daily practices increasingly involves customer integration, collaborative innovation, and consumer education (Kropfeld and Reichel, 2021; Lüdeke-Freund et al., 2019). In line with the boundary work framework for sustainable business models by Velter et al. (2020), creating sustainable value requires mutual boundary changes in the process of multi-stakeholder alignment. Consumers have to become actively involved in the business model and thus also in sufficiency-promoting marketing (Kropfeld and Reichel, 2021). This perspective has so far remained under-explored in empirical studies (Parekh and Klintman, 2021), although it has long been agreed that patterns of consumption are embedded within social practices (Warde, 2005), and practice theory has been suggested as being useful for studying sustainable consumption and production, e.g., in the circular economy (Corsini et al., 2019). Our study contributes to this body of research by applying SPT to a business context and by attempting a holistic view of business and consumer practices.

Methods

Since little research has been conducted in the field of sufficiency-promoting marketing (Gossen et al., 2019; Niessen and Bocken, 2021), we undertook exploratory qualitative research to answer this study's research question. Exploratory research aims at seeking new insights and assessing a phenomenon in a new light (Robson, 2002). As it evolves and is based on small samples that provide an understanding of certain topics, exploratory research allows us to further enhance theoretical observations about marketing practices that support sufficiency-orientated clothing consumption. To improve generalizability, we chose a multiple case study approach. Case study research allows the researcher to obtain a holistic, real-world perspective (Yin, 2003) through detailed in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (Hyett et al., 2014).

Sample

For our sample, we defined three main selection criteria: (i) the company had to be in the outdoor industry, either as an outdoor retailer or outdoor clothing brand; (ii) it had to have sustainability integrated into its corporate strategy; and (iii) it had to follow sufficiency-promoting marketing principles (Table 1).

Table 1: Selection criteria for inclusion of sufficiency-promoting marketing activities

Criterion	Operationalization	Examples
Sufficiency-promoting marketing	Sufficiency-related product policy (Gossen et al., 2019)	Circular, durable, repairable, and/or high-quality products, and/or timeless designs
Sufficiency-promoting marketing	Sufficiency-related communication policy (Gossen et al., 2019)	Critical reflection of consumption, and/or tips for the sufficiency-oriented handling of products, and/or information and education campaigns, and/or information on sufficiency-related product features
Sufficiency-oriented consumption practices	Sufficiency-oriented practices (Sandberg, 2021)	Absolute reductions, and/or modal shifts, and/or product longevity, and/or sharing practices

For the first two criteria, we compiled a list of outdoor companies that are either certified as a B Corporation (B Lab Europe, 2021); members of the Fair Wear Foundation (2021); listed as sustainable brands by the retailer's Globetrotter (Arthur, 2021; Globetrotter, 2021), Bergzeit (2021) or the website Utopia (2021); or those firms that came up in a web search on Ecosia using the search term "sustainable outdoor company". The full list compiled 67 outdoor industry companies. The third criterion was checked by exemplary desktop research including website and social media accounts: 53 companies showed sufficiency-related product policies, while only eleven of them also engaged in sufficiency-oriented promotion activities. After rating the eleven case studies in terms of the extent of their engagement in sufficiency-promoting marketing and accessibility to the company, six of these companies remained as suitable cases and were therefore selected for the final sample. Further practical limitations included data availability and the capacity and resources available to the authors. The final sample comprised the Swedish brand Fjällräven International AB, the German outdoor retailer Globetrotter Ausrüstung GmbH (both part of the Fenix Outdoor E-Com AB based in Sweden), Burton Snowboard Inc. and Patagonia Inc. from the U.S., Devold of Norway AS and VAUDE Sport GmbH & Co. KG from Germany (Table 2).

Data collection

We accessed both primary and secondary data sources from the selected companies. In a first step, their communication on websites, sustainability reports, press news, and Instagram accounts were scanned for sufficiency-promoting marketing messages. This secondary data collection took place between October and December 2020. All material published between January 01, 2018, and December 31, 2020, was scanned and included in the analysis if the relevant picture, video, and/or text indicated sufficiency-promoting marketing activities. We assessed the data suitability based on criteria for sufficiency-promoting marketing as proposed by Gossen et al. (2019) or sufficiency-oriented consumption practices as defined by Sandberg (2021).

Following the preliminary findings of the secondary data research, we collected primary data by conducting in-depth expert interviews with representatives from the marketing and sustainability departments of five of the companies between January and April 2021. The Burton Corporation did not consent to participating in the interview study. Expert interviews have an informative and explorative character and record descriptive respondent knowledge (Lamnek and Krell, 2016). The interviews served two purposes: to glean information about the design and execution of the companies' sufficiency-promoting marketing activities and to provide data on the interviewees' reflections for areas where the companies lacked official stances on the matters discussed. We chose a semi-structured interview typology to allow for flexible interaction between the interviewer and the respondent but also to work with a consistent set of categories to define the boundaries of what to explore (Saunders et al., 2019). The interviews were based on an interview guideline with a set of open and probing questions that encouraged extensive answers (Appendix A). We tested the guideline in a preliminary study for weaknesses in content and question comprehensibility. The interview language was German or English and interviews lasted on average for 45 minutes. We sent the interview guide to the interviewees in advance. The interviews were audiotaped with the interviewees' permission and transcribed verbatim. We translated the quotes from German interviews to English to present them in our findings chapter.

Data analysis

The two data sources were complementary and allowed methodological triangulation (Miles and Huberman, 1994). We coded the collected data using the qualitative data analysis software MAXQDA. Both authors categorized the data according to a category scheme, which was developed inductively-deductively. We reviewed each other's data interpretations to ensure validity and reproducibility. Finally, we systemized and organized the category system (Appendix B) (Kuckartz, 2016). For the data analysis, we followed a semi-quantitative approach (Mayring, 2015). First, we counted the code frequencies for all companies' Instagram channels, as this channel was the only one that allowed for a semi-quantitative analysis across all companies (cf. section 4.1). We further investigated the codes in a comprehensive qualitative content analysis. This procedure allowed a generalized overview over the sample, while permitting various approaches to be distinguished and similarities and differences between the cases to be discussed.

Table 2: Overview over Company Cases

Company	Company description	Headquar-ters	No. of employees[2]	Turnover[2]	Position of the re-spondent(s)	Selected Key Sustainability Initiatives
Burton Snowboard Inc.	Snowboarding equipment & apparel brand	Vermont, USA	ca. 1.000	ca. 345 mEUR	n. a.	Certified B-Corp 2020 Sustainability Goals Burton Code of Conduct Member of the Fair Labor Association (FLA) Cooperation with various NGOs (e.g., POW) Founding Member of Climate Action Corps
Devold of Norway AS	Outdoor ap-parel company	Langevåg, Norway	ca. 30	ca. 28 mEUR	Marketing Director	"Sheep to Shop" Program (Transparency & Traceabil-ity) Commitment to natural fibers Oeko-Tex certified factory in Lithuania
Fjällräven Internatio-nal AB[1]	Outdoor ap-parel and gear brand	Själevad, Sweden	ca. 70	ca. 109 mEUR	Head of Marketing Communications / PR Manager	Fjällräven Code of Conduct Part of the Global Compact Network (GCN) Member of the Sustainable Apparel Coalition (SAC) & FLA Sustainable design philosophy Climate compensation initiative
Globetrotter Ausrüstung GmbH[1]	Retailer for outdoor ap-parel and gear	Hamburg, Germany	ca. 1.100	ca. 148 mEUR	Head of Marketing	Globetrotter Way "Greener Choice" Label Part of the GCN Member of the SAC & the FLA

						Part of the Textile Exchange Organisation
Patagonia Inc.	Outdoor apparel and gear company	Ventura, USA	ca. 1.500	ca. 848 mEUR	Enviro & Marketing Manager Germany	Certified B-Corp 1% for the Planet Zero Growth Strategy for new products Worn Wear Program Patagonia Action Works Member of the FLA & SAC
VAUDE Sport GmbH & Co. KG	Outdoor apparel and gear company	Tettnang, Germany	ca. 500	ca. 110 mEUR	Head of VAUDE Academy	VAUDE Eco-System VAUDE Green Shape Standards Member of the Fair Wear Foundation (Leader) Member of the German Bündnis für nachhaltige Textilien Certified environmental management systems (EMAS, ISO 14001) GRI Sustainability Report Member of the Welfare Economy (GWÖ)

[1] Globetrotter and Fjällräven belong to the Swedish corporation Fenix Outdoor E-Com AB registered in Zug, Switzerland

[2] estimated as of 2020

Findings

In the following section, we present the findings of our exploratory study by including both the semi-quantitative and the qualitative analyses. The semi-quantitative data (Section 4.1) illustrates selected findings, while our focus lies on the qualitative cross-case analysis of our case companies (Section 4.2 on the marketing mix and Section 4.3 on consumption practices).

4.1 Analysis of Sufficiency-oriented Marketing Strategies

Table 3 indicates essential elements in our in-depth qualitative analysis: the share of sufficiency-related promotion content on the companies' or brands' social media channels. As Instagram was the only platform all six case studies used comparably and consistently, we compared the share of sufficiency-related posts based on their Instagram posts in the chosen period (January 01, 2018, to December 31, 2020). The table shows that Patagonia has the highest share of sufficiency-related messages (10.9%), followed by Devold (9.0%). The other four companies all lie relatively close together with a share of about 2% of their Instagram posts being dedicated to explicit sufficiency-promoting communication. Although our research has a qualitative focus, this introductory analysis provides a first insight into the prevalence of sufficiency-related content on the companies' Instagram accounts, which will be analyzed in more detail in the following sections.

Table 3: Share of Sufficiency-related Content in Instagram Posts per Case

Company (Instagram-Account)	**Total no. of posts***	**No. of sufficiency-related posts***	**Sufficiency-related posts in %**
Burton (@burton)	1253	23	1.8%
Devold (@devoldofnorway)	434	39	9.0%
Fjällräven (@fjaellraevenofficial)	406	11	2.7%
Globetrotter (@globetrotterde)	2110	43	2.0%
Patagonia (@patagonia)	977	106	10.9%
VAUDE (@vaudesport)	848	19	2.2%

*based on the companies' official Instagram accounts from 01.01.18-31.12.20

The quantitative analysis above indicates that the companies attach different importance to promoting sufficiency-oriented consumption practices using social media communication. In our further analysis, we focus more on qualitative aspects and distinctions of the companies' sufficiency-oriented marketing strategies (Table 4) and their marketing mixes (Table 5). The cases present comprehensive strategic and operative approaches to support sufficiency-oriented practices. The companies integrate a broad array of activities within their respective marketing strategies. Table 4 provides an overview of their visions, sufficiency-oriented marketing objectives and channels, and their analysis and measurement of sufficiency-promoting activities.

The companies' visions were similar: to enable outdoor experiences while protecting the natural environment:

"As a Swedish company from Scandinavia, nature, and living with nature are deeply rooted in our DNA and have been part of and the reason why we exist from the very beginning. [...] It is still our mission today to bring people into nature and inspire them to go into nature." (Fjällräven interviewee)

Their core sustainability engagement ranges from offering more eco-friendly products (e.g., Burton) and preserving the environment (e.g., Fjällräven, Globetrotter) to using the whole business to protect nature (Patagonia) or moderating and influencing consumer choices (e.g., Devold, VAUDE):

"For us, as a brand, we do a lot for sustainability, but from a consumer point of view, it is about choices. We have to somehow reach out to the consumers and make them do the right choices." (Devold interviewee)

The companies' sufficiency-related marketing objectives vary. Burton and Devold focus their promotion of sufficiency-oriented consumption on product longevity and quality. The other companies also support this goal, but each add another aspect. Fjällräven wants to promote the emotional longevity of its products. Globetrotter and Patagonia also focus on offers such as rentals and second-hand products, which can make buying new products redundant, and VAUDE generally focuses on extending the product's use phase. This diversity enables the companies to differentiate themselves from one another despite the many similarities and to emphasize their respective unique selling points. It also involves rethinking and changing not only their marketing approaches but also their core business model from selling new products to more sufficiency-oriented alternatives:

"Of course, this is a paradigm shift. In marketing, it's a little easier for me than for some salespeople or producers who first must accept that their business model will look a little different in 10 years and completely different in 20 years. We are seeing a clear trend toward purchasing being only one option." (Globetrotter interviewee)

Our interview partners were also aware of the conflict between strong sustainability and economic growth:

"This also applies to us, to fathom out again and again how we manage on the one hand to live from the sale of products as a company, to function as a business enterprise, but on the other hand not to promote senseless excessive consumption, which gradually destroys our livelihood on the planet." (VAUDE interviewee)

Social media is one of the most important sufficiency-related marketing channels for all case companies. Although they also use their websites to display information on their products and sustainability initiatives, social media channels such as Instagram profiles allow them to directly interact with consumers and receive feedback on their activities:

"The channel [Instagram] is especially important to us because we believe it is very important to communicate with the users and to be in exchange, in other words, to build up the community. […] it is also a good tool for exchanging ideas because it is not just a one-way tool, but we also get feedback from the users, and we appreciate that we also get feedback." (Fjällräven interviewee)

All case companies use their websites, social media channels, or YouTube to publish DIY care and repair guides for their outdoor apparel and gear.

In terms of impact measurement, the interviews showed that a measurement of the actual impact of their sufficiency-related marketing activities is difficult at best and generally non-existent so far. To obtain an impression of the success of their marketing campaigns, some of the companies collect several marketing performance indicators, e.g., key figures on social media posts (fans/followers, reach, engagement rate), the number of press inquiries, the quantity of second-hand products sold, download rates for repair and care instructions, the demand for spare parts, and the number of sufficiency-related search engine queries. Devold and Patagonia value qualitative customer feedback, while the latter also tracks sales volumes after marketing campaigns. Following its temporary "Buy Less, Demand More" campaign, Patagonia noticed a definite decline in online sales. They concluded that the campaign was therefore successful in reducing consumption. Overall, however, actual impact measurement is a huge challenge for the companies:

"So on the subject of repair instructions or care instructions, we see the click numbers on iFixit, but we don't know who then really repaired." (VAUDE interviewee)

Table 4. Sufficiency-promoting Marketing Strategies of Outdoor Companies

	Burton	**Devold**	**Fjällräven**	**Globetrotter**	**Patagonia**	**VAUDE**
Vision	Minimizing footprint so people can enjoy the mountains for generations to come	Making choices that create a better future for people and the planet	Living respectfully with nature and consuming long-lasting products	Preserving things, one cares about like the outdoors	Using business to protect nature	Supporting moderate consumption that contributes to an increased quality of life
Sufficiency-oriented Marketing Objective	Producing high-quality and durable products to keep them in use for as long as possible	Producing durable and biodegradable products made from 100% natural materials	Enabling material and emotional longevity, contributing to a greater appreciation of clothes	Replacing new purchases by repairing, reusing, renting, and secondhand	Producing high-quality, circular products and replacing new purchases by repairing, renting, and secondhand	Producing high-quality, timeless, and durable products and extending the use phase of products
Sufficiency-related Marketing Channels	A website with information on sustainability measures Social media for product & promotion campaigns DIY instructions for repair & care guides	A website with information on sustainability measures Social media for product & promotion campaigns	Blog articles based on customer stories Social media for product & promotion campaigns DIY videos for repair & care guides	A website with information on Greener Choice products Social media for product & promotion campaigns DIY videos for repair & care guides Workshop, events, and personal customer service in stores	A website with information on sustainability measures Social media for product, promotion, & activism campaigns DIY instructions for repair & care guides Repair workshops, mobile repair service	A website with sustainability report Social media for product & promotion campaigns DIY instructions for repair & care guides Personal customer service in stores
Analysis and Measurement of Sufficiency-promoting Activities	No information on impact measurement Tracking of quantifiable company-internal sustainability goals	Qualitative customer feedback Brand tracking & research	KPIs of social media and blog articles General marketing & sales KPIs	Number of secondhand products sold, number of repair orders	Measuring online sales volume following marketing campaigns Qualitative customer feedback	KPIs of social media Number of press inquiries, downloads of

				Share of Greener Choice products Brand awareness		repair & care instructions and spare parts ordered Search engine queries

Table 5. Sufficiency-promoting Marketing Mix of Outdoor Companies

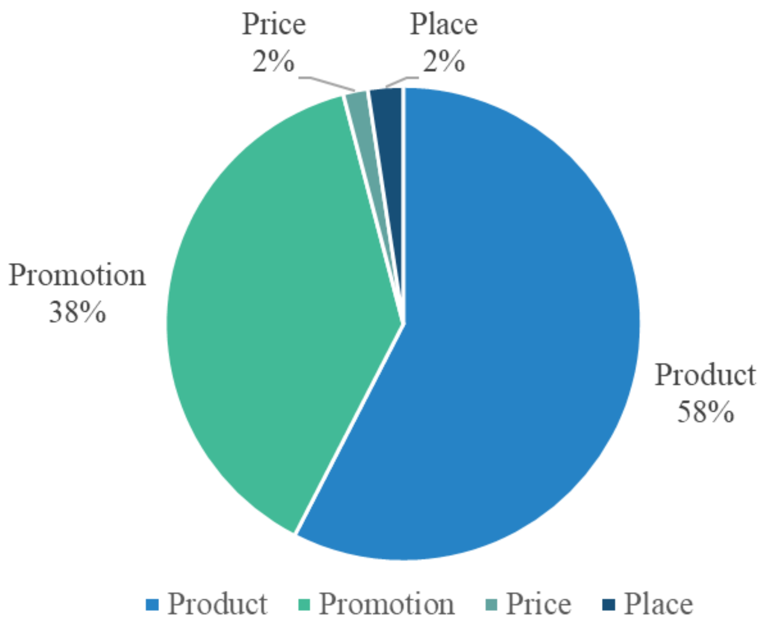
	Burton	**Devold**	**Fjällräven**	**Globetrotter**	**Patagonia**	**VAUDE**
Product	Circular, durable, high-quality, locally produced, timeless	Circular, durable, high-quality, locally produced, multifunctional, repairable, timeless	Circular, durable, high-quality, multifunctional, repairable, timeless	Circular, durable, high-quality, repairable	Circular, durable, high-quality, locally produced, multifunctional, repairable, timeless	Circular, durable, high-quality, locally produced, multifunctional, repairable, timeless
Additional Services	Care & repair tutorials Repair service for warranty claims Internal up- and recycling Lifetime warranty (soft goods)	Care tutorials Repair tutorials (planned)	Care & repair tutorials Care stations in stores Rental service (temporary)	Care & repair tutorials Repair station in stores Second-hand offer Rental service Take-back system	Care & repair tutorials Repair service Partnership with iFixit Repair workshops Second-hand offer Rental service (planned) Take-back system Lifetime warranty (all products)	Care & repair tutorials Repair service Partnership with iFixit Cooperation with repair cafés Second-hand offer Rental service Take-back system
Promotion	Tips for the sufficiency-oriented handling of products Information and education campaigns Information on sufficiency-related product features	Critical reflection of consumption Tips for the sufficiency-oriented handling of products Emotional longevity Information on sufficiency-related product features	Critical reflection of consumption Tips for the sufficiency-oriented handling of products Information and education campaigns Emotional longevity	Tips for the sufficiency-oriented handling of products Information and education campaigns Information on sufficiency-related product features	Critical reflection of consumption Tips for the sufficiency-oriented handling of products Information and education campaigns Information on sufficiency-related product features	Tips for the sufficiency-oriented handling of products Information and education campaigns Information on sufficiency-related product features

			Information on sufficiency-related product features			
Place		Staff training	Staff training	Dedicated second-hand section in stores Mobile and stationary repairing service	Staff training Mobile repairing service Dedicated secondhand stores	Staff training Second-hand and upcycling offer on eBay
Price	Premium pricing Anti-Black Friday campaign	Premium pricing No aggressive discounts Anti-Black Friday campaign	Premium pricing No aggressive discounts	Premium pricing No aggressive discounts Anti-Black Friday campaign	Premium pricing No aggressive discounts Anti-Black Friday campaign	Premium pricing No aggressive discounts Anti-Black Friday campaign

Analysis of Sufficiency-related Instruments of the Marketing Mix

Information on the sufficiency-related instruments of the marketing mix can be found in Table 5. A comparison of the four elements of the marketing mix based on the sufficiency-promoting Instagram posts between 2018 and 2020 clearly shows that most activities can be assigned to the product and promotion policies (Figure 2). Although there are some similarities between the companies (e.g., regarding their product policy and a premium price positioning), we find differences in the extent to which they offer additional services (as an alternative to new purchases) and in their promotion policies.

Figure 2: Share of Marketing Instruments used by Outdoor Companies



Product Policy

The analysis of the product policy including additional services shows that all companies rely on circular products – here understood as recyclable or biodegradable products or products made from recycled or 'upcycled' materials. All the companies pay attention to the high-quality and durability of their products, which allows the use phase to be extended for as long as possible. Outdoor products must be reliable for their users and withstand extreme cold, humidity, or UV radiation without fault. Almost all the companies also commit to producing repairable products. Four companies (Devold, Fjällräven, Patagonia, VAUDE) have a design philosophy that follows the principles of slow fashion by using timeless and simple designs that will not go out of fashion quickly:

"*Of course, it starts with how we develop and design products. In fact, for every VAUDE product that is out there, there is also a reason why the product exists. This continues when it comes to how I design the product so that it can be used as long as possible, for example in terms of appearance, no fashionable colors, and that there is a uniform design language across several collections."* (VAUDE interviewee)

They also produce multifunctional clothing that can be used for different activities and in various environments (outdoors/urban). Four brands (Burton, Devold, Patagonia, VAUDE) produce at least some of their products in a local factory. Devold mainly uses wool for its products because of its superior characteristics such as its natural anti-bacterial properties, which reduces the need for washing and cleaning, thus reducing the overall resource consumption after purchase. The other companies tend to rely on recycled plastic-based materials.

All case companies offer additional services, such as repairing services for their customers, care and repair tutorials, second-hand offers, rental services, or take-back systems. These activities aim at supporting manual skills, enabling repair practices for broken things, and maintaining already owned products in such a way that they are kept up to date. The Globetrotter interviewee explains the great importance of repair services for the outdoor industry:

"Repair has always been a huge issue in the outdoor industry simply because things are good enough to fix and longevity has always been an issue for someone who travels the world." (Globetrotter interviewee)

Repair stations and workshops are further offerings to keep products in use. Furthermore, Globetrotter and Patagonia have built up a service to recondition and sell second-hand products. They offer their second-hand collection online, in separate sections of their shops, or in Patagonia's dedicated second-hand (pop-up) stores, while counterbalancing the availability of cheap second-hand clothing with new rules:

"And what is also exciting about these second-hand pop-up stores with a view to sufficiency is that we had concerns that customers would come and buy a lot because the products are of course much cheaper than new products. That's why we limited that, and each customer was only allowed to buy one product. And there was no discussion at all, it was very well received." (Patagonia interviewee)

Also, some companies, such as Globetrotter and VAUDE, experiment with rental services for outdoor gear. So far, however, these services have played a minor role and are not yet widely used by customers.

Promotion Policy

In terms of the promotion policy, we find three main approaches: (i) critically reflecting consumption and encouraging an absolute reduction of consumption, such as "buy less"; (ii) tips for the sufficiency-oriented handling of products, such as repair and care guides; and (iii) information and education campaigns, such as information on the environmental impact of consumption. Providing tips for the sufficiency-oriented handling of products, i.e., caring for and repairing products to keep them in use longer, is the most widespread sufficiency-related message. The companies offer free online video tutorials on the care and repair of outdoor products (all companies) and encourage consumers to make use of their (free) repair services (see above, Globetrotter, Patagonia, VAUDE). Sharing customer stories is a popular instrument for communicating successful repairs or how customers passed on their apparel or gear to friends or family (e.g., Patagonia). Fjällräven and Devold aim at promoting a positive emotional relationship with their products as long used and loved items that are worth caring for and keeping in use:

"*That is very closely related to emotional longevity. With the current development, the emotional longevity of the product tends to decrease. We want to point this out openly. Longevity is one of the most underrated aspects of sustainability, but one of the most important, we would say.*" (Fjällräven interviewee)

Furthermore, Devold focuses on educating consumers about the properties of wool and instructing them on its special care (e.g., less washing). Especially Patagonia and VAUDE also engage in information and education campaigns to raise awareness of the need to change consumption patterns and current environmental hazards and initiatives. VAUDE has set itself an educational mission and explains the concepts of degrowth and sufficiency in its sustainability report. All companies question consumption in general, encouraging consumers to reduce their overall consumption and live more sustainably by e.g., reducing plastic waste, and refraining from shopping too much for Christmas or Black Friday:

"We made a conscious decision not to take part in Black Friday. […] I think that this has a communicative effect, there are now more and more companies who decide against it or use Black Friday differently and donate the sales." (VAUDE interviewee)

Burton, Patagonia, and VAUDE go even further by motivating their customers for civic engagement and promoting the Global Climate Strikes or the Fridays for Future movement.

More generally, all the companies use their communication activities to advertise their sufficiency-promoting products by giving information about the characteristics and materials of their products, which prolong the use phase of their products (cf. paragraph on product policy).

Place Policy

The place and price policies do not seem to play important roles in the sufficiency-promoting marketing strategies of our case companies. In terms of place, the main instrument was specialized staff training for shop floor personnel who have direct customer contact and can thus influence their choices (e.g., to buy the right product for their needs or to encourage them to buy products made from durable materials) or give advice on the correct treatment of a product after purchase:

"Training is also a thing, so that the specialist staff knows and can explain in conversation with the customer how the product needs to be cared for so that it lasts for a long time." (Fjällräven interviewee)

Furthermore, physical stores have great importance, especially for Globetrotter as a retailer to inform people about their sufficiency-related offers in 'walk-bys' and to give customers a good impression of Globetrotter's products and services:

"Currently, our biggest drivers are the stores and the workshops, because the 'aha-experience' is: the customers are in the store, they look in the workshop and they're like 'what are you guys doing here?' And we say, 'well pretty much fix everything' and there are quite a lot of customers who say 'crazy, I have quite a lot at home, can you fix that?'" (Globetrotter interviewee)

Patagonia also makes use of their shops to advertise their WornWear line, with dedicated second-hand pop-up stores worldwide, that attracts many consumers.

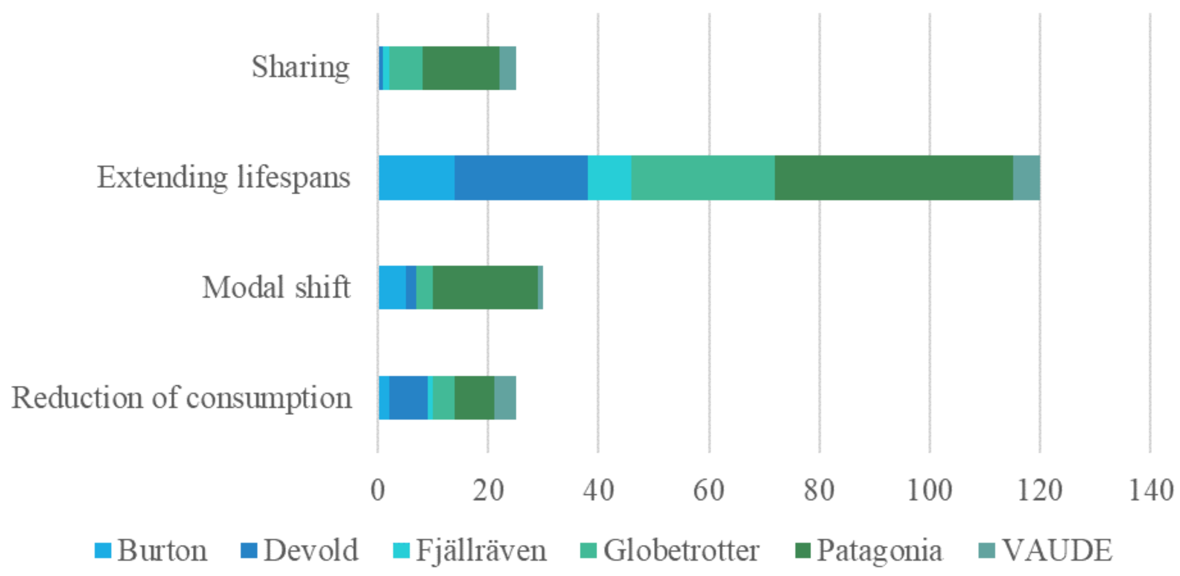
Price Policy

In terms of price, all the companies are positioned in the premium price segment, based on the high-quality and durability of their products, and almost all explicitly refrain from aggressive discount offers, some even engaging in anti-consumption campaigns such as closing business (and online shops) on Black Fridays or days of Global Climate Strikes. Finally, new offers such as secondhand or rental services also require new price structures to make those offers attractive to the customer, but without encouraging overconsumption.

Analysis of Promoted Sufficiency-oriented Consumption Practices

According to the identified Instagram posts between 2018 and 2020, our case companies promote different sufficiency-oriented consumption practices for outdoor apparel and gear (Figure 3). We found evidence of all four categories of Sandberg's (2021) sufficiency-oriented practices.

Figure 3: Sufficiency-oriented Consumption Practices promoted by Outdoor Companies



Reduction of Consumption

All companies, specifically Devold and Patagonia, explicitly encourage consumers to reduce their overall consumption, mainly within their promotion-related activities:

"You want to change the consumption behavior of the community; that is also a super important behavior. So clearly, buy less, repair more, buy secondhand, recycle, reuse or otherwise use other products and overall reduce consumption behavior." (Patagonia interviewee). Such 'buy less' campaigns are especially popular in consumption-intensive periods such as Black Friday or Christmas time. Often, these calls for less consumption are combined with information on the environmental impact of clothing consumption and inspiration for less resource-intensive alternatives and are connected to meanings such as the joy of experiencing the outdoors rather than going shopping. Patagonia's rule of only buying one piece of clothing from their second-hand pop-up stores also restricts the consumption of cheaper outdoor clothing.

Modal Shift towards Less Resource-Intensive Options

All the companies offer circular and sustainable products, i.e., made from recycled products, recyclable, or biodegradable, or made from natural fibers such as wool or organic cotton. Within their product policy, they aim at shifts from an unsustainable production model to one that is less resource-intensive. This shift relies on introducing alternative materials such as recycled fibers in the design process. Our case companies also appeal to the aspect of competences and encourage consumers to choose their more sustainable options if they need to buy something new:

"I think the ultimate goal would be if consumers were to check the labels and then buy less. So, two things, check the labels, [and] make sure that they don't buy products that are under 70% natural fiber." (Devold interviewee)

They also promote their efforts in finding less resource-intensive alternatives to produce outdoor apparel and gear, mostly connected with meanings related to protecting the natural environment.

Extending Lifespans of Products

This practice is the most promoted one and mainly relates to the product policy: to buy high-quality, durable, and repairable products (change of materials) that will not go out of fashion quickly and to keep the products one already owns in use for as long as possible. All the companies engage intensively via their product and promotion policy in encouraging consumers to extend the lifespan of the things they own, indicating that this is the most sustainable thing one can do:

"Because the most sustainable purchase is not a purchase, but a reuse." (Globetrotter interviewee)

They support this by offering free care and repair guides or repairing services, which requires teaching consumers new competences and skills such as fixing a zipper or offering additional materials such as spare parts. Some companies even offer lifetime warranties on some of their products (change of rules). Also, the case companies aim at changing the emotional relationship with the things one owns towards seeing used apparel as loved items that have many stories to tell and are worth keeping in use (change of meanings):

"Our products are functionally durable, timeless; the emotional longevity also plays a big role for us. [...] we believe that if you have a high attachment to the product, you are willing to wear the product longer and pass it on." (Fjällräven interviewee)

Sharing Among Consumers

This practice is not yet widely supported by the outdoor companies of our study. Mainly Globetrotter and Patagonia, who actively promote their second-hand offer within their product policy, encourage consumers to buy used items instead of new ones, but this business section is still rather small:

“We’ve started early […] on secondhand, repair, and rental and we see now how this curve very slowly begins to become interesting. It’s no secret that until we start to make money with it, a lot of time will pass.” (Globetrotter interviewee)

The companies that do not yet have a second-hand offer, share customer stories about passing items from generation to generation or sharing apparel between friends and family. VAUDE and Globetrotter also experiment with rental options. All these offers require a whole set of new elements to be introduced to consumption practices, such as used apparel (materials), the know-how of how to rent gear (competences), and finally a new understanding that moves away from the need to own things towards using rented products (meanings). New ‘rules’ for renting products or how many second-hand pieces one is allowed to buy have to be created and communicated to the customer.

As SPT also offers a detailed analysis of the elements of consumption practices, Table 6 summarizes the key elements found for each of Sandberg’s (2021) practices.

Table 6: Key Elements of Sufficiency-Oriented Consumption Practices

	Materials	**Competences**	**Meanings**	**Rules**
Reduction of Consumption	None Less resource-intensive alternatives	Awareness and knowledge of environmental & social impacts	Joy of experiencing the outdoors instead of shopping	Stores temporarily closed “One Piece Only” rule for second-hand items
Modal Shift	Circular & more sustainable materials	Checking clothing labels for knowledge about fibers used	Reducing negative impact on environment	Criteria for “Greener Choice” labeled products

Extending Lifespans	High-quality, durable, repairable products with timeless designs Spare parts for repairs	Repair & care skills (via tutorials or workshops)	Emotional attachment to product ("loved items") "Future vintage pieces"	Lifetime warranties Free repairing services
Sharing	Second-hand products Rental products	Reflection on demand for novelty Know-how of renting gear	Passing down "loved items" to next generation Valuing products with stories & histories	Pricing and buying restrictions for second-hand items Process and rules for renting gear

Discussion

Theoretical Contributions

Making Marketing Meaningful for Sufficiency

Although sufficiency has emerged as a vital sustainability strategy, approaches to foster the concept are not yet widely studied in marketing research. While there has been extensive literature on concepts such as green marketing and social marketing, sufficiency-promoting marketing still lacks a sound theoretical foundation (Gossen et al., 2019).

In this study, we have used the traditional 4Ps (promotion, product, place, price) of the marketing mix as a conceptual heuristic to analyze of sufficiency-promoting marketing in the outdoor industry, as suggested by Gossen et al. (2019). There are several criticisms of the 4Ps and suggestions for alternatives or extensions of the concept to promote more sustainable behavior, such as, e.g., Belz and Peattie's (2012) 4Cs (customer solutions, customer cost, convenience, and communication), Pomering's (2017) six additional Ps (participants, physical evidence, processes, principles, promise, and partnerships), three additional Ps (providing information, processes, and policies) as suggested by Matin and Alauddin (2016), or two additional Ps (policy and partners) discussed by Gossen et al. (2019). However, these have been argued mostly on a theoretical basis and lack empirical evidence and application.

Employing the traditional 4Ps in our empirical study has proven useful in analyzing sufficiency-promoting marketing measures of businesses. We examined all marketing mix components simultaneously, thereby addressing a shortcoming in marketing research (Leonidou et al., 2013). The 4Ps offer wide definitions and space for interpretation and allow us to contrast our findings with previous empirical research, e.g., on green marketing. Here we find similarities, such as the importance of activities related to product and promotion (Lampe and Gazda, 1995), highlighting the environmental benefits of products, promoting ecological lifestyles, and improving a brand's green image (D'Souza et al., 2007), and premium price strategies for environmentally-friendly products (Esmaili and Fazeli, 2015). Although, the willingness to pay significant premiums for high-quality outdoor clothes is given (Casadesus-Masanell et al., 2009), not everybody can afford high-priced and high-quality products. High prices can act as a barrier to sufficiency-oriented product choice. Companies should therefore enable customers to participate in affluent consumer societies without having to purchase new and expensive goods, e.g., by offering rental or repairing services, subscription models, or approaches for self-subsistence. Of course, promoting sufficiency-oriented consumption in bottom of pyramid (BOP) markets requires different approaches (Belz and Bilharz, 2005; Mathur et al., 2020), as poorer population segments are concerned with securing existential consumption needs (Jaiswal, 2007; Prahalad and Hart, 1999). Furthermore, our findings support the proposed changes of place policies from solely sales channels for products towards digital and physical touchpoints for interaction that are convenient for consumers to access (Belz and Peattie, 2012).

Sufficiency-promoting marketing also supports the shift from an internal orientation of the traditional marketing mix towards a more interactive and consumer-oriented one (Kumar and Ghodeswar, 2015). From on these insights, we suggest that the discussed limitations of the marketing mix might not lie within the tool itself but rather in a narrow interpretation of its elements. However, promoting sufficiency-oriented consumption practices affects the whole business strategy (Dangelico and Vocalelli, 2017) and goes beyond the scope of product innovation or new communication strategies. It also builds on a sufficiency-related company vision and a diversification of the business model, e.g., replacing new purchases through services. This finding is in line with Zott and Amit (2008) suggesting that product-related marketing strategies and business models are complementary concepts rather than substitutes, as well as with Molina-Castillo et al. (2020), who found that marketing innovations may be driven by diverse business model objectives such as entering new markets. Furthermore, our findings support the dual focus of promotion as suggested by Belz and Peattie (2012): not only to communicate the sustainability solutions the company provides through its products and services to the consumer but also to involve consumers and stakeholders in a conversation about the company as a whole, e.g., by encouraging two-sided communication on social media platforms. Our findings broaden the scope and call for an interdisciplinary approach towards sufficiency, integrating not only marketing and business studies but also sustainability and consumer research.

There are still boundaries to what marketing can do for sufficiency due to its sales-oriented nature. Advocates of the degrowth movement call for stricter regulation on or even a complete ban of advertising (Alexander, 2012; Kallis et al., 2018; Nesterova, 2020). Instead, for a better understanding of customers' real needs, companies should strive to reach out to communities and intensify interaction with stakeholders (Nesterova, 2020). This outreach aligns with applying a stricter understanding of sufficiency in the sense of strong sustainable consumption (Lorek and Fuchs, 2013), necessitating a modified marketing mix. The importance of promoting products would decline, whereby promotion policies should be redirected – from traditional advertisement towards a critical reflection of consumption practices and community building. This approach would address criticisms about placing the responsibility for sustainable behavioral change on individuals (Beatson et al., 2020): promoting sufficiency as an absolute reduction of consumption cannot rely on individuals' capacity to change their behavior. Rather, the social structures and embodied values that configure everyday behavioral patterns must be taken into account (Butler et al., 2016). Combining marketing research with SPT offers a possible solution by dissolving the agency-structure debate (Spotswood et al., 2017).

Changing Unsustainable Consumption Practices

Similar to Spotswood et al. (2017) and Parekh and Klintman (2021), we applied SPT to understand which changes of practices our case companies are aiming for. We found evidence of marketing activities promoting all forms of sufficiency-oriented consumption practices as defined by Sandberg (2021). However, our analysis showed that most attempts so far are not consistent with a practice-oriented perspective, due to a rather sporadic targeting and a behavioristic focus with an emphasis on individual choices, which is in line with Parekh and Klintman's (2021) practice-oriented investigation of civil society interventions to foster sustainable food consumption. We conclude that substantive and lasting attempts to change consumption

practices are an important prerequisite and would need to consider the complexities of every-day life as well as partnerships with customers (Parekh and Klintman, 2021).
These partnerships can be achieved by understanding businesses and their customers as communities of practices, in which new competences are developed and shared amongst members (Kropfeld and Reichel, 2021). Although Shove et al. (2012) claim it is not feasible to engineer communities of practice, identifying them, is an essential step in encouraging the spread of sufficiency-oriented consumption practices (Sahakian and Wilhite, 2014). Our case companies showed the first steps towards engaging their communities in practices (e.g., repairing) by offering community events (e.g., repairing workshops). According to Parekh and Klintman (2021), communities of practice favor the development of specific skills, such as repairing, which then also could translate into related communities, thereby spreading sufficiency-oriented consumer practices.
Consumer practices can change due to changes of their elements, e.g., of materials used (such as durable or repairable apparel), of competences (such as repairing skills), by change of practitioners (i.e., people who perform the practice), or of the interrelation or links between different practices (Shove et al., 2012; Watson, 2012). In our study, we mostly found evidence of new elements being introduced to practices (e.g., products) or new members (i.e., consumers) being recruited into the practice (e.g., using community events). The strongest focus the case companies' marketing efforts, however, remains on consumer education and persuasive messages to change individual behavior (i.e., changing the meanings of practices). Next to rational arguments, the case companies use emotional messages related to the ownership of loved apparel and gear or enjoying adventures in an intact environment. This finding complies with Vita et al.'s (2020: 2) findings that organizations attempt to promote alternative social practices by aligning "with the values and envisioned lifestyles pursued by their members." The orientation of sufficiency-promoting marketing must, however, "shift away from persuading, influencing and encouraging attitudinal change in the hope that millions of people will simultaneously change their behaviours, and towards a focus on how daily practices are co-ordinated and ordered within collective daily life" (Southerton et al., 2012: 34). SPT should therefore be a tool not only for analysis but also for planning sufficiency-promoting marketing activities. A better understanding of the interrelation between practices could make such activities more successful.

Although focusing on the three elements of social practices suggested by Pantzar and Shove (2010), we also found evidence that would fit the fourth element ‘rules’ as proposed by Gram-Hanssen (2010) (e.g., buying only one piece at the second-hand pop-up store). Some of them were, however, also directly connected to the product or service itself (e.g., terms and conditions for renting), and could thus be understood as part of the material or competence element, such as Shove and Pantzar (2005) suggest.

Beyond SPT, there are several different frameworks for analyzing behavior, that could be relevant to our study objective. The 4As of sustainable consumer behavior (awareness, acceptance, ability, action), for example, describe the four main steps between awareness and action (Moscardo, 2013). Here, we see parallels to the SPT approach, although the latter explicitly moves away from individual consumer choices and understands consumption behavior as part of everyday social practices. Also, in this study, we analyze social practices as entities, while the 4As reflect a process. Nevertheless, aspects such as awareness and ability include the social practice elements materials and competences, while acceptance reflects the element meanings, thus acknowledging the attitude-behavior gap. While SPT is usually used to describe actual practices, applying it to sufficiency-promoting marketing shifts this focus towards intended practices and behavior, in line with the 4As’ aims. We suggest that, for future studies, it would be interesting to combine the 4As SPT to better understand and promote sufficiency-oriented consumption.

Applying SPT has allowed us to understand better the intended change of consumption behavior promoted by outdoor companies and to overcome the separation of supply and demand. Currently, most marketing activities are not yet in line with a practice-oriented perspective but have the potential to be further developed into practice-inspired marketing measures. By consciously creating and steering communities of practice, introducing new materials, skills, and rules, and by aligning the practices to customers’ values, outdoor companies can be drivers towards more sufficiency-oriented consumption practices.

Practical Implications

Sufficiency-promoting Product and Promotion Strategies

Sufficiency-related product features such as durability, high-quality, or timeless design, which we found in our case studies, help ensure that products are used for as long as possible and are replaced less often, which can reduce the number of new purchases. The ‘greening’ of products and production systems is traditionally a characteristic of green marketing (Peattie, 2001). However, selling the 'greener alternative' can be seen as a rather easy option for businesses to support sufficiency-oriented consumption (Niessen and Bocken, 2021).

Instead of relying only on sustainable materials and greener products, nearly all companies in our study are diversifying their offer by integrating service solutions, such as care and repair tutorials. This diversification is in line with Peattie's (2001) early suggestions that a more sustainable economy requires a transition from purchasing products to using services and an increase in the offer of aftersales support to increase product durability. Some companies initiate sharing and rental models, which seem to be feasible strategies to operationalize sufficiency as they become more widely adopted and accepted by consumers and businesses due to the recent success of the sharing economy (Boar et al., 2020; Martin, 2016). In the clothing industry, product longevity is already a widespread sufficiency-related strategy (Gossen and Heinrich, 2021) because it works against the fast-fashion system building on inexpensive products with short lifespans (Niinimäki et al., 2020).

Besides the high relevance of product-related marketing measures, the companies mainly rely on their communication policy. Since critical voices describe sufficiency as a lifestyle of sacrifice and asceticism, the companies strive for presenting it as a positive image of the future (Schneider et al., 2010) and as a lifestyle rich in unique experiences and deeply rooted in connectedness with nature. Research suggests that those who already practice sufficiency do not perceive the personal restrictions as a loss, but appreciating them instead as a strengthening action (Speck, 2016). Companies can enhance this self-reinforcing effect by framing the transformation's narrative towards more sufficiency-oriented lifestyles positively. At the same time, the influence of Instagram (as the main social media channel used by our case companies) on behavioral changes towards sufficiency-oriented lifestyles can be questioned (Frick et al., 2021). Instagram is often criticized for its consumption-stimulating role, especially among the younger generation (Pappas et al., 2017). Furthermore, we observed a focus on short-term communication efforts among the case companies, e.g., on an event such as the 'Greener Week' by Globetrotter, instead of a continuous, overarching, and brand-related communication strategy to advertise sufficiency-related outdoor practices.

The success of sufficiency-promoting marketing remains an open issue. Previous studies on the effects of sufficiency interventions on consumer behavior also remain contradictory. In an online experiment, Frick et al. (Frick et al., 2021) showed that sufficiency-promoting social media communication can enhance sufficiency behavior, although they observed rather short-term effects, whereas other studies found no effects of interventions on sufficiency orientation and behavior (Tröger et al., 2021; Young et al., 2017). None of our case companies so far has systematically measured or evaluated the effects of their sufficiency-related marketing. The actual impact on consumers' consumption practices, therefore, remains unclear. This finding is in line with Niessen and Bocken (2021), who also conclude that businesses already employing sufficiency strategies had no suitable method to measure their impact on consumption. Sufficiency-induced rebound effects, as described by Reimers et al. (2021), might offset or even reverse any reduction of environmental or social impacts. We therefore agree with the current discourse that sufficiency and sufficiency-promoting marketing strategies need to be examined more closely for potential negative (environmental) rebound effects, such as spending saved money on new outdoor clothes or gear. Moreover, to better reach the targeted consumer groups, marketers should apply segmentation, targeting, and positioning strategies supported by market and consumer research. Especially due to the heterogeneity of consumption practices, target groups, and marketing elements, and marketing measures should be sounded out as precisely as possible.

The Ambiguity of Sufficiency as Business Strategy

In our study, we found evidence of various sufficiency-related business strategies that are in line with the business sufficiency strategies defined by Niessen and Bocken (2021), such as awareness-raising, demand reduction service, design, life extension service, long product warranties, or repair support. As we have shown, most marketing activities focus on promoting an extended product lifespan. Some of the companies even developed new sufficiency-oriented offers after our data collection phases, such as Burton 2nd Lap or Devold's repair guide for wool garments, confirming the strong emphasis on extending the physical and emotional lifespans of products. But why is extending lifespans such a popular strategy for the outdoor industry? We speculate this might be because durable and robust apparel and gear are essential for outdoor sports, and the customers expect reliability. This longer lifespan makes the research and development process of the big outdoor brands cost-intensive, thus making the products more expensive than usual outdoor apparel. As a result, consumers will expect the product to last long and they might probably rather pay for a repair than buy a new item. Although several scholars propose long-lasting and repairable products as one of several criteria for a degrowth business (Hankammer et al., 2021; Khmara and Kronenberg, 2018), promoting sustainably produced, high-quality and durable products or incentivizing customers to use an additional service does not necessarily reduce business turnover (Kelleci and Yıldız, 2021). Increasing the quality of products is often connected with premium pricing and might therefore still contribute to economic growth (Khmara and Kronenberg, 2018). For our case companies, generating continued sales and growing moderately was vital to surviving in the current growth-oriented economy and the consolidating outdoor market and to contributing to a transition towards a more ecological economy (Khmara and Kronenberg, 2018). Such market-driven, strategic considerations can be guiding motives for applying sufficiency-oriented marketing, as was recently shown for sufficiency-oriented textile companies (Gossen and Heinrich, 2021). If businesses perceive a contradiction between supporting moderate consumption and at the same time reaching economic growth, they justify increasing sales by arguing that their products will reduce the consumption of less sustainable options of other companies (ibid.). Some of the companies we investigated in our study, however, have a more growth-critical mindset. They are accepting and considering absolute limits to growth, which in the case of VAUDE implies reducing their budget for advertisement in favor of spending more money on climate compensation (W&V, 2021) or, in Patagonia's case, a commitment to Zero Growth in terms of new product sales (Kaufmann, 2021). Both approaches are in line with Nesterova's (2020) suggestions for degrowth business models.

Conclusion

This study provides an exploratory, yet detailed, insight into the sufficiency-promoting marketing of outdoor companies to support sufficiency-oriented consumption practices. The analysis of selected business pioneers offers a first blueprint for promoting consumption changes among customers. While these are still niche projects, they will be essential for a transformation towards an economy that respects social and environmental boundaries. By applying SPT to the relatively novel research field of sufficiency-promoting marketing, we could illustrate how marketing activities, the business model, and consumer practices are connected and open opportunities for change towards more sustainable consumption. Our findings and discussion offer practical implications as well as theoretical contributions to the fields of sustainability marketing, sustainable business models, and SPT.

Because the study's novelty and unconventionality, it was imperative to investigate sufficiency-promoting marketing with exploratory and qualitative methods based on selected company cases. We carefully selected our case companies by applying strict selection criteria. This selection process rendered a very small sample size, which – due to the focus of this study – stems from a single industry. While such qualitative research is subjective in parts, plausible and defensible interpretations can be achieved through a structured and transparent approach. Conducting several analyses from different perspectives, partly with two coders acting independently, and supplementing these analyses with quantitative approaches and illustrative visualization strengthen the rigor and validity of our research. More qualitative and quantitative studies, also in other industries, are needed to add further insights to the field of sufficiency as a sustainability and marketing strategy for businesses. As we focused on a cross-case analysis, we suggest more in-depth discussions of companies' sustainability strategies and approaches to sufficiency as another avenue for future case-based studies. We conducted our study under the assumption that sufficiency-oriented consumption can reduce negative ecological and social impacts. However, we acknowledge that this assumption must be critically evaluated. Further research is needed to understand the actual impact of sufficiency-promoting marketing on consumer practices to assess its potential for sustainable change and detect possible rebound effects.

The climate crisis will not be solved by consumers and politicians alone. Businesses have market power and, therefore, a responsibility, which more and more brands and retailers are accepting and acting upon. Companies within the outdoor industry have the potential to act as role models and drivers for change, who can encourage consumers to follow their slogan 'Choose Nature. Buy Less.'

Authors contribution

Both authors contributed equally to this work.

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Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Appendix A: Interview guideline

Nr.	Question	Objective
Significance of sufficiency for the company		
1.	What do you understand by sufficiency?	Warm-Up
	What relevance does sufficiency have for your company (compared to other corporate goals)? Which special role does marketing play in this?	General significance and classification of sufficiency for company
Implementation of sufficiency-promoting marketing		
2.	What is your focus in sufficiency-promoting marketing?	What are the main marketing instruments (4P's)
3.	In your opinion, which example best illustrates sufficiency promotion and why?	Important/successful examples
Effect of sufficiency-promoting marketing		
4.	Which effect should sufficiency-promoting marketing have on your customers? When would sufficiency-promoting marketing be a success in your view?	Promoted consumption practices

5.	Do you measure and evaluate the actual impact of sufficiency-promoting marketing? If so, how?	Systematic/long-term impact measurement
Conclusion		
6.	What's the future of sufficiency-promoting marketing?	Outlook

Appendix B: Category scheme

Codes	Subcodes
Marketing strategy	*Vision* *Marketing objective* *Marketing channels* *Cooperation and community-building* *Measurement of impacts*
Marketing Mix	
Price	*Premium pricing* *No aggressive discounts* *Anti-Black Friday campaign*
Product	*Durable* *Circular (factory seconds, recyclable, recycled materials, upcycled)* *High quality* *Locally produced* *Multifunctional* *Repairable* *Timeless* *Lifetime warranty* *Second-hand product*
Additional services	
Promotion	*Tips for the sufficiency-oriented handling of products* *Information and education campaigns*

	Questioning consumption
	Emotional longevity
	Informing about sufficiency-related product features
Place	
	Staff training
	Dedicated second-hand section in stores
	Rental option
	Repair workshop
	Local Infrastructures
Sufficiency-oriented practices	
Reduction of consumption	
Modal shift	
Extending lifespans	
Sharing	
Elements of practices	
Rules	
Meanings	
Competences	
Materials	

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III. Encouraging Consumption Reduction: Findings of a Qualitative Study with Clothing Companies on Sufficiency-promoting Communication

Zusammenfassung

Sufficiency aims at reducing resource consumption and thus requires individual behaviour change. Although it seems counterintuitive at first glance, companies can support sufficiency-oriented, cleaner consumption as part of their societal responsibility. This article investigates motives for sufficiency-promoting business communication and explores related challenges resulting from the economic growth paradigm. Furthermore, it asks which digital tools are used in this communication and for what reasons. The explorative interview study with six German sufficiency-oriented clothing companies of the apparel sector reveals the significance of corporate sustainability values and strategic motives such as reputational benefits and customer loyalty. Since the companies are only pursuing moderate growth, the concurrence of supporting sufficiency and operating in a growth-driven economy is perceived as an area of tension but does not endanger their existence. Benefits of digital marketing arise from the wider audiences, cost efficiency and effective targeting. Future research opportunities entail qualitative and quantitative research to further investigate motives and barriers with different types of companies and to improve understanding of how companies ensure their continued existence whilst promoting less consumption. With our study, we explore the role communication can play in encouraging cleaner and sufficiency-oriented consumption and thus contribute to a young but flourishing research field.

Schlüsselwörter: Sustainable consumption, Sufficiency, Communication, Online marketing, Qualitative research

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Introduction

Overconsumption is a central issue of our time, especially in the more affluent countries of the Global North (Wiedmann et al., 2020), and a driver of environmental degradation. However, consumption cannot be transformed towards sustainability through technological innovations, efficiency gains, and producer-driven actions alone; absolute consumption levels must also be reduced (Alfredsson et al., 2018; Blatt et al., 2020; Lorek and Fuchs, 2013). Reducing resource and energy consumption is at the centre of the sufficiency strategy (Princen, 2005), and sufficiency can be understood as a long-term objective for reaching sustainability. In many countries of the Global North, resource use could be significantly reduced without impairing the satisfaction of existential needs or human well-being (O'Neill et al., 2018). Instead, sufficiency may even contribute to increased well-being as a simplistic and less materialistic lifestyle can lead to wealth in social life and time (Kasser et al., 2014). Achieving sustainability requires, on a macro-level, fundamental changes in how human society and the economy are organized. On a micro-level, individuals can advance sustainability goals by voluntary sufficiency-oriented consumption choices and a simpler life (Gorge et al., 2015).

Sufficiency acknowledges that individual consumption choices for 'greener' products cannot bring the much-needed broader systemic shift away from materialistic lifestyles and continuous consumption (Brown and Vergragt, 2016; Capstick et al., 2014). Instead, it calls for 'living well on less' (Figge et al., 2014). In this context, the relevant literature refers to consumption corridors, which define a minimum and a maximum level for individual consumption (Di Giulio and Fuchs, 2014; Fuchs, 2020), the upper limit being defined by an equal distribution of limited resources within planetary boundaries and the lower limit by basic human needs. Broken down to individual behaviour, sufficiency means (1) lowering absolute reductions of consumption, (2) modal shifts, which entail switching to a less resource-intensive consumption mode, (3) product longevity, and (4) sharing practices (Sandberg, 2021). Examples are living in smaller homes, buying fewer goods, consuming less red meat, and driving and flying less (Veleva, 2020). This article focuses on the micro-level and investigates how individual sufficiency-oriented consumption choices can be promoted by businesses.

The study at hand concentrates on the clothing domain since the apparel industry is fourth in the list of industries putting pressure on primary raw material and water use (European Environment Agency, 2019). Besides the ecological damages, it is also problematic that clothing is predominantly produced under socially critical conditions (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2017). Moreover, the clothing life cycle has shortened considerably as fast fashion brands introduce up to 24 different collections to the shops annually (Remy et al., 2016). The length of time a garment is worn is further reduced because fast fashion items are usually inexpensive and have a short lifespan. This short lifespan may stem from low-quality apparel but also arises from a product's symbolic value being reduced when it becomes outdated by newer trends (Gwozdz et al., 2017). If sustainability targets are to be reached, producing and trading textiles and using and handling clothes must be slowed down (Fletcher, 2007). Consequently, degrowth of the global fashion industry is needed (Niinim€aki et al., 2020). For Europe alone, making clothes last longer through swapping and repairing could lead to a 2% reduction in their environmental impact (Vita et al., 2019). Consumers can contribute to this slow fashion by reducing the purchase of new textiles and pro- longing product lifetime by engaging in behaviours such as care, repair, second-hand acquisition, and clothing exchange. However, these practices still represent a niche phenomenon (Kleinhückelkotten and Neitzke, 2019).

All too often, the responsibility for a more sustainable consumption is left to individuals (Sandberg, 2021), although sustainability sciences have shown that structural and significant changes can only take place if societal and economical systems change (Bengtsson et al., 2018). Therefore, for sufficiency in clothing to leave the niche, multiple actors need to be activated. In this sense, the business sector should take over responsibility and actively support sufficiency-oriented clothing consumption (Heikkurinen et al., 2019; Freudenreich and Schaltegger, 2020). As companies strongly influence the available range of products and services and thus bear co-responsibility for excessive consumption (Heath and Chatzidakis, 2012), they are to be seen as also responsible for promoting sufficiency-oriented behaviour. Although reducing consumption appears as a rather controversial and counter-intuitive endeavour within the profit-driven market sector, businesses are increasingly seeking to reduce their environmental impact. Marketing is both the preferred tool to create and maintain customer relationships and a valuable tool in changing consumption habits (Peattie and Peattie, 2009).

Apparel companies have played an outstanding role in promoting sufficiency since they have often emphasized durability, reparability and high quality of their products. In contrast to that focus on product characteristics and extending the use phase, communication activities aiming to encourage consumers to buy less are a relatively new phenomenon. Those activities are especially interesting as they are contradictory to common business practice. Hence, this article focuses on sufficiency-promoting communication within the marketing mix. Patagonia's ‘Don't buy this jacket' campaign is the most prominent example of how, in its communication, a clothing company is encouraging repair and purchase of second-hand garments instead of the purchase of new products (Hwang et al., 2016). For, even if Patagonia's advertising was initially criticised as damaging the company's image, the company ultimately achieved sales growth of over 30 percent (Meltzer, 2017). That campaign is a visible example of the ambiguity of sufficiency-promoting communication: although it aims to reduce consumption, it can (at least in the short term) increase sales.

Therefore, the question of why companies realise sufficiency- promoting communication is essential, but under-researched. Based on a comprehensive literature analysis, Gossen et al. (2019) identified motives for and barriers to sufficiency-promoting marketing. The motives can be differentiated into altruistic and strategic motives. The normative conviction that companies want to contribute to sustainable development and change the social role of consumption motivates them to promote sufficiency-oriented consumption (e.g., Ramirez et al., 2017). By reducing the risk of debts through moderate consumption, sufficiency-promoting marketing also contributes to consumers' individual well-being (Seegebarth et al., 2016). In addition, it can be viewed as a component of provision-oriented and future-proof economic activity (precautionary principle) (e.g., Sheth et al., 2011). From a strategic point of view, companies use sufficiency-promoting marketing to improve their image, boost relationships with customers, and develop new business areas or increase sales, and thus profits (e.g., Bocken and Short, 2016; Armstrong Soule and Reich, 2015). The empirical investigation of reasons for communication to enhance sufficiency-oriented clothing consumption is still pending, which is why this article poses the following research question:

> *RQ1: What are the motives to pursue communication activities that aim to support sufficiency-oriented clothing consumption?*

In addition to the reasons in favour of sufficiency-promoting communication, the reasons against are also of interest for our study. As mentioned above, sufficiency-promoting communication could be accompanied by endangering a company's existence or simply opting out of the growth paradigm of the economy. Sufficiency-driven business models are characterized by going against the business-as-usual trends and realising radically different marketing campaigns (Bocken and Short, 2016). This opposition implies a new understanding of corporate value creation. The value-added process no longer serves only to maximise profits; it ensures that a company's activities, partners and customers contribute to sufficiency (Kropfeld and

Reichel, in press). Sufficiency-driven companies not focusing on pure profit maximization and corporate growth create non-monetary profits through long-term customer loyalty and by taking market share away from less sustainability-oriented companies (Bocken et al., 2020). Thus, successful non-growing companies distinguish between traditional growth in numbers and growth in qualities – not 'more' but 'better' appears to be their dominant management philosophy (Gebauer et al., 2015). However, these business models are still at odds with the current economic system in many countries, which is focused on growing consumption and sales (Khmara and Kronenberg, 2018; Leonhardt et al., 2017). Research on the barriers that companies experience by following a sufficiency-promoting communication strategy is limited, which leads to the following research question:

RQ2: What challenges arise from the dichotomy of promoting sufficiency-oriented clothing consumption and the economic growth paradigm?

Apart from the question of why companies engage in sufficiency- promoting communication, we were also interested in how they realise it. Since the communication between clothing companies and their customers is increasingly taking place online, we focus on digital tools for sufficiency-promoting communication. Digital tools have been the primary channel for customer communication for some time, and the Covid- 19 pandemic has solidified this (He and Harris, 2020). Blogs, websites, smartphone applications, and Social Media offer new channels for providing sustainability-related information accessible to users anytime and anywhere (Börjesson Rivera et al., 2014; Frick and Santarius, 2019). For example, in an online shop, communicating sustainability-oriented descriptive norms can increase sustainable product choice (Demarque et al., 2015). However, online marketing and Social Media marketing currently primarily targets increased consumption by personalising information or by promoting the desired behaviour as a social norm (Pappas et al., 2017) rather than by supporting sufficiency. Moreover, it was shown that consumption-promoting content is more prevalent online than sufficiency-promoting content (Frick et al., 2020). Apart from a few insights, which primarily focus on sufficiency-promoting communication's effects on customers (e.g., Hwang et al., 2016; Ramirez et al., 2017; Frick et al., 2021), the question remains unanswered as to whether and how companies are using digital tools to successfully promote sufficiency-oriented clothing consumption. This is addressed in an additional research question:

RQ3: Which digital tools are used in sufficiency-promoting communication and for what reasons?

This study follows a qualitative approach and contributes to the literature on sustainable communication (Fischer et al., 2021) by expanding the view to one strong approach to sustainable consumption, namely supporting sufficiency-oriented consumption. The article is structured as follows. First, the research method is presented, followed by key findings. Then the main lessons learned and further research opportunities are discussed. The article finishes with a conclusion.

Methodology

A research process guided by openness and flexibility is a prerequisite for investigating a novel research topic such as sufficiency-promoting communication. Therefore, this study is based on qualitative expert interviews. Expert interviews have an informative and explorative char- acter and record descriptive respondent knowledge on the subject of interest (Lamnek and Krell, 2016). Due to its character, a qualitative study cannot provide representative findings as it can only reflect the interviewees' opinions (Przyborsky and Wohlrab-Sahr, 2014).

The study sample consists of six German companies in the apparel sector (see Table 1). Most of them are very small companies managed by a founder or owner. All companies are dedicated to sustainability and prove this orientation through environmental management systems, sustainability labels and certifications, or sustainability awards. In their customer communication, they explicitly call on people to buy and own less instead of purchasing new clothes (see Table 1). Moreover, we have included them into our study because of their sufficiency-oriented products, which are designed to be repairable, multifunctional, durable, and timeless. To extend the product lifetime, they also publish instructions and guides for product care, storage, and repair.

The sample size and composition fulfil an inductive and reconstructive approach to the research questions. As described above, the companies were selected based on preliminary research on examples of sufficiency-promoting communication because, to answer the research questions, it was important for companies to have had experience with the topic. This condition limited the selection of companies from the outset since sufficiency-promoting communication is not widespread.

We developed a semi-structured guideline (Witzel, 1982) to conduct the telephone interviews with managing directors, heads of corporate social responsibility or staff members of the selected companies. The interviewees' views were acquired through narrative answers and were supplemented by guideline-based questioning and the resulting dialogues. The range of topics included motivation and objectives of sufficiency-promoting communication; obstacles in implementation, within and outside the company and regarding the dichotomy of sufficiency and economic growth; and questions about online marketing and its role for the development and effectiveness of sufficiency-promoting communication. Interviews on an average lasted for 45 minutes thus covering the research issues comprehensively. The interview guideline can be found in Appendix A. The interviews were recorded and transcribed. Verbatim quotes have been translated by the authors for this article.

The study's content analysis was conducted using the program MAXQDA. The theory-guided procedure (Mayring, 2015) enables a systematic data evaluation. The data was categorized by two coders ac- cording to a category scheme (see Appendix B), which was developed inductively-deductively, i.e., based on the research questions as well as on the material. Quality assurance of the content analysis was based on the quality criteria reliability, systematics, and objectivity of the analysis (Mayring, 2015). The validity and reproducibility of the findings were ensured by checking the intercoder reliability, i.e., that the coding of several coders was consistent. Objectivity was guaranteed by the exact operationalisation of the terms used. This objectivity enabled the inter- subjective traceability of the analysis (Berelson, 1971). The systematic approach was guaranteed by the exact description and delimitation of the data material to be analysed and the orientation towards text analysis rules.

Table 1. Study sample.

Company	Company description	Founding Year	Sustainability orientation	Number of employees	Position of the interviewee	Example of sufficiency-promoting communication
Avocadostore GmbH	Online marketplace for sustainable clothing and green products	2010	Sustainability criteria for products	40	Managing director	Sufficiency-promoting posts on Instagram (e.g., 'Buy less, buy better, and really wear it')
Insaka GmbH	Sustainable swimwear	2016	Products made in Europe and made of ECONYL	3	Staff (customer communication)	Campaign #whitemonday and sufficiency-promoting posts on Instagram (e.g., 'Reduce Reuse Repair Recycle')
Manitober GmbH	Sustainable children´s clothing	2017	Federal Ecodesign Award 2018	4	Managing director	Sufficiency-promoting posts on Instagram (e.g., 'Care for your clothes, like the good friends they are' or 'Sometime they'll have a sale and nobody will come')

Salzwasser.EU GmbH	Sustainable clothing	2019	GWÖ (Gemeinwohlökonomie - welfare economy) oriented social business model, GOTS certified products	2	Managing director	Sufficiency-promoting posts on Instagram (e.g., 'Wear your conviction – buy favourite items and wear them a long time', 'buy less, choose well')
VAUDE Sport GmbH & Co. KG	Sustainable outdoor clothing and gear	1974	Member of GWÖ, EMAS and ISO 14001 certified, Standard bluesign®, Brand performance check by Fair Wear, GRI Sustainability Report	536	Senior Manager CSR	Sufficiency-promoting messages (e.g., 'Don't buy this tent – rent it.') on website, Instagram, and in the sustainability report
Jyoti – Fair Works gUG	Sustainable clothing	2014	Social Hero Award, Startsocial Award, Social Impact Start grant	3	Staff (product design)	Tag with sufficiency-promoting messages in garments (e.g., 'Treat me well and repair me') and sufficiency-promoting post on Instagram (e.g., 'No Black Friday Sale' or 'Fair instead of Black Friday', 'Clothes Swapping')

Findings

In the following, the findings of the expert interviews are analysed and summarised in groups according to the research questions.

Reasons for sufficiency-promoting communication

Certain company-specific drivers and external events are among the triggers that prompted the interviewed companies to enhance sufficiency-oriented behaviour in their communication. In one case, the reorientation of the business model led to the additional offer of a repair or rental service. External events include, for instance, media reports on the negative effects of fast fashion.

Motives for sufficiency-promoting communication span idealistic commitments and strategic considerations. All companies are idealistically motivated by their own sustainability-oriented values, i.e., aligning their business activities with sustainability and sufficiency principles and the anchoring of corresponding values in their corporate strategies. The interviewed companies even assert that dealing with the current sustainability challenges was the basis of their business start-up. To meet the claim of contributing to sufficiency, the companies underpin their idealistic commitment with products that focus on longevity, high quality, timelessness, and reparability (in low quantity) and some of them additionally offer repair or rental services that allow life cycle extension. The interviewed companies acknowledge the crucial importance of the product policy: Without a product offering enabling sufficiency, communication activities focusing on sufficiency would not make sense. Strategic motives cited by almost all companies cover raising awareness for the role consumption plays in society. This awareness- raising includes educating on the negative effects of excessive consumption in general and on the ecological damage the clothing industry is responsible for, encouraging customers to reduce consumption or demonstrating alternatives to purchasing new products, and giving practical recommendations for sufficiency-oriented behaviour:

> *"Since then, we regularly post tips on Social Media on how to consume sustainably, and that it is not necessary to buy several things, not even from us, to fill the cupboard, but that one should consciously deal with consumption."* (Inaska interviewee)

> *"[...] that you can repair a pair of jeans or that clothes last longer if you wash them differently, or that you can create five looks with one pair of pants. That's the kind of*

> *thing we do on Social Media because we think it's good ourselves."* (Avacadostore interviewee)
>
> *"[...] raise awareness about what's going on in the clothing industry because that's quite interesting. We do have an opinion on it, and we can and want to educate about it."* (Manitober interviewee)

The interviewee from Jyoti – Fair Works summarizes the company's aims for sufficiency-oriented communication as "promoting conscious consumption instead of excessive consumption" on the one hand and, on the other hand, selling own products to replace fast fashion clothing from competitors. That was only one of similar statements from other companies showing that none of the companies pursue exclusively altruistic goals. All of them also have to think of their existence and advertise less consumption to generate sales. According to two rather small companies, one strategy to deal with the contradiction between supporting moderate consumption and at the same time selling things is for other (unsustainable) companies to sell less (see section 3.2).

Furthermore, increasing popularity and reaching an improved reputation are strategically important reasons for sufficiency-promoting communication, especially for the large companies of the sample. Sufficiency is a fairly new topic that is now also attracting mainstream attention due to the rise of fashion trends such as minimalism and decluttering. It can thus help a company develop its image as future- oriented and innovative:

> *"So that one simply prefers to buy reasonably, and to that belongs that I get something that lasts for my money, and that I don't want to buy a lot anymore. Minimalism is also a mega trend right now. Well, people simply notice that it has been all too much, and if you go into this niche, I think it's possible to win over a lot of people."* (Avacadostore interviewee)

Some interview partners consider their company's sufficiency- promoting communication as a unique selling proposition. Because such communication measures stand out from the general flood of advertising, the company may benefit and set themselves apart from competitors. Thus, positioning their brand against the mainstream emerged as a further strategic motive for almost all interviewed companies. In this context, the interview partners consider authenticity of sufficiency-promoting communication as essential. Enabling transparency and, thus, avoiding contradictions between their own actions and their communication messages are important for the companies because the resulting credibility and trust could contribute to improving customer loyalty.

> *"I think you have to be careful not to contradict yourself. So, we don't do sales, we don't do sales seasons or anything like that."* (Jyoti – Fair Works interviewee)

> *"That's why this brand communication on the topic of alternative consumption is primarily a topic for brand image and differentiation for us [...] Of course, the products have to be able to even meet this requirement, the products and supply chains. That's of course a prerequisite."* (VAUDE interviewee)

Challenges in implementing sufficiency-promoting communication against the background of the economic growth paradigm

Despite strong motives for a sufficiency-orientation in communication, the interviewed companies experience several challenges, which arise from the dichotomy of promoting sufficiency and operating in a growth-driven economy. The interviewed companies are still dependent on sales. Although they are not primarily growth-oriented, they are nevertheless aware that a sharp decline in sales could certainly jeopardize the company's continued existence:

> *"One should not forget there is no social business without business. If we don't sell as an online marketplace, then why do we exist?"* (Avocadostore interviewee)

All company representatives interviewed were aware of this dilemma and demonstrated a strong will to maintain their sufficiency-driven corporate values and philosophy and to reconcile them with sound turnover. According to the interview partners, this reconciliation can mainly be achieved by offering timeless and durable products that do not follow fashion trends and are of high quality:

> *"One can run an economically sustainable company that is also ecologically and socially sustainable and not based on constant in- crease in consumption. That is what we're trying to achieve, primarily through durable and timeless products."* (Salzwasser interviewee)

The compatibility of sufficiency and moderate growth can further- more succeed if companies extend their business models to include a rental, resell, or repair service, as is the case of VAUDE, Jyoti – Fair Works, and Manitober. At the same time, some interviewed companies face the challenge that not all customers take notice of and demand these additional services.

Thus, these companies are often unable to fully compensate the decline in sales due to sufficiency-oriented marketing. However, most of the companies accept the potential revenue losses because their altruistic motives for promoting sufficiency are stronger than their pursuit of profit.

However, in general, the companies' quantitative expectations of turnover growth are moderate. They strive more for a growth of their brand range to replace other, less sustainable companies. In the end, this strategy targets reducing overall clothing consumption and, simultaneously, increasing market share of fair and sustainable clothing companies:

> *"[...] if you buy, we'd like you to buy less overall and to buy these items from us."* (Jyoti – Fair Works interviewee)
>
> *"Growth for us therefore doesn't necessarily mean economic growth, but rather reach growth, so that we can spread our philosophy and encourage people to reflect."* (Jyoti – Fair Works interviewee)

Many interview partners evaluated sufficiency-promoting communication as challenging if key stakeholder groups resist or doubt its legitimacy. In their experience, critics can be convinced if the company's reputation and customer loyalty benefits from the communication activities. To reach that goal, credibility and authenticity are indispensable (see section 3.1). Therefore, strengthening credibility and authenticity appear to be practicable ways for a sufficiency-oriented company to survive in a competitive market.

Digital tools applied in sufficiency-promoting communication

Above all, decisive benefits of digital communication are, in general, the range and immediacy that can be achieved through digital media. According to the companies interviewed, compared with analogue advertisements such as print or billboard advertising, digital media allows more people to be reached directly and independently of time and place. Users sharing the corporate content with other users within social net- works can further extend the range. Moreover, content marketing and Social Media marketing enable more spontaneous, direct, and personal communication with users. Digital communication allows various inter- action with target groups, i.e., feedback, which most of the interviewed companies see as a further benefit. The interview partners had different opinions about cost and time. Some rather small companies evaluate digital communication as at least as cost-intensive as analogue advertisement, and the needed effort and skills even more demanding. In digital communication, there are more channels, the frequency is higher, and the need for customer research and data analysis has also increased.

> *"The effort is probably similar. But Social Media can reach more people more individually, and also much faster."* (Jyoti – Fair Works interviewee)

As a further advantage of digitalisation, the interviewed companies discuss the increase in content- and channel-related options for sufficiency-promoting communication. Especially with a complex, counterintuitive and sensitive topic such as consumption reduction, adequate framing is important in allowing different target groups to grasp and understand the contents. This framing can be achieved with digital and Social Media tools, which provide many ways of conveying texts, images, and videos via different channels. Thus, all the interviewed companies are active on platforms such as Instagram or Facebook, with some going further and pursuing storytelling or sharing ideas for sufficiency-oriented lifestyles in their newsletters or blogs:

> *"I would say content marketing and Social Media are very suitable. Simply because, even subconsciously, the message is somehow pre- sent. Even if you only post a small photo which says 'Buy Less, choose well', it somehow stays in mind."* (Jyoti – Fair Works interviewee)

> *"And this is key, I think, that digitalisation provides more options by using videos and music to catch the users emotionally and effectively."* (Avocadostore interviewee)

Another potential benefit of digital communication, brought up by some of the interview partners, is the ability to track user data. By collecting personal data and, hence, by considering individual preferences, companies can target their communication efforts more effectively. As a downside, targeted advertising may stimulate consumption, which is why some interviewed companies avoid certain online marketing channels. Some companies even use their reach and trust in their brands to educate customers about the manipulative effects of advertising and to enhance political and societal debate about consumerism.

> *"Social Media marketing is still primarily aimed at a young audience and promotes sales through consumption incentives. At the same time, these platforms are also a great asset for drawing attention to critical opinions on consumption. Political consumer debates thus become more visible and reach a broader mass than conventional marketing. However, a lot of educational work still needs to be done here to ensure that these channels do not develop into pure 'consumer incentive machines'."* (Inaska interviewee)

> *"We are keen to promote conscious buying, instead of 'intoxicating' consumption. If many people buy consciously, there is still enough for everyone."* (Jyoti – Fair Works interviewee)

Digital communication simplifies the process of addressing target groups by increasing the number of recipients and allowing the information to be steered according to the target group. As indicated above, specific customer groups such as younger people open-minded towards sufficiency and conscious consumption can be reached efficiently as they use digital media frequently. On the other hand, potential target groups might not be reached by digital means since they do not use digital media (very often). And, beyond digitalisation, personal contact will remain important, especially for communicating sufficiency issues.

Discussion and further research directions

This study explores motives and obstacles for sufficiency-promoting communication in the apparel domain from a business perspective and the role digital tools plays in realising such a communication strategy. In this final section, we discuss our findings and propose future research opportunities.

Our study indicates that promoting sufficiency-oriented consumption arises from a general entrepreneurial orientation towards sustainability and the common good. Hence, altruistic reasons (e.g., moral obligation) (Graafland and Mazereeuw-van der Duijn Schouten, 2012) for the CSR-engagement of companies are also crucial for implementing sufficiency-promoting communication. The interviewed companies represent a niche insofar as most of them (four of six) are very small clothing companies with only few employees and managed by a founder or owner. As a result, they are less externally determined than large companies are. This independence allows decisions that are more autonomous and sometimes even represent more radical and progressive innovations (e.g., Utterback and Abernathy, 1975) such as approaching sufficiency, which is still at odds with the mainstream consumer culture and economy. Therefore, the choice of our sample and its size are an opportunity for experimenting and learning from niche pioneers of an alternative fashion market.

Cross-case analysis revealed no noteworthy differences between the interviewed companies regarding their motives and barriers. It seems that other factors are more decisive for the adoption of sufficiency-promoting strategies than the question of whether they are large or small companies, start-ups or incumbent firms. This should be followed up by further research.

When discussing the role of companies in transforming markets and society to become more sustainable, the sustainable entrepreneurship literature often distinguishes between small pioneers or large incumbents (Hockerts and Wüstenhagen, 2010). In the study at hand, the focus is on small pioneers, which are well aware of the considerable challenge in resisting the growth-driven market with competitors that pursue an opposite business strategy relying on profit maximization. Hence, their small size, while offering clear advantages, also holds challenges. Since the small companies' range of influence is limited, they are challenged to grow, to multiply, or to successfully influence others in order to trans- form the market (Schaltegger et al., 2016). On the other hand, their small size allows them to avoid organizational inertia and to operate in a more flexible and independent way. Our findings indicate that these 'Emerging Davids' (Hockerts and Wüstenhagen, 2010) are more visionary and more willing to take risks than larger companies. With regard to the requirement to grow, the interviewed companies view growth critically; still, none of them aims to shrink or gain large market shares. Yet, if they increase sales, they justify it by arguing that their products will reduce the consumption of less sustainable options. In these cases, growth could even be desirable (Bocken et al., 2020). Supporting sufficiency and at the same time operating in a growth-driven economy is perceived as an area of tension but does neither endanger their existence nor their altruistic commitment. For example, they can continue to survive if they extend their business models by building on producing and selling products to include rental or repair services.

Our focus on small pioneers is not only an advantage but also a limitation of our study. The findings are not necessarily generalizable for bigger companies, non-sustainable companies, or companies from other sectors. A repetition of the qualitative study with a mixed sample including conventional and medium-size or large companies would enable a comparison between different types of companies and their motivations for sufficiency-promoting communication. To explore barriers against sufficiency-promoting communication in more depth, the study could also be repeated with sustainability-oriented companies that have not yet applied sufficiency-promoting communication.

A comparison between our interview findings and the theory in the literature (e.g., Gossen et al., 2019) highlights some interesting differences regarding the motives for realising sufficiency-promoting communication. The interviewed companies did not cite an orientation towards the precautionary principle or aiming to increase individuals' well-being as altruistic motives for supporting sufficiency-oriented clothing consumption, which in the literature were identified as relevant motives. Similarly, developing new business areas and positively affecting sales and profits were not explicitly mentioned, even though these gains can certainly be the result of improved customer relations and increased visibility – strategic motives that were also identified in the empirical study at hand. These differences can again be explained by the chosen study sample, which is composed of companies with a pronounced orientation towards sustainability and an idealistic view of their work and impact.

The aim to increase awareness of non-materialistic lifestyles amongst customers and to stand out strategically from competitors is a common motive for realising sufficiency-promoting communication. The inter- viewed companies demarcate themselves from other (sustainability-oriented and conventional) companies by using eye-catching and unusual messages, hoping for reputational benefits. Other studies have shown that sufficiency-promoting advertising contributes to company credibility and to a positive perception of a company's intentions (Gossen and Frick, 2018; Ramirez et al., 2017; Frick et al., 2021), which is supported by the study at hand. Yet, the interviewed companies were taking a certain risk – their credibility could quickly be damaged if customers identified a discrepancy between the communication and the actual corporate action. In this case, sufficiency-promoting communication could lead to accusations of greenwashing. Yet, greenwashing can be excluded, or is at least unlikely, if such communication tools meet the criteria of credibility, transparency, authenticity, consistency, readiness for dialogue, and have relevant content (e.g., Heinrich and Schmidpeter, 2018). Accordingly, the interviewed companies make a great effort to establish an authentic and consistent communication. However, another scenario is also possible: although sufficiency-promoting communication is currently a niche phenomenon and only few companies pursue the marketing goal of consuming less (Gossen et al., 2019), if this communication was to be picked up by more companies, a unique selling point for the pioneers of sufficiency-promoting communication could vanish. The requirements and conditions for authentic and credible sufficiency promotion should be investigated in further research.

Although our study focusses on communication, it emphasized the importance of other elements of the marketing mix for effectively promoting sufficiency-oriented clothing consumption. Thus, fostering attitudes in favour of sufficiency through information and communication alone is not enough to change the behaviour of most consumers. The interviewed companies offer high quality, durable, repairable, and timeless products and accompanying services for rental or repair options in order to support moderate lifestyles through their product policy. In this way, customers are enabled to purchase fewer new items and to use the things they own until the end of the product life cycle. A strong focus on product and communication policies is also discovered in the literature on sufficiency-promoting marketing (e.g., Ertekin and Atik, 2015; Gossen et al., 2019). Activities within the price and place policies were not discussed in the interviews. Therefore, future empirical research should investigate if price-related instruments, such as premium pricing and wavering of discounts (e.g., Jung and Jin, 2016; Bocken and Short, 2016), and place-related instruments, such as community building, are of practical relevance and if so, how they can be best used for the goal to enhance sufficiency.

Alongside other objectives, this study investigates which digital communication tools are applied in sufficiency-promoting communication and for what reasons. When compared with analogue communication, generally beneficial features of online marketing are, e.g., the reachability independent of time and location (Börjesson Rivera et al., 2014), the increase of cost efficiency, the increased range, and the direct dialogue and interaction possibilities with consumers (Shankar et al., 2010). These benefits are also advantageous to sufficiency-promoting communication. The role of personalised advertising based on evaluating personal data from Social Media, user profiles, and community forums was only briefly discussed in the interviews, and more in the sense that these techniques can stimulate consumption. The increasing importance of micro-targeting, on- and offline tracking, and big data evaluation means that their significance for the targeted communication of sufficiency-oriented messages will most likely grow as well. Further research must be undertaken in this area, especially since the conventional marketing techniques mentioned above currently tend to create new consumption needs and purchasing intentions (Pappas et al., 2017) and thus increase consumption. Further, our study revealed that content marketing and Social Media marketing are especially suitable for conveying complex messages in need of explanation such as sufficiency, which is consistent with previous research on digital green marketing (Luck and Ginanti, 2013). The task of inspiring customers to reduce consumption and change social norms through awareness-raising is ambitious and requires using normative motives in digital communication (Joanes et al., 2020). Whether current sufficiency-promoting messages already meet this requirement should be investigated in future studies.

The primary goal of marketing is to increase buying intentions, and digital marketing technologies and tools are especially fitting (Pappas et al., 2017). A recent study showed that sufficiency-promoting communication on Social Media leads to more sufficiency behaviour compared to neutral and consumption-promoting communication (Frick et al., 2021). That result is reflected in the findings of this study, which indicate that sufficiency-oriented companies are using Social Media to enhance transparency and information, raise awareness for minimalistic lifestyles, and initiate discussions about the social and environmental effects of overconsumption. In some cases, the interviewed companies even consider themselves promoters of political activism and educators on sustainability.

Finally, our study reveals that, with current sufficiency-promoting marketing means, clothing companies merely focus on enhancing product longevity, repairing, and renting practices. They are taking a step towards sufficiency since these practices are relatively low-threshold and easily adoptable and do not overall challenge consumerist culture and possession of goods. Less addressed by these activities is the 'hard nut', namely restricted consumption (Spangenberg and Lorek, 2019). Further research should be concerned with the question of if and how the business sector can contribute to this endeavour or whether it must be left to policy interventions.

Conclusion

Sufficiency-oriented consumption can be an answer to over- consumption in affluent societies, which is partly responsible for environmental degradation. To change consumption modes, societal and economical systems have to change. The apparel industry is dominated by the fast fashion system with rapid turnovers of clothing, which will be discarded long before a product's lifetime has really ended. Changes in the ways clothing companies market their products have to be pushed. Yet, reducing consumption appears as a controversial and counter- intuitive endeavour within the profit-driven market sector. The reasons clothing companies promote sufficiency-oriented consumption are un- clear and have not been empirically investigated so far. Since digital tools are the primary channel for customer communication, and online marketing and Social Media marketing mainly target increased consumption and invent new consumption desires, investigating their role in sufficiency-oriented communication is vital. Therefore, this study applied a qualitative approach to explore the motives and challenges of sufficiency-promoting communication and to discuss the role digital communication plays in promoting sufficiency. The study focuses on small pioneering companies for sustainable clothing, which have special requirements but also favourable factors for supporting sufficiency.

Our findings show that motives for sufficiency-oriented consumption span both idealistic and strategic considerations. For example, contributing to sustainability is as much a guiding principle as improving the reputation of the company. Our study indicates that companies find different ways to deal with the challenges arising from operating in a growth-driven economy whilst promoting sufficiency. None of the companies are aiming at contraction, but most pursue only moderate growth targets. Supporting sufficiency and simultaneously operating in a growth-driven economy is perceived as an area of tension but does not endanger a company's existence if it, for example, extends its business model to include rental or repair services. Another central finding is that digital marketing tools facilitate conveying sufficiency-promoting messages. The interviewed companies stated how online marketing and Social Media marketing allow them to address sufficiency-promoting messages efficiently and to a large circle of customers.

Our analysis is limited in that it is based on a small sample size, focuses on small sufficiency-oriented companies in the apparel sector, and is an exploratory approach. Nonetheless, it offers a way of discovering new contexts and future research prospects in sufficiency-orientated communication. To expand our preliminary findings, more qualitative and quantitative research is necessary. An important task for future research is to repeat the qualitative exploration of motives and challenges of sufficiency-oriented communication with different types of companies to exclude the possibility that the given size and the high sustainability orientation of the interviewed companies make the findings less generalizable. Moreover, further research is needed to investigate accompanying strategies within the product, price, and place dimension of the marketing mix to foster sufficiency and to better understand how companies handle the growth dilemma and ensure their continued existence. Our study also motivates consumer research to conduct quantitative studies to measure the impacts of (digital) sufficiency-promoting communication and, thus, to clarify whether online marketing supports or negates the intended effects of sufficiency-promoting communication.

Investigating sufficiency-promoting communication is a young but flourishing research field within the marketing, consumer, and sustain- ability research community. Niche experiments with sustainability entrepreneurs can provide valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities in advancing sufficiency-oriented lifestyles. With this study, we contribute to a better understanding of the role marketing can play in encouraging cleaner and sufficiency-oriented consumption.

CRediT authorship contribution statement

Maike Gossen: Conceptualization, Formal analysis, Methodology, Investigation, Writing – original draft, Writing – review& editing, Project administration.

Anneli Heinrich: Formal analysis, Methodology, Investigation, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing.

Declaration of competing interest

None of the authors are aware of any conflicts of interest.

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Appendix A. Semi-structured interview guide

1. At first, I would like to know what is your understanding of consumption reduction?

2. When did you initiate your sufficiency-promoting communication?

3. What are motives for your sufficiency-promoting communication?

4. What outcomes do you expect from your sufficiency-promoting communication?

5. Are you planning to expand your sufficiency-promoting communication?

6. What obstacles or challenges did you experience when introducing the topic of consumption reduction in your communication policy?

7. Do you see a contradiction in the communication of consumption reduction and your sales targets? If yes, how do you manage to reconcile this contraction?

8. Marketing, in particular advertising, is supposed to increase sales. In your opinion, can a company's communication promote consumption reduction or is that paradoxical?

9. What role does digitalisation play for your sufficiency-promoting communication?

10. Which digital and Social Media tools do you use for your sufficiency-promoting communication?

11. Is online communication better suited to conveying consumption-reduction messages than analogue communication? What advantages do you see and what are the limits?

12. How do you evaluate cost and time input for your digital sufficiency-promoting communication?

13. Have you got something to add in terms of sufficiency-promoting communication?

14. Considered everything, would you rate the communication of consumption reduction positively for your company?

Appendix B. Category scheme

Codes	Subcodes
Understanding of sufficiency	
Motives	

Triggers for implementing sufficiency-promoting communication	*External triggers* *Internal triggers*
Motives for / outcomes from sufficiency-promoting communication	*Strategic motives* *Altruistic motives*
Intentions to expand sufficiency-promoting communication	
Digitalisation	
Role of digitalisation	
Advantages of digital communication	*Range and immediacy* *Increase in content and channel-related topics* *Simple addressing of target groups* *Adequate addressing of complex and sensitive topics*
Limits of digital communication	
Cost and time input for digital communication compared to analogue communication	
Obstacles	
Challenges and obstacles associated with sufficiency-promoting communication	*Dependence on sales and company growth* *Consistency of company activities and communication* *Opposition/Concerns from stakeholders* *Pressure from the competitors*
Dealing with the challenge ‘growth and consumption reduction’	*High quality products* *Expansion of business model* *Lower expectations of sales growth*

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IV. Brauchst du das wirklich? – Wahrnehmung und Wirkung suffizienzfördernder Unternehmenskommunikation auf die Konsummotivation

Zusammenfassung

Suffizientes Konsumverhalten gilt als eine wichtige Strategie, um Nachhaltigkeitsziele zu erreichen, und kann von nachhaltigkeitsorientierten Unternehmen unter anderem mithilfe von suffizienzfördernder Kommunikation unterstützt werden. In einer Online-Befragung von Kund*innen eines Online-Marktplatzes für nachhaltige Produkte (N =1626) wurde untersucht, wie ein Unternehmen mit suffizienzfördernder Kommunikation als Sender von seinen Kund*innen wahrgenommen wird, ob diese Kommunikationsform tatsächlich zu suffizientem Konsumverhalten motivieren kann und welche Faktoren suffizienzfördernde Kommunikation wirkungsvoll begünstigen können. Die Befragten bewerteten die Inhalte der suffizienzfördernden Kommunikation sowie die Glaubwürdigkeit und die Motive des Unternehmens als sehr positiv und drückten eine hohe Motivation zu suffizientem Konsumverhalten aus. Nur vereinzelt wurden die Motive des Unternehmens infrage gestellt. Die positive Bewertung der Glaubwürdigkeit und der Motive des Senders sowie ausgeprägte Werte umweltfreundlichen Konsums bei Kund*innen begünstigten zudem die suffizienzfördernde Wirkung der Kommunikationsmaßnahme, während sich die Wahrnehmung strategischer Motive des Unternehmens sowie individuelle hedonistische Konsummotive nicht maßgeblich auswirkten. Die Ergebnisse legen nahe, dass sich suffizienzfördernde Kommunikation positiv auf das Ansehen nachhaltigkeitsorientierter Unternehmen auswirkt und die Motivation zu suffizientem Konsumverhalten fördern kann. Daher kann dies als ein wertvolles Instrument für die Übernahme unternehmerischer Verantwortung gesehen werden.

Schlüsselwörter: Konsumethik, Nachhaltige Entwicklung, Sozialmarketing, Umweltschutzverhalten, Unternehmensethik

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Stand des Problems und Fragestellungen

Hintergrund und Problemstand

Globale Probleme wie Klimawandel, Umweltverschmutzung und Ausbeutung von ökologischen Ressourcen und menschlicher Arbeitskraft werden maßgeblich durch eine konsumintensive und materialistische Lebensweise in Ländern des globalen Nordens verursacht (Lorek & Fuchs, 2013). Dies macht ein rasches Umsteuern auf Seiten von Konsumentinnen und Konsumenten, Politik und Wirtschaft erforderlich. Zunehmend setzt sich die Erkenntnis durch, dass technologiebasierte und effizienzorientierte Strategien die drängenden Nachhaltigkeitsherausforderungen aufgrund von Rebound-Effekten und ausgeblendeten Gerechtigkeits- und Verteilungsfragen nicht ohne eine gleichzeitige gesellschaftliche Ausrichtung am Prinzip der Suffizienz lösen können (Santarius, 2015; Wuppertal Institut, 2008; Zahrnt & Schneidewind, 2013).

Unter Suffizienz wird die absolute Reduktion des Verbrauchs von natürlichen Ressourcen und Energie verstanden. Auf individueller Ebene zielt Suffizienz auf Verhaltensweisen ab, die durch eine Verringerung der Nachfrage nach ressourcenintensiven Gütern und Dienstleistungen zu einer Pro-Kopf-Reduktion des Volumens benötigter Material- und Energiemengen führen (Jenny, Grütter, & Ott, 2014). Dies setzt eine Reflektion persönlicher Konsumbedürfnisse voraus (Stengel, 2011), womit Suffizienz auch Fragen nach dem genügenden Maß an Gütern und Dienstleistungen für ein gutes Leben impliziert (Jenny, 2016). Die Schaffung förderlicher Rahmenbedingungen für suffiziente Verhaltensweisen wird zumeist von der Politik oder Zivilgesellschaft erwartet – und zunehmend auch von Unternehmen (Bocken & Short, 2016). Da Suffizienz auf der Ebene der individuellen Lebensstile und Konsumreduktion ansetzt, kommt hierbei dem Marketing und insbesondere den Kommunikationsaktivitäten eines Unternehmens eine besondere Bedeutung zu (Kleinhückelkotten, 2002). Zudem gilt konventionelles Marketing als Mitverursacher der negativen ökologischen und sozialen Folgen der materialistischen Konsumgesellschaft (Achrol & Kotler, 2012; Assadourian, 2010; Varey, 2010).

In der Praxis wird die unternehmerische Förderung von suffizienten Konsumstilen durch Marketingmaßnahmen vereinzelt bereits umgesetzt: Beispielsweise rief der Outdoor-Hersteller Patagonia vor einigen Jahren ausgerechnet am „Black Friday", dem wichtigsten Einkaufstag des Jahres in den USA, seine Kundinnen und Kunden dazu auf, Produkte aus seinem Sortiment an diesem Tag nicht zu kaufen. Das Anzeigenmotiv des Aufrufs zeigte eine Jacke von Patagonia und den Spruch „Don't buy this jacket" (Meltzer, 2017). Auch bei Unternehmen, die anstelle von ökonomischem Wachstum primär Nachhaltigkeitsziele verfolgen, wie Postwachstumsunternehmen (Gebauer, Mewes, & Dietsche, 2015; Posse, 2015) oder Gemeinwohlunternehmen (Sommer, Kny, Stumpf, & Wiefek, 2016), können Bezüge zur Förderung von suffizienten Konsumstilen hergestellt werden.

Konzeptionell bezieht sich ein Marketing zur Förderung von Suffizienz vor allem auf das Social Marketing, welches individuelle und gesellschaftliche Verbesserungen durch Verhaltensänderungen zum Ziel hat (Andreasen, 1994). Peattie & Peattie (2009) konstatieren beispielsweise in einer viel beachteten Veröffentlichung die Eignung des Social Marketing – umgesetzt von politischen oder zivilgesellschaftlichen Akteuren – für die Förderung von Konsumreduktion. Im Unterschied dazu ist das suffizienzfördernde Marketing auf den Anwendungsbereich von Unter nehmen fokussiert. Es ermöglicht und fördert suffizienten Konsum, wertet gemäßigte Lebensstile auf und unterstützt Konsumentinnen und Konsumenten bei der Fokussierung auf das Notwendige (Gossen & Schrader, 2018) bei einer gleichzeitig steigenden Lebensqualität (Griese & Halstrup, 2013b). Damit steht suffizienzförderndes Marketing gewissermaßen im Widerspruch zum ökonomischen Wachstumsparadigma und dem Ziel der Absatzsteigerung im klassischen Marketing. Daher wird es teils als kontrovers und kontraintuitiv bewertet (Bocken & Short, 2016; Griese & Halstrup, 2013a; Peattie & Peattie, 2009). Operativ kommt der klassische Marketingmix zum Einsatz, bei dem für die Bereiche Produkt, Kommunikation, Preis und Vertrieb suffizienzfördernde Maßnahmen umgesetzt werden. Dieser Artikel legt einen besonderen Fokus auf Interventionen im Bereich der suffizienzfördernden Kommunikationspolitik.

Forschungsfragen

Die Marketing- und Konsumforschung beschäftigt sich erst seit wenigen Jahren mit der Verantwortung von Unternehmen für suffiziente Konsumstile und in diesem Zusammenhang mit Fördermöglichkeiten im Rahmen von Werbung und Kommunikation. Griese und Halstrup (2013a) haben beispielsweise eine empirische Untersuchung mit qualitativen und quantitativen Methoden durchgeführt, die auf eine positive Bewertung von suffizienzfördernder Kommunikation durch Konsumentinnen und Konsumenten hinweist, was sich wiederum positiv auf die Wahrnehmung des jeweiligen Unternehmens auswirkt. Angesichts der für Unternehmen ungewöhnlichen und kontroversen Aufforderung, den eigenen Konsum zu reflektieren beziehungsweise Konsumalternativen gegenüber dem Neukauf zu bevorzugen, und der Möglichkeit, dass Konsumentinnen und Konsumenten suffizienzfördernde Interventionen als Einmischung in ihre individuellen Konsumentscheidungen auffassen (Wahrung der Konsumentensouveränität) oder sie als Greenwashing wahrnehmen und aus diesem Grund eher ablehnend auf diese reagieren, ist die Frage nach der Akzeptanz und Wahrnehmung von Inhalten suffizienzfördernder Kommunikation von besonderer Relevanz. Um das diesbezügliche Wissen empirisch weiter auszubauen, lautete die erste Forschungsfrage dieser Studie:

Wie wird die inhaltliche Botschaft der suffizienzfördernden Kommunikation von Kundinnen und Kunden eines nachhaltigkeitsorientierten Unternehmens wahrgenommen? (FF1)

Da Suffizienz Verhaltensänderungen in Richtung alternativer Konsum und Konsumreduktion impliziert, zielt die Studie darüber hinaus darauf ab, die von den Kundinnen und Kunden wahrgenommene Wirkung der Anzeige auf ihre Motivation, suffizient zu konsumieren, zu erfassen. Die zweite Forschungsfrage ergründete daher, ob suffizienzfördernde Kommunikation die erwünschte motivierende Wirkung für suffizientes Konsumverhalten bei Kundinnen und Kunden entfaltet:

Steigert suffizienzfördernde Kommunikation die Motivation für suffizientes Konsumverhalten? (FF2)

Ferner stellt sich die Frage, wie das Unternehmen als Sender der suffizienzfördernden Kommunikation von Kundinnen und Kunden wahrgenommen wird. Diese Frage fällt in den Untersuchungsbereich von zwei aktuellen Studien. Im Mittelpunkt der Arbeit von Fricke (2015) steht die Glaubwürdigkeit von Kommunikation zur unternehmerischen Corporate Social Responsibility, die auf Konsumentenverantwortung gerichtet ist (CnSR-Kommunikation). Die Arbeit untersuchte unter anderem die wahrgenommene Glaubwürdigkeit des Senders (also des Unternehmens) und zeigte diesbezüglich, dass eine hohe Glaubwürdigkeit des Senders die Glaubwürdigkeit der CnSR-Kommunikation unterstützt. Armstrong Soule und Reich (2015) untersuchten die Erreichbarkeit von Konsumentinnen und Konsumenten für „Green Demarketing“, also Werbung, die als zentrale Botschaft dazu aufruft, weniger zu konsumieren. Ein Ergebnis ihrer Studie verdeutlicht, dass Green Demarketing dazu führt, dass dem entsprechenden Unternehmen altruistische (also für Gesellschaft und Umwelt vorteilhafte) sowie strategische (also auf Kundengewinnung, -bindung und Gewinn ausgerichtete) Motive zugeschrieben werden, während ausnutzende Motive im Sinne von Greenwashing-Absichten eher nicht unterstellt werden. Weiterhin zeigte die Studie, dass ein Image als ökologisch-orientiertes Unternehmen mit höheren wahrgenommenen altruistischen und niedrigeren wahrgenommenen ausbeuterischen

Motiven zusammenhängt. Strategische Motive konnten jedoch nicht mit dem ökologischen Image des Unternehmens in Verbindung gebracht werden. Das Ziel der vorliegenden Studie war es daran anknüpfend, die Ergebnisse der beiden genannten Untersuchungen mit einer größeren Stichprobe und in einem realen Setting, also mit einem real existierenden nachhaltigkeitsorientierten Unternehmen, zu replizieren. Die dritte Forschungsfrage lautete dementsprechend:

> *Werden nachhaltigkeitsorientierte Unternehmen als Sender von suffizienzfördernder Kommunikation als glaubwürdig wahrgenommen und welche Motive werden ihnen unterstellt? (FF3)*

Das Forschungsinteresse bezog sich zudem auf die Frage, ob unternehmens- und kundenseitige Einflussfaktoren die suffizienzfördernde Wirkung begünstigen oder erschweren. Die vierte Forschungsfrage lautete daher: Welche kunden- und unternehmensseitigen Faktoren begünstigen oder erschweren die Wirkung der suffizienzfördernden Kommunikation? (FF4) Zu dieser Forschungsfrage werden im Folgenden mehrere Hypothesen gebildet.

Je eher Konsumentinnen und Konsumenten davon ausgehen, dass sich ein Unternehmen an Nachhaltigkeitskriterien orientiert, desto eher werden die Motive des Unternehmens als altruistisch wahrgenommen (Armstrong Soule & Reich, 2015). Zudem wird vermutet, dass ein Unternehmen, das suffizienzförderndes Marketing anwendet, dann als glaubwürdig angesehen wird, wenn ihm altruistische Motive zugeschrieben werden. Die erhöhte Glaubwürdigkeit wirkt sich wiederum positiv auf die CnSR-Kommunikation aus (Fricke, 2015). Daher prüft die Untersuchung, ob die Wahrnehmung altruistischer Motive, mediiert über die Glaubwürdigkeit des Senders, die Wirkung der suffizienzfördernden Kommunikation erhöht.

> *H1a: Je höher das altruistische Motiv des Senders wahrgenommen wird, desto größer die Wirkung der suffizienzfördernden Kommunikation.*

> *H1b: Dieser Zusammenhang wird über die Glaubwürdigkeit des Unternehmens mediiert.*

Wie sich die Wahrnehmung strategischer Motive des Unternehmens auf die Wirkung der Anzeige auswirkt, darüber finden sich gemischte Befunde in der vorhandenen Literatur. Einerseits sind Konsumentinnen und Konsumenten eher bereit, ein Unternehmen zu unterstützen und dort zu kaufen, wenn es die strategischen Motive hinter den Aktivitäten im Rahmen seiner Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) offenlegt (Kim, 2014). Andererseits scheint die Attribution strategischer Motive bei CSR-Aktivitäten den Skeptizismus gegenüber diesen Aktivitäten weder zu stärken noch zu vermindern (Skarmeas & Leonidou, 2013) und kann sogar einen positiven Zusammenhang mit der Einstellung zum Produkt (Armstrong Soule & Reich, 2015), zur Firma oder der Kaufintention aufweisen (Groza, Pronschinske & Walker, 2011). Es wurde daher ein positiver Zusammenhang zwischen strategischen *Motiven und der Wirkung der Anzeige erwartet.*

> *H2: Je höher die strategischen Motive des Senders eingeschätzt werden, desto größer die Wirkung der suffizienzfördernden Kommunikation.*

Ferner zeigen Armstrong Soule und Reich (2015), dass es einen Zusammenhang zwischen der Wahrnehmung der Nachhaltigkeitsorientierung und ausnutzenden Motive eines Unternehmens gibt. Es wird daher geprüft, ob suffizienzförderndes Marketing weniger Wirkung zeigt, wenn dem Unternehmen ausnutzende Motive zugeschrieben werden.

> *H3: Je niedriger die ausnutzenden Motive des Senders eingeschätzt werden, desto größer die Wirkung der suffizienzfördernden Kommunikation.*

Nicht nur die Wahrnehmung des Senders, auch die persönlichen Merkmale der Empfängerinnen und Empfänger können die Wirkung suffizienzfördernder Kommunikation beeinflussen. So belegen Studien einen Zusammenhang zwischen einem hohen ökologischen Bewusstsein und der Bereitschaft zu suffizienten Konsumverhalten (Cherrier, Black & Lee, 2011; Egea & Frutos, 2013). Zudem legt die Marketingforschung nahe, dass Selbstkongruenz, also die Passung der Werte von Kundinnen und Kunden mit den wahrgenommenen Werten der Organisation, zu einer besseren Bewertung des Unternehmens durch Kundinnen und Kunden führt (Johar & Sirgy, 1991; Sirgy, Grewal & Mangleburg, 2000). Daraus folgt, dass Konsumentinnen und Konsumenten insbesondere dann positiv auf suffizienzfördernde Unternehmenskommunikation reagieren, wenn diese mit ihren eigenen Werten übereinstimmt. Daher wurde für diese Studie angenommen, dass die Kommunikation wirkungsvoller ist, je höher die Werte umweltfreundlichen Konsums der Empfängerinnen und Empfänger ausgeprägt sind, also je höher die individuelle Tendenz ist, das Konsumverhalten durch ökologisches Bewusstsein leiten zu lassen.

> *H4a: Je höher die Werte umweltfreundlichen Konsums der Empfängerinnen und Empfänger sind, desto größer ist die Wirkung der suffizienzfördernden Kommunikation.*

> *H4b: Der Zusammenhang wird durch das suffiziente Konsummotiv mediiert.*

Werden die Aneignung und der Besitz von Gütern im Zusammenhang mit einer Orientierung der Lebensweise am Konsumismus als besonders bedeutsam eingeschätzt und treten diese damit in Konkurrenz zu Suffizienz, kann das eine Barriere für suffizientes Konsumverhalten darstellen (Speck, 2016). So hängt Materialismus beispielsweise negativ mit umweltfreundlichem Verhalten zusammen (Hurst, Dittmar, Bond & Kasser, 2013). Das Einkaufen und der Besitz von Produkten können über ihren reinen Gebrauchswert hinaus zudem ein hedonistisches Erlebnis sein, wobei das hedonistische Vergnügen durch das Produkt im Zentrum steht (Alba & Williams, 2013). Hausman (2000) wiederum betont in seiner hedonistischen Konsumskala in erster Linie das Vergnügen während des Einkaufsprozesses. Da das Konsumieren von Gütern demnach sowohl durch dieFreude am Produkt als auch durch die Freude am Einkaufsprozess hedonistische Bedürfnisse befriedigt, war in der vorliegenden Studie zu erwarten, dass ein stark ausgeprägtes hedonistisches Konsummotiv die Wirkung suffizienzfördernder Kommunikation verringert.

> *H5: Je höher das hedonistische Konsummotiv der Empfängerinnen und Empfänger, desto geringer die suffizienzfördernde Wirkung der suffizienzfördernden Kommunikation.*

Methode

Für die vorliegende Studie wurde ein Mixed Methods-Design gewählt, das quantitative und qualitative Forschungselemente verknüpft. Dieser so genannte „single study“-Ansatz erlaubt die gegenseitige Replikation der Ergebnisse und führt so zu besonders belastbareren Aussagen (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie & Turner, 2007). Die Ergebnisse beider Forschungszugänge wurden als substanzielle Integration ausgewertet und in die abschließenden Schlussfolgerungen einbezogen (Brake, 2011).

Ablauf

Die Befragung wurde unter Kundinnen und Kunden des Online-Marktplatzes für nachhaltige Produkte Avocadostore.de durchgeführt und in enger Abstimmung mit Verantwortlichen auf Ebene der Geschäftsführung und aus dem Marketing konzipiert. Der im deutschsprachigen Raum operierende Online-Marktplatz wendet im Rahmen seiner Social Media- und Online-Marketing-Aktivitäten bereits suffizienzfördernde Kommunikation an und weist daher ein ausgeprägtes Interesse an den Fragestellungen der Studie auf.

Die Studie wurde als Online-Befragung konzipiert. Ein Vorteil von Online-Befragungen liegt in der zeit- und ortunabhängigen Umsetzung. Methodisch gesehen lassen sich Interviewer- Effekte ausschließen und Befragungstendenzen wie soziale Erwünschtheit spielen eine geringere Rolle, woraus offenere und ehrlichere Antworten der Befragten resultieren können (Holzhauer, Gossen, Schipperges & Scholl, 2015). In einem Pretest mit Forschenden und Studierenden aus der Umweltpsychologie wurden Anmerkungen zur Verständlichkeit der einzelnen Fragen und der Vollständigkeit und Strukturierung des Fragebogens erfasst. Im Anschluss wurde der Fragebogen entsprechend leicht modifiziert. Für den zweiwöchigen Befragungszeitraum im August 2017 wurden über einen gesonderten Newsletter des Online- Marktplatzes insgesamt über 50.000 Newsletter- Abonnentinnen und Abonnenten zur Teilnahme an der Befragung aufgerufen. Als Anreiz zur Beteiligung erfolgte eine Gutscheinverlosung.

Nach einem Einstieg mit einem Begrüßungstext, der über den Durchführungskontext und die Befragungsziele informierte, wurde den Befragten ein realer Stimulus präsentiert. Dabei handelte es sich um eine Anzeige des Online- Marktplatzes, mit der suffizienter Kleidungskonsum unterstützt werden soll (siehe Abbildung 1). Anhand einer offenen Frage wurden die Befragten zunächst gebeten, spontan zu äußern, was ihnen zu dieser Anzeige einfällt. Im Anschluss wurden Einschätzungsfragen bezüglich der Anzeige gestellt. Dabei wurde nach der Gestaltung und der suffizienzfördernden Wirkung der Anzeige, sowie der Glaubwürdigkeit und den Motiven des Senders der Anzeige gefragt. Weiterhin wurde das ökologische Bewusstsein zu nachhaltigem Konsum durch Werte des umweltfreundlichen Konsums und das hedonistische Konsummotiv erfasst. Zuletzt wurden soziodemografische Merkmale und die Häufigkeit bestimmter nachhaltiger Verhaltensweisen der Befragten erfasst.

Abbildung 1. Suffizienzfördernde Kommunikationsanzeige

Messinstrumente

Abhängige Variablen

Verständlichkeit und Attraktivität der Anzeige. Die Verständlichkeit der Anzeige wurde durch das Item „Die Anzeige ist gut verständlich.“ Und die Attraktivität der Gestaltung durch das Item „Die Gestaltung der Anzeige spricht mich an.“ erfasst.

Wahrnehmung der Anzeige. Da der Untersuchungsgegenstand dieser Studie vergleichsweise neuartig ist und bezüglich der Wahrnehmung von suffizienzfördernder Kommunikation bisher wenige wissenschaftliche Erkenntnisse vorliegen (vergleiche Kapitel 1.1), wurde zur explorativen Beantwortung der Forschungsfragen ein qualitatives Messinstrument in Form einer offenen Abfrage eingesetzt. Die offene Frage wurde mit Bezug auf die Kommunikationsanzeige gestellt und lautete: „Was fällt Dir spontan zu dieser Anzeige ein?“. Die Befragten konnten begründete Meinungen und Einstellungen spontan und frei äußern. Durch die Wahl der offenen Frage wurde eine suggestive Richtungsvorgabe vermieden (Züll, 2015), in der erwartete Effekte bereits genannt werden und so zu sozial erwünschtem Antwortverhalten führen könnten. Quantitativ wurde die Wahrnehmung der inhaltlichen Botschaft außerdem durch das Item „Die inhaltliche Botschaft der Anzeige spricht mich an“ erfasst. Suffizienzfördernde Wirkung der Anzeige.

Neben der Wahrnehmung der Anzeige wurde die *suffizienzfördernde Wirkung* der inhaltlichen Botschaft mit Hilfe der offenen Abfrage (siehe oben) qualitativ erhoben. Quantitativ wurde die suffizienzfördernde Wirkung durch zwei Items erfragt, und zwar ob die Anzeige die Befragten dazu anregt, „sich ausführlicher mit dem Thema nachhaltiger Konsum zu befassen“, und ob sie sich durch die Anzeige motiviert fühlen, ihr „Kaufverhalten zu verändern“ ($\alpha = .87$).

Wahrnehmung des Senders. Zur qualitativen Erfassung der Wahrnehmung des Unternehmens wurde ebenfalls die obenstehende offene Abfrage eingesetzt. Zur quantitativen Messung der wahrgenommenen Glaubwürdigkeit des Unternehmens wurde die Skala „Glaubwürdigkeit des Senders“ (Fricke, 2015) verwendet. Das Konstrukt umfasst die zwei Dimensionen „Vertrauenswürdigkeit“ und „Expertise“ mit jeweils drei Items: wie „ehrlich“, „vertrauenswürdig“ und „zuverlässig“ der Sender eingeschätzt wird ($\alpha = .80$) sowie für wie „qualifiziert, um über nachhaltiges Kaufverhalten zu informieren“ der Sender gehalten wird und ob er „über große Erfahrung im Bereich nachhaltiges Kaufverhalten“ verfügt beziehungsweise „das nötige Fachwissen, nachhaltige Einkaufstipps zu geben“ mitbringt“ ($\alpha = .86$). Die interne Konsistenz der gesamten Glaubwürdigkeits-Skala ist hoch ($\alpha = .90$).

Prädiktoren

Wahrnehmung der Motive des Senders. Die wahrgenommenen altruistischen, strategischen und ausbeuterischen Motive des Senders wurden mit jeweils drei Items erfasst (Armstrong Soule & Reich, 2015). Zur Erfassung des altruistischen Motivs wird gemessen, inwieweit die Befragten annehmen, dass der Sender sich „moralisch verpflichtet [fühlt], der Umwelt zu helfen“, „versucht, der Gesellschaft etwas zurückzugeben“ und „sich aufrichtig um das Wohlergehen der Umwelt [kümmert]“ ($\alpha = .78$). Das strategische Motiv wird durch die wahrgenommenen Bestrebungen des Senders erfasst, „seinen Gewinn zu erhöhen“, „neue Kunden zu gewinnen“ oder „bestehenden Kunden zu gefallen“ ($\alpha = .55$). Mit Blick auf das ausbeuterische Motiv werden die Befragten gebeten einzuschätzen, ob der Sender „das Angebot attraktiver darstelle, um die Preise erhöhen zu können“, den „grünen Trend nur [nutze], um mehr Geld zu verdienen“, und „sich nicht wirklich um die Umwelt [kümmere]“ ($\alpha = .64$).

Werte des umweltfreundlichen Konsums. Die Werte des umweltfreundlichen Konsums wurden mithilfe der GREEN Scale erfasst (Haws, Winterich & Naylor, 2014). Die Skala umfasst sechs Items und misst die Tendenz, ökologisches Bewusstsein durch Kauf- und Konsumverhalten auszudrücken. Die Items lauten: „Ich sorge mich um die Verschwendung der Ressourcen unseres Planeten.“, „Ich würde mich selbst als ökologisch verantwortungsvoll bezeichnen.“, „Es ist wichtig für mich, dass die Produkte, die ich nutze, der Umwelt nicht schaden.“, „Ich nehme Unannehmlichkeiten in Kauf, um umweltfreundlich zu handeln.“, „Bei vielen meiner Entscheidungen berücksichtige ich den potenziellen Einfluss meiner Handlungen auf die Umwelt.“ und „Meine Kaufentscheidungen werden durch meine Sorge um die Umwelt beeinflusst.“. Die interne Konsistenz der Skala ist hoch ($\alpha = .88$).

Suffizientes Konsummotiv. Das Motiv, suffizient zu konsumieren, wurde durch drei eigens für die Studie entwickelte Items erfragt. Diese erfassen die Kriterien beim Kleiderkauf, und zwar: „nur so viel ein[zukaufen], wie ich tatsächlich brauche.“, „Alternativen zum Neukauf finden (zum Beispiel Second Hand /gebraucht zu kaufen, zu leihen oder tauschen)“ sowie „Kleidungsstücke sollten ein zeitloses Design haben, so dass ich es auch nach längerer Zeit noch nutze.“ ($\alpha = .39$).

Hedonistisches Konsummotiv. In der vorliegenden Studie wurde das hedonistische Konsummotiv durch vier Items erfasst, die an die Skala von Barbopoulos und Johansson (2017) angelehnt sind, jedoch das Vergnügen sowohl am Produkt als auch am Einkaufsprozess erfassen. Die Items lauten: „Die Kleidungsstücke, die ich kaufe, sollten mir Freude bereiten / ein ansprechendes Design haben / mir beim Kauf ein freudiges Erlebnis bereiten / mir beim Auswahl-Prozess Vergnügen bereiten“. Die interne Konsistenz der Skala ist hoch ($\alpha = .71$).

Soziodemografie. Die soziodemografischen Merkmale der Stichprobe wurden durch Geschlecht, Bildungsniveau, Einkommen und Wohnort (Stadt oder Land) erfasst. Das Alter konnte aufgrund einer technischen Störung des Software-Tools nicht erfasst werden.

Datenauswertung

Quantitative Inhaltsanalyse der qualitativen Daten. Mit dem Ziel der Komplexitätsreduktion des Datenmaterials wurde die offene Frage zur Wahrnehmung der suffizienzfördernden Kommunikation mit der Methode der quantitativen Inhaltsanalyse ausgewertet (Früh, 2017). Dabei wurden die offenen Antworten nach Vorgabe eines Kategorienschemas durch zwei Kodiererinnen und Kodierer kategorisiert. Wenn die Äußerungen mehrere inhaltliche Komponenten enthielten, wurden sie mehrfach kodiert und damit auch mehrfach gezählt. Zu den insgesamt vier Oberkategorien, die das Datenmaterial noch recht allgemein strukturierten, wurden jeweils Unterkategorien entwickelt, um eine genauere Analyse zur Beantwortung der Forschungsfragen zu ermöglichen. Das Kategorienschema wurde induktiv-deduktiv entwickelt. Die Qualitätssicherung der Inhaltsanalyse erfolgte anhand der Gütekriterien Reliabilität, Systematik und Objektivität der Analyse (Mayring, 2010). Die Gültigkeit und Reproduzierbarkeit der Ergebnisse wurde durch die Prüfung der Interkoderreliabilität (also die Übereinstimmung der Kodierung mehrerer Kodiererinnen und Kodierer) sichergestellt. Die Objektivität wurde durch die exakte Operationalisierung der verwendeten Begrifflichkeiten gewährleistet, was wiederum die intersubjektive Nachvollziehbarkeit der Analyse ermöglichte (Berelson, 1971). Das systematische Vorgehen wurde durch die genaue Beschreibung und Eingrenzung des zu analysierenden Datenmaterials und die Orientierung an Regeln der Textanalyse garantiert.

Statistische Analyse der quantitativen Daten. Zur Auswertung der quantitativen Daten wurden die deskriptive Statistik und Korrelationen in SPSS berechnet. Für die Bewertung der Einflussfaktoren auf die suffizienzfördernde Wirkung der Anzeige wurde ein Strukturgleichungsmodell (SEM) mit latenten Variablen im Statistikprogramm R mit lavaan gerechnet. 2.4 Stichprobe Von den über 50.000 Adressatinnen und Adressaten des Newsletters nahmen 2.144 Personen an der Befragung teil. Insgesamt füllten 1.626 Personen den Fragebogen vollständig aus. Die Stichprobe ist durch ein hohes Bildungsniveau (über 60 % haben einen Hochschulabschluss) und ein eher niedriges Einkommen (über 60 % verfügen über ein Haushaltseinkommen bis zu 2.000 Euro) gekennzeichnet. 80 % der Teilnehmerinnen und Teilnehmer sind weiblich und etwas über die Hälfte der Befragten lebt in Großstädten mit mehr als 100.000 Einwohnerinnen und Einwohnern. Die Stichprobe weist hohe Werte des umweltfreundlichen Konsums auf (M = 5.87, SD = .91, vgl. Tabelle 1), was deutlich über den von Haws et al. (2014) aufgezeichneten Werten der Skala liegt (Studie 1: M = 3.95, SD = .67; Studie 2: M = 4.49, SD = nicht berichtet). Das suffiziente Konsummotiv ist eher hoch (M = 5.11, SD = 1.10, vgl. Tabelle 1) und auch das hedonistische Konsummotiv ist stark ausgeprägt (M = 5.63, SD = 1.00, vgl. Tabelle 1).

Ergebnisse

Die Anzeige als Kommunikationsinstrument

Die Anzeige wurde auf ihre Verständlichkeit sowie die wahrgenommene Attraktivität der Gestaltung geprüft, da beide Faktoren als wichtige Voraussetzungen für weitere Analysen gesehen werden. Die Anzeige wurde als gut verständlich (M = 5.94, SD = 1.53) und die Gestaltung als ansprechend beurteilt (M = 5.24, SD = 1.67).

Wahrnehmung und Wirkung der inhaltlichen Botschaft der suffizienzfördernden Kommunikation

Für die Analyse der offenen Frage zur Wahrnehmung und Wirkung der suffizienzfördernden Kommunikation wurden diejenigen Antworten der Befragten herangezogen, die sich positiv als auch negativ auf die inhaltliche Botschaft der Anzeige beziehen. In 1.013 von insgesamt 1.626 Antworten fanden sich Aussagen mit Bezug auf die Wahrnehmung und Wirkung der inhaltlichen Botschaft. Da einzelne Antworten mehrere inhaltliche Aspekte (und damit Kodes) abdecken konnten, summierten sich die relevanten Nennungen auf 1.197. Die Mehrheit dieser Nennungen (95 %) vermittelte eine positive Wahrnehmung der inhaltlichen Botschaft der Anzeige, während entsprechend vergleichsweise wenige Äußerungen eine negative Einschätzung (5 %) zum Ausdruck brachten (siehe Abbildung 2). Die Antworten wurden in weitere Unterkategorien unterteilt, die im Folgenden ausführlich dargestellt werden.

Neben der allgemeinen Befürwortung der inhaltlichen Aussage in 25 % der kodierten Nennungen („inhaltlich ansprechend“, „wahrer Gedanke“, „überzeugend“, „gute Message“ usw.)2 bezogen sich 23 % der Äußerungen darauf, dass die Anzeige als Anregung zur Reflektion des Konsumverhaltens verstanden wird. Die Befragten fühlten sich animiert, sich kritisch mit den eigenen Bedürfnissen auseinanderzusetzen („was will ich wirklich?“) und Neukäufe zu hinterfragen, beziehungsweise über Konsumalternativen nachzudenken („Man wird angeregt, über sein Kaufverhalten nachzudenken. Erst, wenn sich der Kunde sicher ist, ob er wirklich ein NEUES Produkt braucht, sollte er sich dieses zulegen.“). Als alternative Konsummöglichkeiten zum Neukauf werden in der Anzeige Tätigkeiten wie Selbermachen, Gebrauchtkauf, Teilen oder Tauschen vorgeschlagen. Diese Anregung wurde in etwa 11 % der Nennungen positiv aufgegriffen, ebenso häufig wie die Anregung zu nachhaltigem Konsum („Dass man viel zu oft Dinge neu kauft, die es auch gebraucht in gutem Zustand gibt.“, „Sich moralisch zu entscheiden, dass man alte Sachen kauft (Flohmarkt, Freunde, etc.) und/oder nachhaltig kauft.“). In acht Prozent der Fälle nahmen die Befragten die Anregung zum Konsumverzicht als positive Botschaft wahr. Die Formel „weniger ist mehr“ verspricht in ihren Augen ein einfaches Leben. Teils begründeten die Befragten ihre Zustimmung zum Konsumverzicht auch mit den negativen

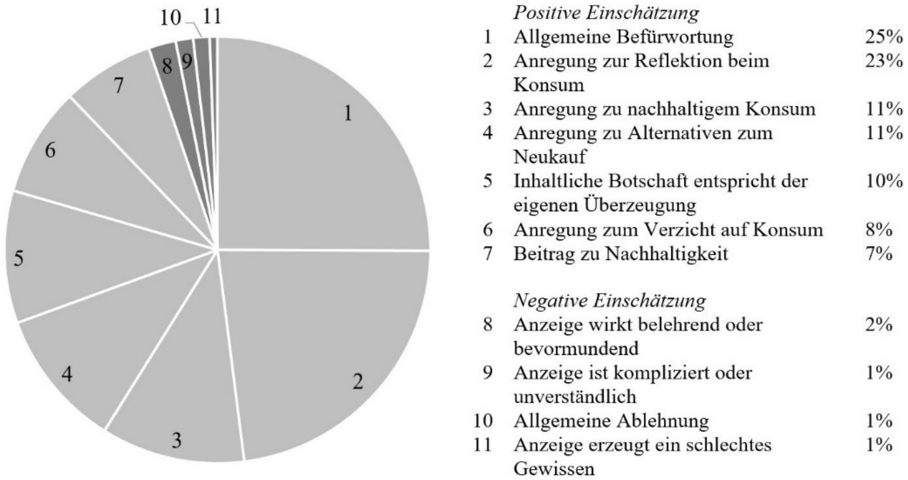
Umweltfolgen des Massenkonsums („Die Gesellschaft muss ihr Konsumverhalten immer mehr überdenken, denn wir erfüllen schon lange nicht mehr nur unsere Bedürfnisse, sondern leben darüber hinaus. Wir sollten uns viel öfters die Frage stellen, ob wir gewisse Dinge überhaupt brauchen.“). Einige Befragte gaben zudem an, dass der dargestellte Entscheidungsprozess ihrem eigenen Verhalten beziehungsweise ihrer Konsumeinstellung entspricht. Dies ließ sich aus etwa 10 % der Antworten mit Bezug zur inhaltlichen Botschaft ableiten. („So fälle auch ich meine Entscheidungen, wenn ich einen Kaufimpuls spüre.“, „Die Anzeige bildet auf einfache Weise meine Einstellung zum Thema Konsum ab.“). Eine gewisse Anzahl der Nennungen (7 %) ging auf den allgemeinen Beitrag des gezeigten Kaufverhaltens für Nachhaltigkeit ein („Ich finde Nachhaltigkeit ein sehr wichtiges Thema“, „Ressourcen schonen, Nachhaltigkeit“).

Die Subkategorien Anregung zur Reflektion beim Konsum, Anregung zu Alternativen zum Neukauf und Anregung zum Verzicht beim Konsum stellen suffiziente Verhaltensweisen dar. Insgesamt enthalten also über 40 % der Nennungen Hinweise, dass sich die inhaltliche Botschaft positiv auf die Bereitschaft, suffizient zu konsumieren, auswirkt.

Die negativen Einschätzungen der Inhalte der Anzeige bezogen sich in 2 % der Antworten auf die Wahrnehmung als belehrend und anmaßend („Mein Händler muss mir nicht die Gewissensfrage stellen, ob ich nicht lieber zum Flohmarkt will.“, „Erhobener Zeigefinger, spricht mich nicht direkt positiv an.“). Ferner wurde die negative Einschätzung mit allgemeiner Ablehnung („Die Anzeige spricht mich nicht an.“, „(…) es ist unklar, was damit beworben werden soll!“ usw.) beziehungsweise der Wahrnehmung, dass die Botschaft ein schlechtes Gewissen erzeuge oder zu kompliziert erscheint, begründet.

Auch die quantitative Abfrage bestätigt, dass die inhaltliche Botschaft der Anzeige stark positiv ($M = 6.25$, $SD = 1.34$) und die Anzeige motivierend für suffizientes Konsumverhalten wahrgenommen wird ($M = 5.13$, $SD = 1.69$).

Abbildung 2. Anteile der Subkategorien zur Wahrnehmung der inhaltlichen Botschaft der suffizienzfördernden Kommunikation

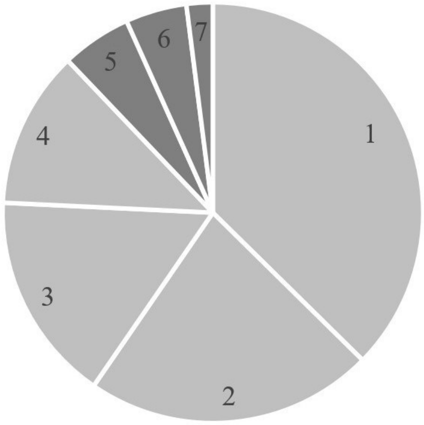


Wahrnehmung des Senders

Aus einigen Antworten (insgesamt 244) zur offenen Frage ließen sich Rückschlüsse auf die Bewertung des Senders der suffizienzfördernden Kommunikation ziehen. Durch die Mehrfachkodierung ergaben sich 297 relevante inhaltliche Nennungen. Auch hinsichtlich dieser Frage überwogen die positiven Äußerungen (88 %) gegenüber den negativen Äußerungen (12 %) (siehe Abbildung 3), für die jeweils ebenfalls Unterkategorien gebildet wurden. In 37 % der diesbezüglichen Antworten kam zum Ausdruck, dass der Ansatz, als gewinnorientiertes Unternehmen Alternativen zum Neukauf zu präsentieren, uneigennützig und mutig wirkt. Anstatt einer Verkaufs- und Gewinnorientierung unterstrich die Anzeige aus Sicht der Befragten das Bestreben zu Nachhaltigkeit und Umweltschutz des Online-Marktplatzes („Selbstlosigkeit der Nachhaltigkeit zuliebe.“, „anders, schön, bricht mit der kapitalistischen Logik, immer mehr verkaufen zu wollen/müssen.“, „Toll, dass auch ein Shop, der mit Klamotten Geld verdient, darauf hinweist, dass man nicht immer alles neu kaufen muss. Großes Lob dafür!“). Dazu passend bezogen sich 22 % der Äußerungen auf den Glaubwürdigkeits- und Authentizitätsgehalt des Unternehmens („ehrlich; wirklich an Umweltschutz interessiert, nicht nur vorgeschoben“, „So wirkt das nachhaltige Image von Avocadostore authentisch und es wird nicht das Gefühl vermittelt, dass es das Wichtigste ist Geld auf der Website auszugeben.“). In den Aussagen wurde die hohe Glaubwürdigkeit mit der Wahrnehmung begründet, dass die Unternehmensphilosophie des Unternehmens an Nachhaltigkeit statt an Gewinnmaximierung ausgerichtet ist („Man bekommt den Eindruck, dass Avocadostore nicht auf Biegen und Brechen etwas verkaufen will, sondern berücksichtigt, dass der Kauf von Neuware für unsere Umwelt die häufig schlechteste Option ist. Wirkt dadurch sehr authentisch.“). Die Befragten honorierten in 12 % der Antworten die Andersartigkeit der Anzeige und des Unternehmens („konsumkritisch“, „unkonventionell“, „ungewöhnlich“) im Vergleich zu herkömmlicher Werbung oder Greenwashing („Wirkt sehr authentisch und nicht nur fake green und nachhaltig.“), was ebenfalls als konsistent mit dem Image des Online-Marktplatzes wahrgenommen wurde („Werbung mal anders, die statt zum Kaufen zu verführen, den Kauf erst hinterfragt – wahre Nachhaltigkeit.“). Aus 16 % der Aussagen ließ sich schließen, dass die Anzeige den Sender als sympathisch und ansprechend erscheinen lässt („Find ich nett, der Verweis auf Secondhand wirkt sympathisch und lässt vermuten, dass nicht nur Profit entscheidend ist.“, „Sympathisch, dass Avocadostore Alternativen zum Konsumwahn aufzeigt!“).

Vergleichsweise wenige Nennungen vermittelten eine durch die Betrachtung der Anzeige ausgelöste negative Wahrnehmung des Senders. Der negative Eindruck entstand entweder durch eine allgemeine Irritation über die Sinnhaftigkeit und den Zweck der Anzeige („Absurd, dass ein Online-Shop Werbung gegen Shoppen macht.“) oder aufgrund von Zweifeln an der Glaubwürdigkeit der inhaltlichen Aussage („Insbesondere beim Avocadostore gibt es ja nun wirklich auch sehr viele Dinge, die man ganz definitiv nicht braucht und ganz sicher auch nicht neu, wie all die Kleidung. Insofern ist meine Assoziation zu dieser Anzeige auch eine gewisse Heuchlerei.“, „Wirkt unglaubwürdig, da Avocadostore ja durchaus ein wirtschaftliches Interesse hat.“). Diese beiden Aspekte machten jeweils 5 % der Antworten zum Sender der Anzeige aus. Aus etwa 2 % ließ sich schließen, dass die Aktivitäten als geschäftsschädigend für den Online-Marktplatz wahrgenommen wurden und dadurch ein negativer Eindruck entstand.

Abbildung 3. Anteile der Subkategorien zur Wahrnehmung des Senders der suffizienzfördernden Kommunikation



	Positive Einschätzung	
1	Uneigennützig, mutig	37%
2	Glaubwürdig, authentisch, ehrlich, vertrauenswürdig	22%
3	Sympathisch, ansprechend, sinnvoll	16%
4	Anders als übliche Werbung	12%
	Negative Einschätzung	
5	Unklares Motiv, unpassend für Onlineshop	5%
6	Unglaubwürdig	5%
7	Geschäftsschädigend, nicht verkaufsfördernd	2%

Die Glaubwürdigkeit sowie die Motive des Senders wurden auch bei der quantitativen Befragung als sehr hoch bewertet (siehe Tabelle 1).

Tabelle 1: Interkorrelation der Prädikatoren suffizienzfördernder Wirkung

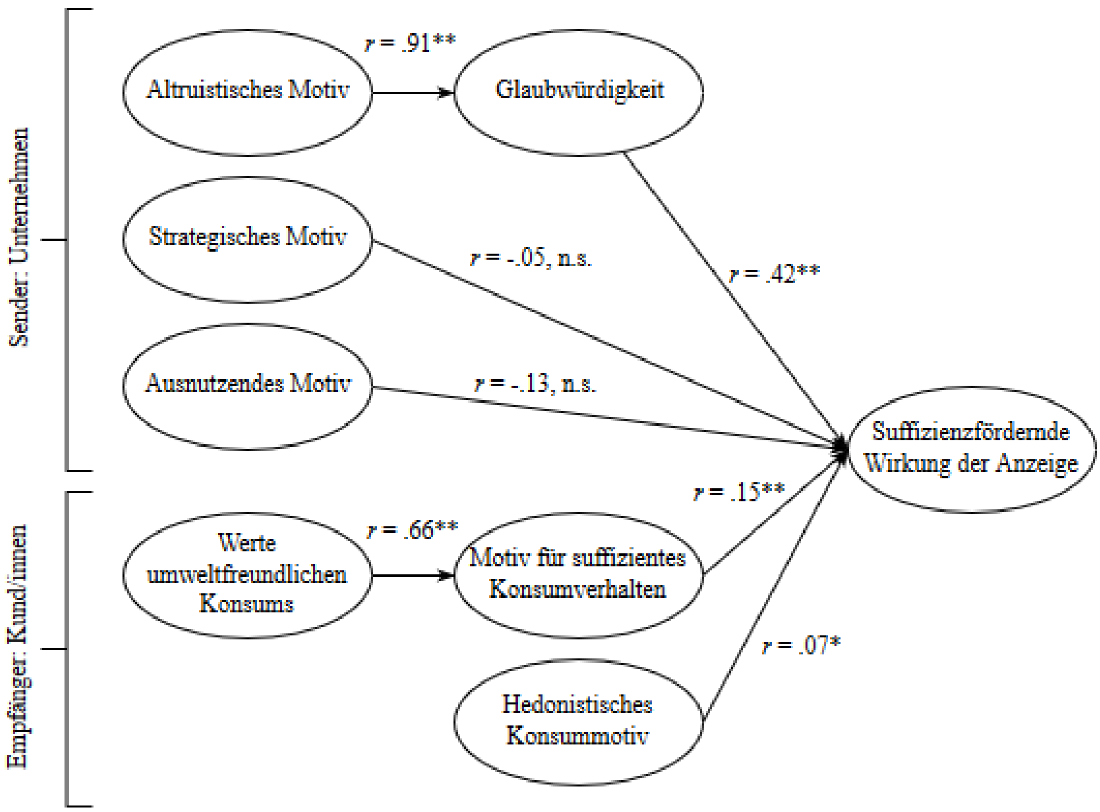
	M (SD)	2	3	4	5	6	7
Sender: Wahrgenommene Motive und Glaubwürdigkeit							
1 Glaubwürdigkeit	5.58 (1.04)	.71**	.15**	-.32**	.21**	.17**	.16**
2 Altruistische Motive	5.44 (1.15)		.07**	-.36**	.20**	.16**	.18**
3 Strategische Motive	4.94 (1.21)			.26**	.02	.02	.10**
4 Ausbeuterische Motive	2.33 (1.11)				-.11**	-.04	-.08**
Empfänger/Empfängerin: Werte und Motive							
5 Werte umweltfreundlichen Konsums	5.87 (0.91)					.38**	.03
6 Suffizientes Konsummotiv	5.11 (1.10)						.02
7 Hedonistisches Konsummotiv	5.63 (1.00)						

** = Signifikanzniveau $p < .001$; * = Signifikanzniveau $p < .05$

Einflussfaktoren auf die Wirkung der suffizienzfördernden Kommunikation

Welche Faktoren sich fördernd oder hemmend auf die Wirkung der suffizienzfördernden Kommunikation auswirken, wird mit Hilfe eines Strukturgleichungsmodells (SEM) mit latenten Variablen analysiert (siehe Abbildung 4 und Tabelle 2). Von den Prädiktoren (siehe Tabelle 2) beeinflussen unternehmensseitige altruistische Motive, die durch die Glaubwürdigkeit des Senders mediiert werden, positiv die suffizienzfördernde Wirkung der Anzeige. Somit können die Hypothesen 1a und 1b bestätigt werden. Hypothese 2 konnte nicht bestätigt werden, da strategische Motive keinen Zusammenhang mit der Wirkung der Anzeige aufweisen. Ausnutzende Motive des Senders haben einen Einfluss auf die Wirkung der Anzeige, wodurch Hypothese 3 bestätigt wird. Von den kundenseitigen Prädiktoren verstärken Werte nachhaltigen Konsums, die durch das suffiziente Konsummotiv mediiert werden, die suffizienzfördernde Wirkung der Anzeige. Demnach können auch die Hypothesen 4a und 4b bestätigt werden. Das hedonistische Konsummotiv hingegen hat entgegen der Erwartung aus Hypothese 5 einen leicht positiven Einfluss auf die Wirkung der Anzeige. Das Modell hat eine gute Passung, χ^2 (388)= 887, $p <$ .001, *RMSEA* = 0.031 (*Konfidenzintervall* 0.029 - 0.034); *CFI* = .96; *TLI* = .95, *SRMR* = 0.041.

Abbildung 4. Strukturgleichungsmodell zur suffizienzfördernden Wirkung der Anzeige



Bemerkung. $N = 1626$. ** = Signifikanzniveau $p < .01$; * = Signifikanzniveau $p < .05$; n.s. = nicht signifikant.

Tabelle 2: Zusammenhänge der Prädikatoren

	B	*S.E.*	*z-Wert*	*p*	*β*
Altruistisches Motiv → Glaubwürdigkeit	2,15	0.24	8,92	<.001	.91
Werte → Motiv suffizienten Konsums	0.87	0.09	10,25	<.001	.66
Glaubwürdigkeit → Wirkung	0.20	0.03	7,10	<.001	.42
Strategisches Motiv → Wirkung	-0.06	0.08	-0,65	.51	-.05
Ausnutzendes Motiv → Wirkung	-0.15	0.08	-1,87	.06	-.13
Motiv suffizienten Konsums → Wirkung	0.13	0.04	3,71	<.001	.15
Hedonistisches Konsummotiv → Wirkung	0.08	0.04	2,08	.04	.07

Diskussion

Zusammenfassung der Ergebnisse

Dieser Artikel befasst sich mit dem Potenzial der Unternehmenskommunikation für die Sensibilisierung für und Förderung von suffizientem Konsummotivation. Die empirische Untersuchung wurde mit Kundinnen und Kunden eines Online-Marktplatzes für nachhaltige Kleidung durchgeführt.

Die suffizienzfördernde Kommunikation wurde von der Mehrheit der Befragten im Zuge der spontanen Meinungsäußerung auffallend positiv aufgefasst. So wurde die Anzeige als hilfreiche Entscheidungshilfe für nachhaltigen Konsum wahrgenommen, der es gelingt, Alternativen zum Neukauf überzeugend darzustellen. Selbst die Anregung zum Konsumverzicht wurde größtenteils positiv aufgenommen. Einige Antworten lassen darauf schließen, dass die Befragten das Abwägen von Konsumalternativen bereits routinisiert haben und ihre generelle Einstellung zu Konsum eher kritisch ist. Eine wichtige Motivationsquelle für suffiziente Verhaltensweisen liegt in der Bestrebung, dadurch Verbesserungen im Sinne der Nachhaltigkeit zu erreichen. Negative Reaktionen rief die Anzeige lediglich bei wenigen Befragten hervor, die sie in diesen Fällen zumeist als belehrend und anmaßend wahrnehmen.

In ähnlicher Weise wurde der Sender der suffizienzfördernden Kommunikation bewertet. Auch hier überwogen die positiven Äußerungen auf die offene Frage. Demnach korreliert die Wirkung der Anzeige positiv mit der wahrgenommenen Uneigennützigkeit und Glaubwürdigkeit des Online- Marktplatzes und wurde als übereinstimmend mit dem nachhaltigen Unternehmensimage wahrgenommen. Die vergleichsweise wenigen negativen Reaktionen wurden vor allem durch Irritationen über die Sinnhaftigkeit und den Zweck der Anzeige hervorgerufen. Die quantitative Erfassung der wahrgenommenen – altruistischen und ausnutzenden – Motive des Unternehmens bestätigte diese Ergebnisse.

Insgesamt zeigte sich also, dass Inhalte und Absender von suffizienzfördernder Kommunikation unter den Befragten sehr positive Reaktionen hervorriefen. Damit werden die Befunde von Griese und Halstrup (2013a) bestätigt und für eine größere Untersuchungsgruppe sowie einen Stimulus bestehend aus Text und Bild (im Vergleich zu einem rein textlich basierten Stimulus (Slogan), wie bei Griese und Halstrup (2013a)) empirisch fundiert. Da die Zielstellung von suffizienzfördernder Kommunikation im Widerspruch zum eigentlichen Ziel von Marketing steht, nämlich den Abverkauf zu steigern, wären auch kontroverse oder irritierte Reaktionen von Konsumentinnen und Konsumenten denkbar. Dass diese in der vorliegenden Studie weitestgehend ausblieben, hängt möglicherweise mit einer starken Übereinstimmung der Werte der Befragten und der wahrgenommenen Werte des Unternehmens zusammen.

Ein weiteres wichtiges Ergebnis der Studie bezieht sich auf die Wirkung der suffizienzfördernden Kommunikation. Den offenen Antworten zufolge konnte die Anzeige zu suffizientem Konsum motivieren. Sie regte aus Sicht der Befragten dazu an, das eigene Konsumverhalten zu überdenken und auf dieser Grundlage möglicherweise gänzlich auf den Kauf neuer Produkte zu verzichten oder auf alternative Möglichkeiten wie Selbermachen, Gebrauchtkauf, Teilen oder Tauschen zurückzugreifen, wodurch wahllose Impulskäufe und unnötiger Konsum verhindert werden könnten. Angesichts der recht unspezifisch und offen gehaltenen Frageformulierung ist der Anteil derjenigen, die die Anzeige als Anregung zu suffizientem Konsum verstehen, als hoch zu bewerten. Dies wurde durch die quantitativ abgefragte motivierende Wirkung und Wahrnehmung der inhaltlichen Botschaft bestätigt.

Die Hypothesenprüfung zu Einflussfaktoren auf die Wirkung der suffizienzfördernden Kommunikation zeigte, dass die Anzeige umso stärker überzeugen konnte, je höher die wahrgenommenen altruistischen Motive des Unternehmens und dadurch seine Glaubwürdigkeit wahrgenommen wurden. Da altruistische Motive und Glaubwürdigkeit des Senders in der Stichprobe sehr hoch ausgeprägt waren, lässt sich dieser Befund primär für Unternehmen mit hoher Nachhaltigkeitsreputation verallgemeinern. Hingegen hatte das wahrgenommene strategische Motiv des Unternehmens keine Auswirkungen auf die suffizienzfördernde Wirkung der Anzeige.

Auch wenn den Befragten somit bewusst ist, dass suffizienzfördernde Kommunikation von nachhaltigkeitsorientierten Unternehmen genutzt wird, um die Kundenbindung zu erhöhen oder Gewinne zu maximieren, wirkt sich dies nicht negativ auf die suffizienzfördernde Wirkung aus. Hingegen konnte eine tendenziell ($p = 0.06$) negative Wirkung von ausnutzenden Motiven auf die suffizienzfördernde Wirkung der Anzeige festgestellt werden. Allgemein wurde das ausnutzende Motiv in dieser Erhebung als sehr gering wahrgenommen. Der Effekt könnte jedoch für Unternehmen ohne starke Nachhaltigkeitsreputation sowie für weniger umweltbewusste Konsumentinnen und Konsumenten noch stärker zum Vorschein treten. Darüber hinaus zeigte sich, dass die Werte umweltfreundlichen Konsums der Befragten, mediiert durch das Motiv, suffizient zu konsumieren, positiv mit der suffizienzfördernden Wirkung der Anzeige zusammenhingen, wenngleich dieser Zusammenhang deutlich schwächer ausfiel als der Zusammenhang mit der wahrgenommenen Glaubwürdigkeit des Unternehmens. Dies weist darauf hin, dass eine hoch ausgeprägte Selbstkongruenz der Ziele von Suffizienz – entgegen der Vermutung – keine zwingende Voraussetzung für eine suffizienzfördernde Wirkung der Anzeige ist (Sirgy et al., 2000). Es bleibt anhand einer repräsentativen, durchschnittlich umweltbewussten Stichprobe zu bestätigen, ob suffizienzfördernde Kommunikation mit Blick auf die individuellen Werte von Verbraucherinnen und Verbrauchern tatsächlich weniger voraussetzungsreich ist als angenommen und so auch weniger nachhaltigkeitsaffine Kundengruppen zu suffizientem Konsum motivieren kann.

Interessanterweise zeigte sich für das hedonistische Konsummotiv ein leicht positiver Zusammenhang mit der suffizienzfördernden Kommunikation. Es scheint, dass die Motivation, aus Vergnügen zu konsumieren, die Motivation, aus Nachhaltigkeitsgründen auf Konsum zu verzichten, nicht ausschließt. Nachhaltiger Konsum wird durch unterschiedlichste Motive gefördert oder gehemmt und die Gründe für nachhaltigen Konsum und für nicht-nachhaltigen Konsum weisen diskriminante Validität auf, sind also nicht das Gegenteil voneinander (Chatzidakis, Hibbert & Winklhofer, 2016; Richetin et al., 2012). Dass sich insbesondere auch konsumfreudige Personen für Suffizienz begeistern lassen, ist eine wichtige Erkenntnis, um die gesellschaftliche Akzeptanz und Verbreitung von suffizienten Lebensstilen zu erhöhen.

Stärken und Schwächen der Studie

In der Online-Befragung des vorliegenden Artikels fielen die freiwilligen Antworten auf die offene Frage zur Wahrnehmung und Wirkung der Anzeige vergleichsweise vielzählig und ausführlich aus. Es kann angenommen werden, dass die hohe Antwortrate auf eine sehr positive Wahrnehmung des Unternehmens innerhalb der Stichprobe zurückzuführen ist.

Die Stichprobengröße kann mit 1.626 gültigen Datensätzen als sehr gut bewertet werden. Allerdings wurde die Befragung an über 50.000 Abonnentinnen und Abonnenten geschickt. Die Rücklaufquote von drei Prozent deutet auf Selektionseffekte hin, wodurch eine vorsichtige Interpretation der Ergebnisse indiziert ist (Kaiser & Henn, 2017). Durch die Erhebung im Kundensegment des Online-Marktplatzes konnte eine Stichprobenauswahl nach bestimmten Vorgaben wie Repräsentativität nicht ermöglicht werden. Die Befragten sind überwiegend weiblich und weisen eine sehr hohe durchschnittliche Zustimmung zu Werten des ökologischen Konsums auf. Damit ist die Generalisierbarkeit für die Gesamtbevölkerung nicht gegeben. Die überdurchschnittlich hohe Bedeutung umweltbewussten Konsums innerhalb der Stichprobe ebenso wie das stark positive Ansehen des Online-Marktplatzes als nachhaltigkeitsorientiertes Unternehmen könnten die nahezu ausschließlich befürwortende Resonanz auf die suffizienzfördernde Kommunikation erklären. Diese hohen Werte drücken sich in leichten Deckeneffekten bezüglich der Werte umweltfreundlichen Konsums, Altruismus und Glaubwürdigkeit des Senders sowie einem Bodeneffekt bei ausnutzenden Motiven aus und werden ebenfalls in einer hohen Interkorrelation von Glaubwürdigkeit und Altruismus des Senders sichtbar. Da es sich bei diesen beiden Konstrukten inhaltlich um eindeutig verschiedene Wahrnehmungsdimensionen handelt (Fricke, 2015; Armstrong Soule & Reich, 2015), wurden sie trotz hoher Interkorrelation distinkt behandelt.

Eine weitere Schwäche stellt die geringe interne Konsistenz des Motivs für suffizienten Konsum dar. Dies kann dadurch begründet sein, dass dieses Konstrukt mehrere Aspekte zu beinhalten scheint. Beispielsweise können sich Motive zur Reduktion der Anschaffung und zum Ersetzen des Neukaufs durch alternativen Konsum (Secondhand) unterscheiden (siehe z.B. Hüttel, Ziesemer, Peyer & Balderjahn, 2018).

Einschränkungen bei der Verallgemeinerbarkeit entstehen zudem durch die Auswahl des Kooperationspartners Avocadostore.de und den Konsumbereich Kleidung. Das Unternehmen ist als Online-Marktplatz für nachhaltige Kleidung positioniert und das Markenimage umfasst Werte wie Nachhaltigkeit und Qualität. Zudem stammen Kundinnen und Kunden von Avocadostore.de vermutlich aus einem besonders nachhaltigkeitsaffinen Milieu, das durch eine besondere Aufgeschlossenheit gegenüber der Suffizienzstrategie geprägt ist. Damit sind die Ergebnisse insbesondere zur Wahrnehmung des Senders nicht auf andere, weniger an Nachhaltigkeitskriterien orientierte Unternehmen übertragbar (Hwang, Lee, Karpova & Diddi, 2016). Dies gilt auch für die Produktgruppe Kleidung. Untersuchungen zu suffizienten Konsumstilen etwa im Bereich der Ernährung kommen mit großer Wahrscheinlichkeit zu anderen Ergebnissen. Die Aussagekraft der Ergebnisse wird zudem von der Tatsache beeinflusst, dass der Unternehmenspartner – wie die meisten Unternehmen – insgesamt in erster Linie auf Abverkauf abzielende Kommunikationsaktivitäten verfolgt. Newsletter und andere Maßnahmen des Avocadostore.de, die zu suffizienten Verhaltensweisen anregen, stellen eher die Ausnahme dar. Dies hatten möglicherweise auch die Kundinnen und Kunden im Hinterkopf, die an der Befragung teilnahmen.

Für die Studie wurde ein Design ohne Kontrollgruppe gewählt. Neben forschungspraktischen Gründen sprach der explorative Ansatz der Studie und das neuartige Thema für dieses Vorgehen. Die Studie zielte darauf ab, erste empirische Befunde und vertiefte Einblicke in Begründungsmuster bezüglich der Wahrnehmung von suffizienzfördernder Kommunikation zu erlangen. In nachfolgenden Studien sollte hingegen ein Kontrollgruppen-Design gewählt werden, etwa um die Wirkung suffizienzfördernder Kommunikation mit der Wirkung herkömmlicher Nachhaltigkeitskommunikation (zum Beispiel die Bewerbung von „grünen" Produkten) vergleichen zu können. Dabei könnte etwa auf der Studie von Griese und Halstrup (2013a) aufgebaut werden, die die Wahrnehmung von suffizienzorientierter Kommunikation im Vergleich zu Effizienz- und Konsistenzkommunikation anhand von Werbeslogans untersucht haben.

Aufgrund eines technischen Software-Problems musste in der Studie auf die Erfassung des Alters der Befragten verzichtet werden. Altersbezogene Analysen hätten vermutlich interessante Erkenntnisse mit Blick auf die Offenheit und Akzeptanz für suffizienzfördernde Unternehmenskommunikation in unterschiedlichen Altersgruppen gebracht.

Zukünftiger Forschungsbedarf

Wie bereits ersichtlich wurde, könnte eine Wiederholung dieser Umfrage mit einer repräsentativen Stichprobe als Befragungszielgruppe weitere wertvolle Erkenntnisse verschaffen. Unter weniger umweltbewussten Personen könnte die Akzeptanz und Wahrnehmung von suffizienzfördernder Kommunikation weniger hoch beziehungsweise positiv ausfallen, wodurch Reputationsrisiken für das Unternehmen entstehen können. Zudem wäre eine Wiederholung mit einer generalisierbaren Stichprobe ratsam, um den inhaltlichen Zusammenhang der verwendeten Konstrukte (Werte umweltfreundlichen Konsums, Altruismus und Glaubwürdigkeit des Senders) zu testen. Um kausale Rückschlüsse zur Wirkung der suffizienzfördernden Kommunikation ziehen zu können, wäre für zukünftige Studien dieser Art ein experimentelles Design wünschenswert. So wäre einerseits der Vergleich mit einer Kontrollgruppe, die keiner suffizienzfördernden Kommunikation ausgesetzt wird, aber auch ein Referenzszenario mit klassischem Nachhaltigkeitsmarketing sehr aufschlussreich. Da der voraussetzungsreichste und anspruchsvollste Aspekt der Suffizienzstrategie die tatsächliche Konsumreduktion darstellt, wären ferner zukünftige Studien zur Untersuchung des Beitrags suffizienzfördernder Unternehmenskommunikation auf tatsächliches Konsumverhalten von Interesse. Auch wäre es wünschenswert, die Ergebnisse über andere Konsumsegmente und Produktkategorien wie beispielsweise Nahrungsmittel oder Mobilitätsangebote zu bestätigen.

Zudem stellt sich die Frage nach den unternehmensseitigen Motiven für suffizienzfördernde Kommunikation – unabhängig davon, ob es sich um ein nachhaltigkeitsorientiertes oder konventionelles Unternehmen handelt. Letztlich könnte eine Förderung von Suffizienz eine Minderung des Profits bedeuten. Ob es möglich ist, dies mit der Gewinn- oder gar Wachstumsorientierung der meisten Unternehmen am Markt zu vereinbaren, ist eine offene Forschungsfrage.

Praktische Implikationen

Die vorliegende Studie zeigt, dass nachhaltigkeitsorientierte Unternehmen von suffizienzfördernder Kommunikation profitieren können, insofern als dass entsprechende Kommunikationsmittel und -botschaften positive Assoziationen auslösen und Unternehmen als Sender dieser Botschaften zudem als uneigennützig, vertrauenswürdig und sympathisch wahrgenommen werden. Dies gilt vor allem für Unternehmen, die aufgrund ihrer sonstigen Nachhaltigkeitsaktivitäten besonders authentisch für suffiziente Konsumstile eintreten. Inwieweit suffizienzfördernde Kommunikation sich auf das Image konventioneller Unternehmen auswirkt, kann mit den Ergebnissen der vorliegenden Studie hingegen nicht beantwortet werden. Dass suffizienzfördernde Kommunikation in einer für Nachhaltigkeit sensibilisierten und trotzdem konsumfreudigen Zielgruppe die Motivation für Verhaltensänderungen in Richtung suffizienter Konsumstile fördert, ist ebenfalls von praktischer Relevanz. Unternehmen können diese innovative Kommunikationsform einsetzen, um ihrer Verantwortung für nachhaltigen Konsum gerecht zu werden. Wie bereits angedeutet wurde, stellt sich in praktischer Hinsicht zudem die Frage nach der Intention des Unternehmens, mit der es suffizienzfördernde Kommunikation einsetzt. Zielt die übergeordnete Unternehmensstrategie tatsächlich auf eine Konsumreduktion und damit gegebenenfalls einen Rückgang der Verkaufszahlen ab, oder handelt es sich bei suffizienzfördernder Kommunikation lediglich um einen „Marketing-Gag"?

Kommunikation ist nur ein Aspekt des Marketings, um für suffiziente Konsumstile zu sensibilisieren oder diese zu befördern. So wirkt beispielsweise die Kommunikation von suffizienzfördernden Botschaften sicherlich unglaubwürdiger, wenn das Unternehmen nicht gleichzeitig mit einem Produktsortiment aufwartet, das durch Langlebigkeit und Qualität eine ressourcenschonende Nutzung ermöglicht. Daher sollten Unternehmen nicht nur kommunikativ, sondern bestenfalls auch durch den Einsatz des vollständigen Marketingmix suffizienten Konsum fördern. Gleichermaßen gilt, dass unternehmerische Unterstützung von Suffizienz nicht nur durch die Befähigung und Sensibilisierung von Konsumentinnen und Konsumenten erfolgen kann, sondern auch durch die Umsetzung von Suffizienz in anderen Unternehmensbereichen und -prozessen wie dem Umwelt- und Energiemanagement oder Lieferkettenmanagement.

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Endnoten

1) Mit Ausnahme der offenen Frage und den Fragen zu soziodemografischen Merkmalen der Stichprobe liegen dem Fragebogen ausschließlich Multi-Item-Skalen zugrunde, die alle mit Hilfe einer 7-Punkt-Likert-Skala von 1 = „stimme überhaupt nicht zu“ bis 7 = „stimme voll und ganz zu“ oder der Antwortoption „ich weiß nicht“ beziehungsweise im Falle der Frage zum hedonistischen Konsummotiv mit einer 7-Punkt-Likert-Skala von 1 = „nie“ bis 7 = „immer“ gemessen wurden.

2) Die wörtlichen Zitate wurden sprachlich leicht an die Schriftsprache angepasst, um die Lesbarkeit zu erhöhen.

Anmerkung

Die vorliegende Studie wurde im Rahmen der Nachwuchsgruppe „Digitalisierung und sozial-ökologische Transformation“ durchgeführt. Das Kooperationsprojekt des Instituts für ökologische Wirtschaftsforschung (IÖW) und der TU Berlin wird vom Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung (BMBF) im Rahmen der sozial-ökologischen Forschung gefördert. Die Befragung wurde in Kooperation mit dem Online-Marktplatz für nachhaltige Kleidung und Accessoires Avocadostore.de durchgeführt. Wir danken Mimi Sewalski und Aleks Hilarski für die erfolgreiche Zusammenarbeit. Zudem möchten wir Dr. Sonja Geiger von der TU Berlin für ihre wertvollen Rückmeldungen zu den verwendeten Methoden danken.

V. When your shop says #lessismore. Online communication interventions for clothing sufficiency

Zusammenfassung

To keep human resource consumption within planetary boundaries, individual consumption levels need to drop. We therefore investigated whether online communications interventions, especially on Social Media, can foster sufficiency in the clothing domain. In two experiments, consumption reduction and prolonging the lifetime of clothes were promoted. In Study 1, we conducted an online field intervention. All participants, both in the experimental and the control groups, reduced their clothing consumption. Hence, the intervention itself did not change clothing consumption levels. Study 2 was a laboratory experiment with sufficiency promoting Social Media communication. Sufficiency-promoting communication led to more sufficiency behaviour compared to neutral and consumption-promoting communication. This effect was mediated by a lower desire to acquire new clothes (aspiration level). Peer endorsement of the communication by other Social Media users did not strengthen the communication's effect. However, the attitude towards the sender and the communication was more positive in the sufficiency-promoting communication than under the other two conditions. Although the field intervention was not effective, Social Media posts could increase sufficiency behaviour in the short-term. To test longterm effects, further experimental studies are needed.

Schlüsselwörter: Sufficiency, Sustainable consumption, Behaviour change, Intervention, Social Media, Online environment

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Introduction

Climate change, biodiversity loss, environmental degradation and pollution are on the rise, and our society is facing the challenge of limiting their consumption's impacts to remain within planetary boundaries (Steffen et al., 2015). Three strategies are often proposed to face this challenge (Sachs, 2015). Following the efficiency strategy, production, use and disposal of consumed goods and services should require as little energy and few resources as possible, and following the consistency strategy, products should be biodegradable, reusable and environmentally friendly. These measures can only prove effective in combination with the sufficiency strategy, which requires behavioural changes of consuming less goods and services in absolute terms (Lorek & Fuchs, 2013; Spangenberg & Lorek, 2019). Sufficiency denotes a self-determined reduction of consumption levels in absolute terms while ensuring individual well-being (Princen, 2005). The affluent societies of the Global North could decrease resource use substantially without impairing well-being or the satisfaction of existential needs (O'Neill et al., 2018). At the level of individual consumption, sufficiency behaviour means reducing the purchase of new resource-intense goods, choosing goods that are smaller or of lower capacity, or using resource-intense goods and services less often (Jenny, 2016).

The clothing domain is especially prone to overconsumption, and the vast majority of clothes are produced under socially and ecologically unsustainable conditions (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2017). The fast-fashion system amplifies consumption habits such as buying more items and wearing them less frequently. Accordingly, Europe experienced a 40% increase in clothing purchases between 1996 and 2012 (European Environment Agency, 2014). Decreasing clothing purchases and increasing garment lifetimes can help minimize and mitigate the environmental impacts of the clothing industry (Niinimäki et al., 2020). In line with the above characterisation, sufficiency behaviour in the clothing consumption domain means reducing the purchase of new clothing and prolonging product lifetime by engaging in behaviours such as care, repair, second-hand acquisition, and clothing exchange.

While clothing sufficiency is currently a niche phenomenon in the Global North (Kleinhückelkotten & Neitzke, 2019), consumption-promoting communication predominates in online environments (Frick et al., 2021): Online marketing is ubiquitous, increasingly intrusive, and primarily targets increased consumption (Pappas et al., 2017). Clothing is among the goods most strongly advertised online (Statista, 2019), and clothing-related communication in Social Media abounds. Social Media use is also related to conspicuous consumption (Taylor &

Strutton, 2016), and the majority of studies concerning Social Media's influence on consumption focus on the marketing perspective of increasing consumption. Nevertheless, online environments can also support consumption reduction. Currently, a growing interest in sufficiency can be observed through sustainability trends such as minimalism, slow fashion, or voluntary simplicity (e.g., Etzioni, 1998; Jung & Jin, 2016).

We report on two consecutive studies on sufficiency-promoting communication in online environments. In Study 1, we conducted a field experiment with customers of a sustainable online shop. We studied behavioural change towards clothing sufficiency by examining the impact of an online intervention applying sufficiency-promoting communication in Social Media. Study 2 was an online laboratory experiment with a representative sample of Social Media users. There, we investigated the impact of sufficiency-promoting communication on sufficiency behaviour and on attitudes towards the communication and its sender, and compared it with the impact of consumption-promoting communication and with a neutral condition without any consumption- related content. Additionally, we tested whether peer endorsement through likes and comments from other Social Media users increased the effect of sufficiency-promoting or consumption-promoting communication.

Sufficiency interventions

From a theoretical standpoint, Steg and Vlek (2009) categorize behaviour change interventions for pro-environmental behaviour into structural strategies and informational strategies. Structural strategies consist of providing incentives to reduce behavioural costs and increase self-efficacy. Informational strategies induce motivational change, e.g., increasing knowledge or changing motives such as social or personal norms towards pro-environmental behaviour. According to the multiple goals theory (Lindenberg & Steg, 2007), these motivational changes can be induced for three motive categories, that are relevant for pro-environmental behaviour: Normative motives of what one should do to reflect personal or social norms, gain motives of what brings personal advantages, and hedonic motives of what feels good. Informational strategies can thus foster sufficiency behaviour by strengthening normative motives towards sufficiency, decreasing gain and hedonic motives opposed to consumption reduction, or aligning gain and hedonic motives with normative motives (Steg et al., 2014; Steg & Vlek, 2009).

The normative motive can be addressed by means of the personal norm. It describes a feeling of moral obligation and is a widely established determinant of pro-environmental behaviour

(Schwartz, 1977; Steg & Vlek, 2009). A recent study discovered personal norms to be especially relevant for sufficiency intentions in clothing (Joanes et al., 2020). Moreover, normative goal framing can increase sufficiency behaviour (Thøgersen & Alfinito, 2020). Normative motives also include what individuals perceive as a social norm in their community. Descriptive social norms are especially effective in pro-environmental behaviour change by providing normative information about a peer group's behaviour (Abrahamse & Steg, 2013; Cialdini et al., 1991; Goldstein et al., 2008). They also increase the effectiveness of informational strategies (Abrahamse & Matthies, 2012).

Gain and hedonic motives may weaken sufficiency behaviour, for example when hedonic enjoyment or comfort through consumption are in conflict with consumption reduction (Steg et al., 2014). Accordingly, some hedonic values negatively relate to sustainable fashion consumption (Geiger & Keller, 2018). To many, the experience of shopping is rewarding (hedonic shopping value, Babin et al., 1994). Status and conspicuous consumption both describe the desire to increase one's status or social prestige by acquiring consumer goods, including clothing and fashion (O'Cass & McEwen, 2004). Conspicuous consumption is also an outcome of materialism, which describes the belief that well-being can be attained through acquiring goods (Goldsmith & Clark, 2008), and negatively correlates with pro-environmental behaviour (Hurst et al., 2013; Kasser & Kanner, 2004). Additionally, the activation of self-enhancement values such as material aspirations has been shown to weaken self-transcendence values such as environmentalism and benevolence, and vice versa (Maio et al., 2009). The motive to pursue gain and hedonic motives by frequent consumption can be operationalised as the aspiration level. It has been examined in a consumption context by Easterlin (2001), who measured material aspirations as the importance of owning certain material goods (e.g., a car, a house, or clothes in the latest style). Similarly, Karlsson et al. (2004, p. 755) define the aspiration level as "the degree to which households consider consumption of different goods and services to be necessary". Finally, in a psychological setting, it was defined as the perceived need or desire to acquire goods and services (e.g., Frick et al., 2021; Jenny, 2016).

As a result, we expect that framing communication on consumption reduction with intrinsic, non-materialistic benefits of sufficiency (e.g., lightness, freedom, autonomy, meaning in life) decreases the hedonic motive of aspiration levels and thus strengthens sufficiency behaviour (Pelletier & Sharp, 2008; Steg et al., 2014). Such communication may allow materialistic motives to be replaced by non-materialistic ones: embedded in concepts such as voluntary simplicity or minimalism, sufficiency behaviour has personal advantages such as monetary savings and less pressure to earn money to spend (Etzioni, 1998).

Sufficiency communication on Social Media

To apply the described sufficiency interventions, online environments offer various new possibilities (Guadagno & Cialdini, 2005). Blogs, websites, smartphone applications, and Social Media offer new channels for providing sustainability-related information that is accessible to users at anytime and anywhere (Börjesson Rivera et al., 2014; Frick & Santarius, 2019). For example, in an online shop, communicating sustainability-oriented descriptive norms can increase sustain- able product choice (Demarque et al., 2015).

Communication interventions on Social Media are expected to be especially effective due to social influence, with some authors claiming they may be as influential as face-to-face interactions while having a wider reach (Goldsmith & Goldsmith, 2011). Arguably, Social Media can improve distribution of pro-environmental social norms (Ballew et al., 2015). A field experiment on social influence and political mobilization showed, albeit with a small effect size, that Social Media posts influence individual decision-making on a large scale (Bond et al., 2012). The study found it was the descriptive social norm demonstrated by close peers that particularly influenced decision-making. Peer communication can lead to behavioural and motivational change through social influence such as social learning (Bandura, 2009), social norms, or persuasion (Guadagno & Cialdini, 2005). Accordingly, an online intervention including visible peer engagement on Social Media was effective in encouraging college students to save energy (Senbel et al., 2014). A Social Media field experiment aiming at reducing food waste, however, found no effects (Young et al., 2017).

"Peer endorsement" is used to describe when peers visibly embrace Social Media communication (e.g., videos or pictures) with likes, shares, and supportive comments. It has been shown to influence behaviour and a communication's popularity (e.g., Sherman et al., 2016; Tofighi et al., 2020). Similar concept used in informatics and marketing research are "social contagion", describing peer influence through Social Media net- works (e.g. to promote products, Aral & Walker, 2012; Langley et al., 2010) or "word-of-mouth", the impact of informal communications between Social Media users on consumption decisions (Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006; Stephen, 2016). In this study, we therefore expect that peer endorsement of a company's sufficiency communication strengthens the descriptive social norm for sufficiency and thereby, behaviour.

Companies as senders of sufficiency interventions

Marketing endeavours to promote consumption reduction for a social purpose mostly stem from political or civic actors (McKenzie-Mohr, 2011). Yet commercial actors can also play their part in fostering sufficiency (Bocken & Short, 2016; Heikkurinen et al., 2019). They may foster sufficiency through their marketing activities since those activities create and maintain customer relationships and can effectively influence consumption decisions. Sufficiency-promoting marketing focuses on satisfying 'needs' rather than promoting 'wants' and aims at only selling the customer what she or he needs at the moment of purchase (Bocken et al., 2020; Gossen & Frick, 2018). This strategy is increasingly proving its relevance – both in practice, shown, for example, in Patagonia's prominent campaign "Don't buy this jacket" (Hwang et al., 2016), and in scientific discourse (Gossen et al., 2019). There are other marketing concepts that seek to reduce consumption, such as demarketing (Cull- wick, 1975; Kotler and Levy 1975) or social marketing (Andreasen, 1994; Peattie and Peattie 2009). What differentiates sufficiency-promoting marketing from those concepts is the clear focus on voluntary behaviour change, the contribution to sustainability through consumption reduction, and the fact that the sender is a commercial actor.

Companies might not implement sufficiency-promoting marketing if it appears unusual, controversial, or untrustworthy in the eyes of their customers and leads to image loss (Gossen et al., 2019). Empirical studies on sufficiency-promoting advertising show that customers perceive the company as more altruistic (i.e., socially and environ- mentally beneficial) and strategic (e.g., customer loyalty or profit), but exploitative motives in the sense of greenwashing are often not assumed (Armstrong Soule & Reich, 2015; Gossen & Frick, 2018). Ramirez et al. (2017) further found companies applying sufficiency-promoting communication to be perceived more environmentally concerned and trustworthy.

Two-study outline

We combined a field experiment to maximize external validity (Study 1) with a laboratory experiment to maximize internal validity (Study 2) (Lusk et al., 2006). With Study 1, we tested whether online sufficiency-promoting communication can increase sufficiency behaviour and if so, which motives mediate this effect. The longitudinal design enabled us to measure consumption levels of clothing over two periods of four weeks. However, the transdisciplinary approach posed practical constraints that prevented all our hypotheses from being addressed. Also, a substantial long-term effect of a single instance of sufficiency-promoting communication is somewhat unlikely, due to the sheer amount of competing in online environments, especially from marketing sources promoting consumption. Yet, as shown by Bond (2012), even very small interventions can have a significant impact on attitudes and behaviour when communication is broadcast to a big enough target group. Therefore, in an exploratory approach, we examined the hypothesis that sufficiency-promoting communication on Social Media can in fact change sufficiency behaviour, albeit with a small effect size. Further, the field experiment provided a conceptual and exploratory setting to determine whether there were small effects of the field intervention.

To gain additional insights on short-term effects of sufficiency- promoting communication in a controlled setting and to address further hypotheses that could not be examined in the field, we con- ducted a complementary laboratory experiment. Study 2 included best- practice strategies that strengthen internal validity. Full randomisation was provided by the laboratory setting, and the experiment was assessed and approved by an ethical committee. In a cross-sectional design, sufficiency behaviour was assessed as an ad-hoc consumption decision. Study 2 included and manipulated further factors such as the comparison of sufficiency-promoting and consumption-promoting communication with a neutral communication condition. It also intended to deepen the understanding of social norms by investigating the effect of peer endorsement on Social Media. Additionally, we addressed the organisational perspective on practicability and appeal of sufficiency- promoting communication. For these purposes we tested how the attitude towards sufficiency communication and its sender differ between the sufficiency-promoting, consumption-promoting and neutral communication condition.

Study 1: Exploratory field experiment

Hypotheses

The main hypothesis addresses the effectiveness of an intervention in online environments via Social Media and newsletters that promote sufficiency behaviour, with a clothing company sending the communication. The communication's impact can be measured by self-reported sufficiency behaviour. Notably, based on the literature, this online intervention is expected to yield only a small effect.

H1a. Sufficiency-promoting communication increases sufficiency behaviour compared to a neutral communication condition.

Past research ascribed effects of Social Media on behaviour change largely to the perception of social norms. As social norms play a major role in pro-environmental behaviour, we expect that the sufficiency- promoting communication strengthens social norms, which then sup- ports sufficiency behaviour.

H2a. The perceived descriptive social norm mediates the positive impact of sufficiency-promoting communication on sufficiency behaviour.

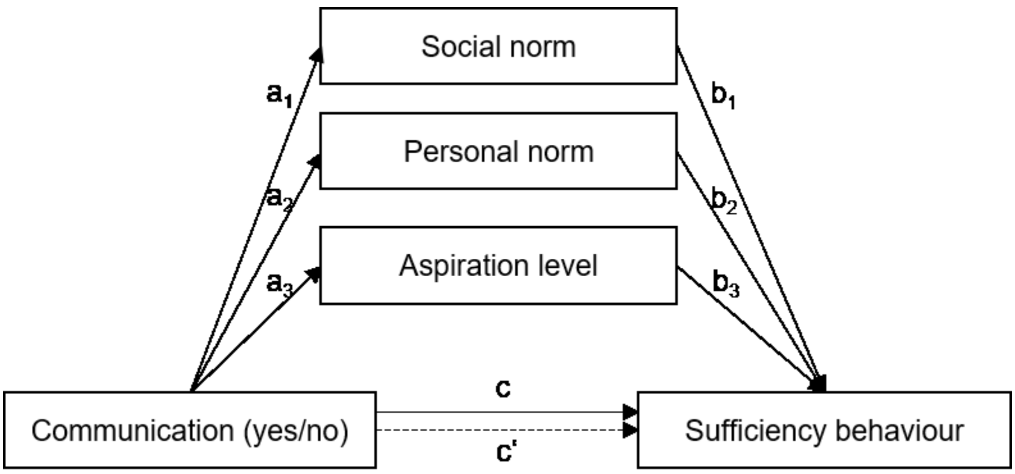
At the same time, moral motives are established drivers for pro- environmental behaviour. We expect sufficiency-promoting communication to strengthen the personal norm for sufficiency. As a mediator, it promotes sufficiency behaviour.

H3a. The personal norm for sufficiency mediates the positive impact of sufficiency-promoting communication on sufficiency behaviour.

Sufficiency-promoting communication highlights non-materialistic values and decreases hedonic and gain motives for consumption. We expect a mediating effect for the aspiration level for clothing:

H4a. A decrease in the aspiration level for clothing mediates the positive impact of sufficiency-promoting communication on sufficiency behaviour.

Figure 1. Hypotheses for study 1 (H1a: c; H2a: a_1b_1; H3a: a_2b_2; H4a: a_3b_3)



Method

Study 1 was designed as a field experiment to measure the impact of a sustainable online shop's sufficiency-promoting communication on its customers. In a quasi-experimental design, the subjects were assigned to either the experimental or control group by self-report of intervention perception. In a longitudinal design, sufficiency behaviour, operationalised as clothing consumption levels, was assessed before (T1) and after the intervention (T2, T3).

Sample

The sample consisted of customers of the sustainable online shop. Prior to the intervention, participants were recruited by the online shop's newsletter (invitation newsletter). As described, only a small effect was expected from the field experiment. For a small effect size of $f = 0.05$, given $\alpha = 0.05$ and Power = 0.95, power analysis with G*Power indicated a sample size of 1302 participants. In fact, however, sample size was determined by the return rate on the online shop's invitation. In total, N = 3308 participants completed the T1 questionnaire, yet only N = 3278 gave their e-mail address. They received an invitation for the second questionnaire (T2), which was completed by N = 2405 participants (27% drop-out rate). N = 2113 participants filled out the third questionnaire (T3), representing the final sample (36% drop-out rate from T1). This convenience sample (Table 1) cannot be generalised for the German population, but was typical for the customers of the sustainable online shop, with a high rate of young, female participants, with low income and a high education level (as shown in a previous study by Gossen & Frick, 2018). Compared to the control group, the experimental group was younger, $t(2105) = 4.05$, $p < .001$, had a slightly lower education level, $\chi2(2) = 12.46$, $p < .01$, and a lower income, $t(744.4) = 4.41$, $p < .001$ a higher percentage was female, $\chi2(3) = 24.58$, $p < .001$, spent more time online, $t(2079) = -2.16$, $p < .001$, dCohen = 0.12, and had slightly higher environmental awareness, $t(2110) = -2.75$, $p < .01$, dCohen = 0.13.

Table 1. Sample description of the field experiment.

	Field experiment	
	Control Group	Experimental group
	N = 1685	N = 428
Age M (SD)	33.5 (10.5)	30.6 (9.9)

Education level*	7.2% secondary	10.3% secondary
	59.2% graduate	35.3% undergrad.
Income M (SD)	1524 (1134) €	1282 (981) €
Gender*	79.6% female	90.0% female
Online h/day	2.82 (1.67)	3.02 (1.67)
Enviromental awareness	4.53 (0.38)	4.58 (0.34)

Notes. Percentages not adding up to 100% due to participants choosing “other” or “no indication”. Range environmental awareness: 1 = very low, 5 = very high.

Material

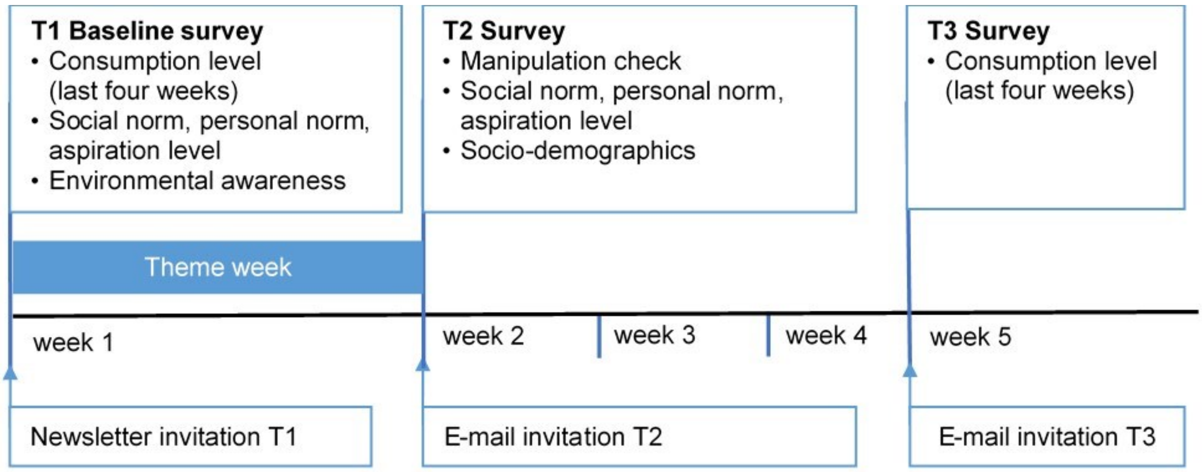
The intervention was planned in a transdisciplinary process (Lang et al., 2012). This means that the online shop was involved in the formulation of the research question, the design of the study, and the interpretation of the results. The study design was co-produced during several workshops and meetings with representatives of the online shop. As a result, a ‘theme week’ intervention was implemented, during which the online shop promoted clothing sufficiency through its Social Media accounts and in one of their weekly newsletters (intervention news- letter), along with the hashtag #lessismore. The intervention advertised the benefits of buying less and only owning ‘favourite pieces’. The intervention newsletter, presented different styling options for a single clothing piece (trousers). On Instagram and Facebook, a staff member of the online shop posted photos and stories on a daily basis, showing alternative outfits for her favourite trousers and presenting capsule wardrobe collections. In addition, polls for feedback were conducted, and discussions and interactions with the online shops’ followers about the benefits of sufficiency in their dealings with fashion were initiated in the comments section of the Social Media channels.

Procedure

The sustainable online shop recruited participants via their weekly newsletter, inviting its customers to take part in an online survey (invitation newsletter on week prior to the intervention newsletter), incentivised by a coupon raffle. The invitation gave no indication on the topic of the survey. In the first survey before the intervention (T1, Fig. 2), the self-reported amount of new and second-hand clothing purchased in the previous four weeks, as well as aspiration level, personal norm and social norm for sufficiency were assessed. Additionally, e-mail addresses were collected in order to send out the post-surveys. The survey contained further scales on frugality, materialism, fashion consciousness and attitude towards the sender, which are, however, not included in this study. After the intervention week, participants were invited to take part in the second survey (T2). Here, participants completed a manipulation check by stating whether they had taken note of the #lessismore theme week. We assessed whether participants remembered the intervention newsletter, two exemplary posts from Social Media, and they could further indicate whether they had seen any comments on the posts from other Social Media users or whether they had commented on the posts themselves. If participants recalled at least one of the communication tools shown in screen-shots or reported to have seen comments or have commented, they were assigned to the experimental group. Participants who did not agree with any of these statements were assigned to the control group. Cued recall revealed that 9% of the sample had only seen the intervention newsletter, 4% only Social Media posts and 7% had seen both, whereas 80% had not seen any of the intervention tools.

The post-intervention survey (T2) contained the same questions as T1 except for shopping behaviour and additional questions about environmental concern, time spent online and socio-demographic variables. Only subjects in the experimental group were asked about their attitude towards the theme week and sender. The third survey (T3) was conducted four weeks after the intervention to assess behavioural impacts. This time, participants were again questioned about the self-reported number of new products and second-hand clothing purchased in the last four weeks.

Figure 2. Procedure study 1



Measures

All measures can be found in Appendix A. If not specified otherwise, items were assessed on a 5-point Likert scale, with the option ‘I don’t know’, which was defined as a missing variable in subsequent analyses.

Sufficiency behaviour was operationalised as a low consumption level of clothing. This was assessed at T1 and T3. We asked for the amount of clothes obtained in local or secondhand-shops, clothes swapped or gifted, clothes bought online, online-reselling or online- exchange of clothing, and for the amount of self-made clothes, each on a scale from ‘0 pieces of clothing’ to ‘6 or more pieces’ during the last four weeks.

Personal norm for sufficiency consisted of three items ($\alpha T1 = 0.78$, $\alpha T2 = 0.78$) and were constructed following Schwartz (1977), e.g. ‘I feel obliged only to buy new clothes when I really need them’.

Social norm for sufficiency was assessed as the perceived descriptive social norms (Cialdini et al., 1991) of customers of the sustainable online shop as the peer group. Five items assess whether participants think other customers show sufficiency behaviour, e.g. ‘customers of the on- line shop buy new clothes if they really need them’ (−),aT1 = 0.78, $\alpha T2 = 0.79$.

Aspiration level of clothing was assessed by the mean of the subjectively ideal level of clothing consumption (‚Given limitless availability of money and time, how many pieces of clothing (outerwear) would you ideally like to buy annually?‘; Frick et al., 2021), and the subjectively sufficient level of clothing consumption (‘How many pieces of clothing would you need to buy annually for your well-being not to be restricted?’; Jenny, 2016) (r T1 = 0.63, $p < .001$, r T2 = 0.62, $p < .001$).

Environmental awareness was assessed by using a short version of the German environmental awareness scale (Geiger, 2019) including 9 items, $\alpha = 0.66$. The option ‘I don’t know’ was also included and later defined as missing value in subsequent analyses.

Socio-demographics were gender, age, education level, and income level.

Statistical analysis

To test hypothesis 1a, repeated-measure variance analysis was applied. The interval-scaled variables measuring the aspiration level were tested for outliers. Outliers were identified, as proposed by Tabachnick and Fidell (2013), as values scoring higher than 3.29 standard deviations above the sample mean. They were truncated, i.e. recoded to scores one unit above the highest value within the described range. Missing data resulted in a decrease of the sample through listwise deletion.

Mediation analyses to test hypotheses 2a-4a and the pretest-posttest control group design from Valente and MacKinnon (2017) was applied (see Fig. 4). This method adjusts for pretest scores and thus controls for confounders invariant over time. Path analyses with manifest variables were executed with R lavaan (Rosseel, 2012), using robust maximum likelihood. In order to handle missing data, we used full information maximum likelihood (Graham, 2009; Steinmetz, 2015).

Results

All measured variables are listed in Table 2. To check whether randomisation led to comparable groups, we tested differences in all study variables before intervention (T1) via multiple variance analysis (MANOVA). We found no significant differences between experimental and control groups, except for social norm for sufficiency, which was higher in the experimental group, $F(1) = 23.63$, $p < .001$, partial $\varepsilon 2 = 0.015$.

Table 2. Desciptive statistics of study 1.

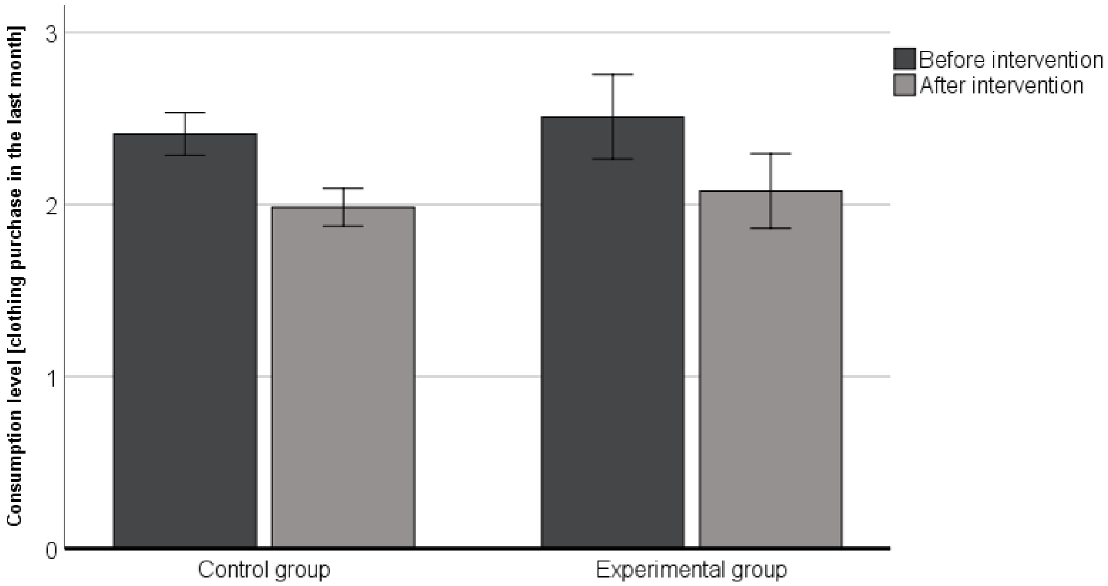
	Control group (n = 1685)				Experimental group (n = 42			
	T1		T2		T1		T2	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Dependent variable								
Consumption level	2.41	2.58	1.98	2.29	2.51	2.60	2.08	2.34
Mediators								
Aspiration level	13.16	7.90	13.00	7.82	13.22	7.43	13.34	7.86
Personal norm	3.70	0.82	3.84	0.70	3.79	0.79	3.94	0.76
Social norm	3.41	0.59	3.46	0.59	3.58	0.55	3.63	0.53

Notes: Social Norm: CG T1 n = 1390, T2 n = 1319; EG T1 n = 390, T2 n = 386.

Repeated-measure variance analysis showed that consumption levels dropped in both the experimental and control groups from pre-to post- intervention measurement, $F(1, 2111) = 25.94$,

$p < .001$, $\varepsilon = .012$. There was no main effect of the group, $F(1) = 0.91$, $p = .34$. Yet the experimental group did not differ from the control group in their consumption reduction, $F(1, 2111) < 0.01$, $p = .98$. The intervention therefore did not make a difference in participants' clothing consumption, but all participants reduced their clothing consumption.

Figure 3. Clothing consumption level in the last month before (black) and a month after (grey) the theme week intervention. Error bars indicate 95% confidence intervals.



Addressing H2a-H4a, we examined whether an influence of the intervention on the consumption level was mediated by motive changes. As Table 3 shows, the intervention had a small effect on the perceived descriptive social norm for sufficiency with regards to other customers (path a_1), yet this social norm had no effect on the consumption level of clothing (path b_1). The consumption level after the intervention was influenced by the aspiration level (path b_3). Yet the intervention had no effects on personal norm or aspiration level, and mediation effects turned out to be non-significant. It is noteworthy that although mediators were stable over time (stability $sm_{1\text{-}3}$), the consumption level of clothing before and after the intervention only showed a weak positive relationship (stability sy).

Figure 4. Mediation model of consumption reduction after Valente and MacKinnon (2017). Model includes the effects of intervention on mediators (a), effects of mediators on outcome (b), effect of intervention on outcome (c′), stability of mediators (sm) and stability of dependent variable (sy), cross-lagged effects on mediators (ca), cross-lagged effects on outcome (cb), and the pretest correlations between mediators and outcome.

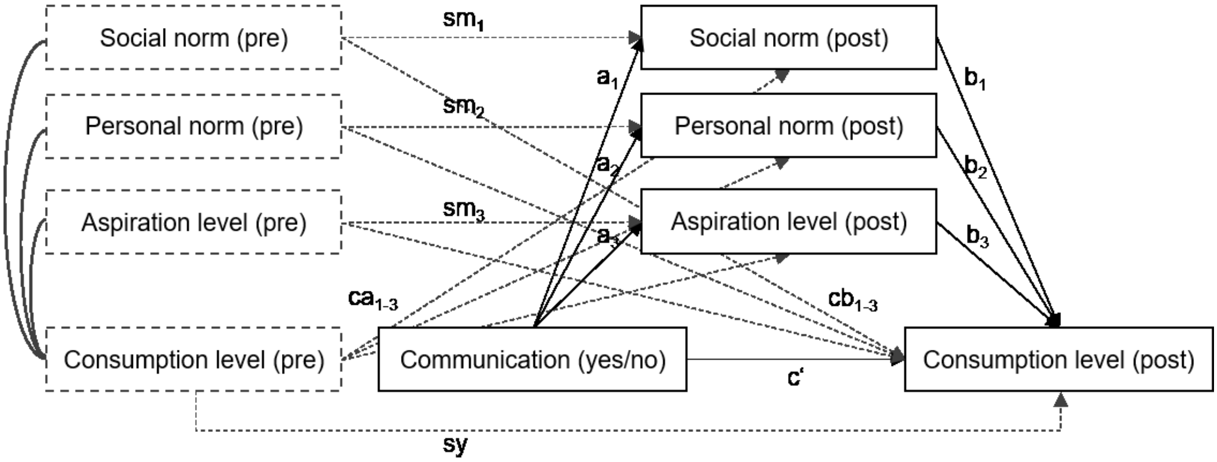


Table 3. Mediation model predicting consumption reduction.

		b	se	ß	z	p
Path						
	a1	0.08	0.03	.06*	3.25	<.01
	a2	0.05	0.03	.03	1.75	.08
	a3	0.22	0.29	.01	0.76	.45
	b1	-0.05	0.13	-.01	-0.37	0.71
	b2	-0.13	0.09	-.04	-1.34	.18
	b3	0.03	0.01	.10*	2.64	.01
	c‘	0.09	0.12	.02	0.74	.46
Stability						
	sm1	0.61	0.02	.61*	26.15	<.01
	sm2	0.67	0.02	.70*	40.28	<.01
	sm3	0.90	0.02	.79*	44.09	<.01
	sy	0.13	0.02	.14*	5.43	<.01

Cross-lagged effects					
ca1	-0.01	0.00	-.03	-1.43	.15
ca2	-0.01	0.01	-.05*	-2.71	.01
ca3	0.10	0.05	.03	1.94	.05
cb1	0.15	0.11	.04	1.31	.19
cb2	-0.25	0.09	-.09*	-2.77	.01
cb3	0.01	0.01	.04	1.01	.31
Covarites					
Consumption (pre) – social norm (pre)	0.04	0.03	.03	1.08	.28
Consumption (pre) – pers. norm (pre)	-0.21	0.05	-.10*	-4.19	<.01
Consumption (pre) – aspiration l. (pre)	3.67	0.49	.18*	7.43	<.01
Indirect mediation effects					
Social norm (H2)	0.00	0.01	.00	-0.37	.71
Personal norm (H3)	-0.01	0.01	.00	-1.05	.30
Aspiration level (H4)	0.01	0.01	.00	0.74	.46

Notes. SEM fit indices: $\chi2(16) = 463.87$, CFI = 0.90, RMSEA = 0.12, SMSR = 0.11.

Discussion

All participants had reduced their clothing consumption and thus increased their sufficiency behaviour, whether they had perceived the intervention or not. Limitations of our study design are, of course, a prerequisite for interpreting these findings and are discussed below. However, our result replicates findings from a similar field experiment in the Social Media, which aimed at reducing food waste (Young et al., 2017) and showed that both Social Media and control groups significantly reduced their self-reported food waste. We conclude that the questionnaire may itself have had an effect as participants reflected on their clothing consumption during the pre-test questionnaire: It has been shown that assessing consumption intentions alone may alter subsequent behaviour, at least in the short term (mere-measurement effect, Morwitz & Fitzsimons, 2004). A second explanation for the overall consumption reduction may be the point of time in a clothing consumption cycle. When participants first completed the questionnaire, they may merely have been interacting with the online shop (irrespective of their perception of the intervention), and thus were more likely to have bought clothes whereas, a month later, they may not have been in a 'consumption phase'. Also, clothing consumption is under- taken infrequently, leading to a high error variance in the outcome variable and thus possibly weakening effects. The low stability of clothing consumption in the four weeks prior to intervention, compared to the four weeks after intervention, supports this explanatory approach. Third, participants from the control group could have been unconsciously exposed to the campaign and therefore, both groups would have been affected by the treatment. Yet this explanation seems unlikely, as informational strategies change motives or knowledge, which involves conscious reflection (as opposed to structural strategies which do not need reflection, e.g., Steg & Vlek, 2009).

Mediation analysis showed no mediation effects. The intervention had a small effect on the social norm of other customers' clothing sufficiency, but that did not affect consumption. From the mediators, only the aspiration level influenced the consumption level, yet the change of aspiration levels before and after the intervention could not predict the change in consumption levels. In any case, the non-significant results and low visibility of the theme week show that, in the way we implemented the intervention, single posts were not influential enough to have a measurable effect. The reason for this insignificance may be found in deficiencies of our study design, as discussed below, but also in low attention levels on Social Media and the sheer amount of competing information available online (Maurer & Wiegmann, 2011). Therefore, Social Media communication might be too weak when it appears as singular posts in participants' newsfeeds.

The transdisciplinary approach and the field setting were additional challenges, which resulted in a dependency on the interests and technical availabilities of the cooperating online shop (e.g., they formulated the daily posts on their own), giving us less control regarding the intervention's topic and wording. Focussing on the hashtag #lessismore and on 'favourite pieces' within the theme week may not be explicit enough to foster sufficiency behaviour. Also, only 21% of participants perceived the theme week communication activities. Another recent study showed that reminding individuals about the environmental consequences of their purchases can effectively increase voluntary simplicity (Peifer et al., 2020). Thus, it seems advisable to educate individuals on the link between overconsumption and the ecological harnesses of fast fashion before they indicate their purchase intentions.

Whereas the study's strength lies in its sample size and external validity, another methodological limitation is its quasi-experimental approach. Assigning participants post-hoc to experimental and control groups resulted in selection effects. The groups were inherently different in terms of their initial consumption level, Social Media use, and sociodemographic characteristics. Also, we could not completely rule out that drop-outs between T1 and T3 (36%) were selective, even if there is no strong rationale for this. Finally, the sample was not representative of the German population. Participants were recruited among customers of a sustainable online shop, which attracted participants with higher- than-average education levels, environmental concern, and female gender, as was also found in other convenience sample studies on consumption reduction (Herziger et al., 2020; Joanes et al., 2020). Recruiting participants through a newsletter may have excluded potential participants who are irregular customers not as tied to the company or not interested in frequent information.

As a practical research implication, the study demonstrates how effectiveness of interventions has to be interpreted with caution and within the limitations of the study design. Despite methodological weaknesses, the field experiment indicates positive effects of sufficiency- promoting communication on clothing sufficiency and provides valuable practical implications. To address these potentials, a laboratory experiment was conducted to follow up on open questions.

Study 2: Online laboratory experiment

Hypotheses

In Study 2, we tested further hypotheses we had derived from the literature, while we could also retest the hypotheses from Study 1. We compared sufficiency-promoting and consumption-promoting communication with a neutral communication condition that does not suggest any change in the recipient's consumption levels, expecting inverse effects on sufficiency behaviour by consumption-promotion. Further, the aspiration level, personal norm and social norm for sufficiency were also expected to mediate this relationship analogous to H2a-H4a (Fig. 1).

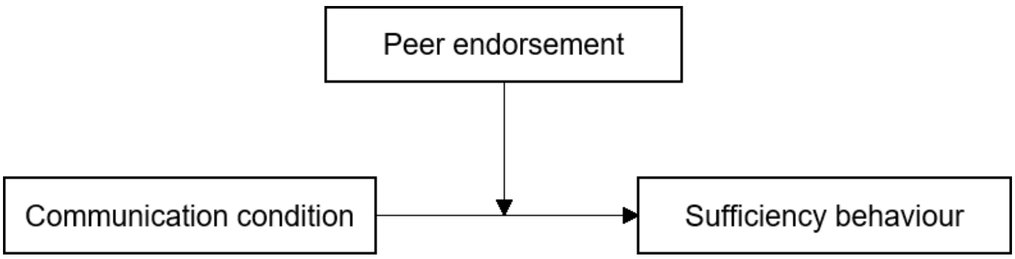
H1b. Consumption-promoting communication decreases sufficiency behaviour compared to a neutral communication condition.

H2b, H3b, H4b. The perceived descriptive social norm, personal norm and aspiration level mediate the negative impact of consumption- promoting communication on sufficiency behaviour.

In the laboratory setting, the impact of peer endorsement of communication conditions through likes and comments could be controlled for and tested. Each communication condition was presented either with or without peer endorsement. We hypothesised that peer endorsement of Social Media communication increases its effectiveness, proposing a moderating effect on the impact of communication conditions on sufficiency behaviour (Fig. 5). Note that most above cited literature detected effects for peer groups that participants knew in person. In our research, we focus on Social Media communication from organisations and therefore test whether descriptive social norms shown by the more distal peer group of other Social Media users are equally effective.

H5a, H5b. Peer endorsement moderates the positive impact of sufficiency-promoting communication on sufficiency behaviour (a) and the negative impact of consumption-promoting communication on sufficiency behaviour (b).

Figure 5. Moderation effect of peer endorsement by Social Media users



Since in Study 1 we examined only customers of a sustainable online shop who reported high environmental awareness, in Study 2 we controlled for such values in a representative sample. Numerous studies established that pre-existing values of self-transcendence and self-enhancement influence pro-environmental behaviour and curtailment (Steg et al., 2012; Steg et al., 2014; for sustainable clothing consumption see; Geiger & Keller, 2018). We expected that participants with high self-transcendence values (biospheric and altruistic values) would show more sufficiency behaviour, and the opposite for high self-enhancement values (hedonistic and egoistic values).

H6. Individuals with high self-transcendence values show more sufficiency behaviour, whereas individuals with high self-enhancement values show less sufficiency behaviour.

Due to the novelty of sufficiency-promoting communication, there is still little practical experience and empirical evidence on its effects on the image and value of the company. In past research, sufficiency- promoting communication itself was found to contribute to a positive attitude towards the company (Armstrong Soule & Reich, 2015; Gossen & Frick, 2018; Ramirez et al., 2017). Therefore, we expect that the attitude towards sufficiency-promoting communication and towards the sender are more positive than in the other conditions.

H7a, H7b. Sufficiency-promoting communication leads to a more positive attitude towards the communication and sender than neutral communication (a) and consumption-promoting communication (b).

Method

Study 2 was conducted as an online laboratory experiment, allowing for a representative sample and full randomisation. The participants were randomly assigned to one of six conditions in a 3 × 2 design, with the three communication conditions (neutral, sufficiency-promoting and consumption-promoting), each paired with only the fictional company's communication (Instagram posts) or the communication plus peer endorsement (Instagram posts with likes and comments).

Pre-study for the design of experimental material

In order to identify the most effective manipulation for the actual laboratory experiment, we conducted a pre-study. Initially, seven posts were designed (in each of the three versions neutral, sufficiency- promoting and consumption-promoting, but not including peer endorsement). In three surveys with mixed posts, N = 105 could rate the posts on two dimensions. First, participants' attitude towards the communication was assessed, and second, the participants rated the post on a consumption promotion scale from 1 = 'the post is intended to make me consume less', to 3 = 'neither', to 5 = 'the post is intended to make me consume more'. Based on these indicators, four posts were selected for the experiment. They were selected on the basis of the sufficiency-promoting version scoring as low as possible, the consumption-promoting version scoring as high as possible and the neutral version scoring in the middle range of the consumption promotion scale. At the same time, the posts with an overall positive attitude were chosen. The consumption promotion in the sufficiency- promoting condition was perceived as M(SD) = 1.99(0.96), so on the side of 'intended to make me consume less', the mean in the consumption-promoting condition was M(SD) = 4.16(0.82), 'intended to make me consume more', and in the neutral condition it was M(SD) = 3.40(0.76). The sufficiency-promoting communication included both messages directed towards normative motives (as proposed by Joanes et al., 2020) and hedonic motives (egoistic appeals, as proposed by Herziger et al., 2020) to engage in sufficiency behaviour. The messages thus included both ecological and personal advantages of sufficiency.

Sample

The data was collected by a market research institute within its online access panel, recruiting participants from Germany. As an inclusion criterion, participants were screened for Social Media use (Facebook, Instagram or Twitter). Only participants who used it at least once a week were included. To provide representativeness, a socio-demographic distribution was chosen that is representative for the part of the German population who actively participate on Social Media. Therefore, participants were screened on the criteria of age (three age groups between 16 and 69 years), gender (two groups), education level (three levels) and income (two levels). The planned sample was N = 1100, as power analysis using G*Power proposes a sample size of 1093 participants for a medium effect size of 0.15, given $\alpha = 0.05$ and Power = 0.95. N = 2286 people accessed the survey, N = 815 were excluded as they did not use Social Media regularly, N = 222 because they did not pass a control question ('please click 2 here'), N = 13 due to a break of more than 15 min within the questionnaire (as the priming effect of seeing the posts would fade over time), and N = 259 participants did not pass the manipulation check explained below. From the remaining N = 977 participants, N = 96 did not want to participate in the coupon raffle. The groups in the six conditions did not differ significantly in age, $F(5) = 1.02$, $p = .41$, gender, $\chi2(15) = 13.00$, $p = .60$, income, $F (5) = 0.76$, $p = .58$, education level, $\chi2(10) = 10.44$, $p = .40$, or the time spent online, $F (5) = 1.36$, $p = .24$. The final sample of N = 881 is described in Table 4.

Table 4. Sample description

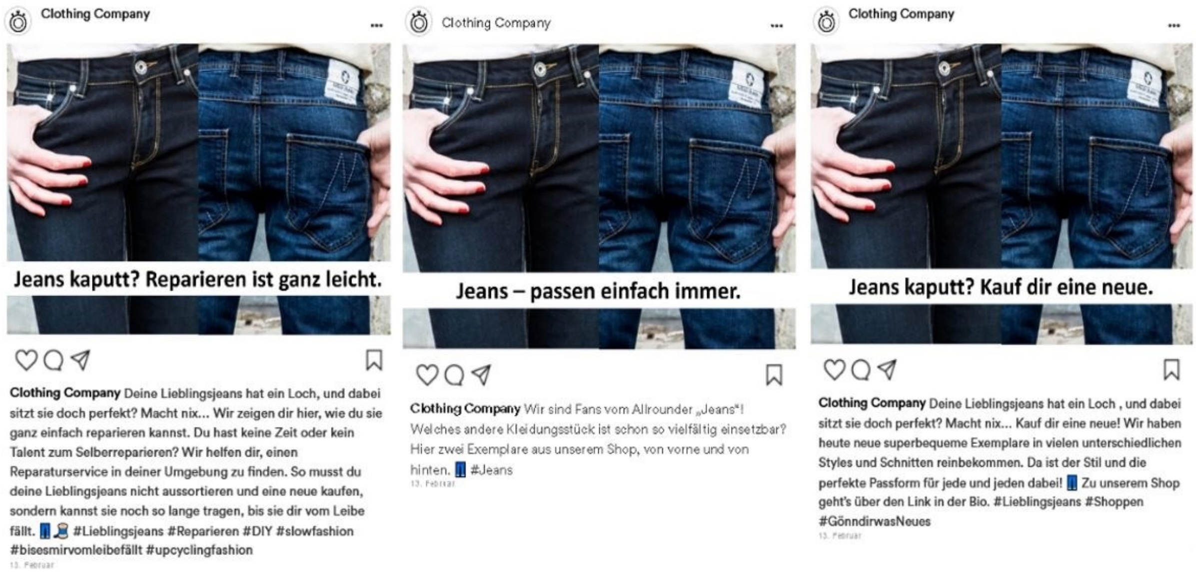
	Laboratory experiment	German Population
	Full sample	
	N = 881	(Destatis, 2018)
Age M (SD)	33.7 (13.4)	44.3
Education level*	52.2% secondary	30.4% secondary
	26.1% undergrad.	23.1% undergrad.
	18.9% graduate	31.9% graduate
Income M(SD)	1500 - 2000 €	1’957 € (in 2013)
Gender*	51.2% female	50.7% female
	48.6% male	49.3% male
Online h/day M(SD)	3.82 (2.08)	3.27

Notes. Percentages not adding up to 100% are due to participants choosing “other” or “no indication”.

Material

The manipulation comprises six communication conditions, each consisting of four Instagram posts of a fictional online clothing shop. Over the conditions, each post had an identical design, using the same picture and text design, and in the peer endorsement condition, also the same number of likes and comments. For an example of a post in the three communication versions see Fig. 6. For full manipulation display, see supplementary material.

Figure 6. Manipulation from left to right: (1) Sufficiency-promoting communication: ‘Torn jeans? It’s easy to repair them.’, (2) Neutral communication: ‘Jeans - they always fit.’, (3) Consumption-promoting communication ‘Torn jeans? Buy a new pair.’.



Procedure

After entering the survey, a screening question covered the Social Media use in terms of frequency and general internet use in terms of time expenditure. Next, participants were asked for their age, education level, income level and gender, in order to screen for quotas that ensure a representative sample for the German population actively participating on Social Media in all six conditions. This was followed by random assignment to one of the six communication conditions and a presentation of the intervention, consisting of four Instagram posts (for an example see Fig. 6). Participants were asked to look at the posts for a given time and like and comment on them. Each post was shown for at least 8 s, and the median time that participants spent looking at each of the four posts was between 15 and 21 s. After manipulation, dependent variables were assessed (see next chapter).

Measures

All measures can be found in Appendix A. If not otherwise specified, items were assessed on a 5-point Likert scale, with the option ‘I don’t know’, which was defined as a missing variable in subsequent analyses.

Sufficiency behaviour in the domain of clothing was measured by a coupon choice. In a coupon raffle for 10 vouchers at 10 Euros each, participants could choose between four coupons: two options for pop- ular retail shops representing a consumption-oriented choice, and two options representing sufficiency behaviour, namely a voucher for a second-hand online shop, or a donation of the given amount to a NGO that campaigns for sustainable clothing consumption. The option ‘I do not want to take part in this raffle’ was defined as a missing variable. To determine sufficiency behaviour as a dichotomous variable, voucher choices for the charity donation and second-hand online shop were coded as 1 = yes, and the regular online-shop vouchers were coded as 0 = no.

Aspiration level of clothing see study 1.

Personal norm for sufficiency see study 1.

Social norm for sufficiency was assessed using a set of eight items, on the descriptive social norm of the peer group for sufficiency (e.g. reduced consumption, repair, sharing), that varied slightly from study 1, this time defined as ‘Instagram users’, $\alpha = 0.82$.

Attitude towards sufficiency-promoting communication was measured with five new items assessing how users liked the posts ($\alpha = 0.77$), e.g. ‘The Social Media presence of the clothing company is appealing’.

Attitude towards the sender measured how participants perceived the online shop due to its communication. The scale ‘motives of the sender’ was used (Armstrong Soule & Reich, 2015). In it, the altruistic dimension, and reversed strategic and exploitive motives were integrated ($\alpha = 0.77$). Each dimension consists of three items. ‘Tries to address new customers’ or ‘does not really care for the environment’ are examples for motives of the sender.

Universal values was assessed using a short version of Schwartz’s value scale (Steg et al., 2012) to measure altruistic and biospheric values in the category of self-transcendence, $\alpha = 0.88$, and egoistic and hedonistic values in the category of self-enhancement, $\alpha = 0.77$, with eight items ranging from − 1 ‘opposed to my values’, 0 ‘unimportant’ to 7 ‘guiding principle’.

Manipulation check. To check whether participants received and understood the communication content, they were shown one of the four Social Media posts in all three communication versions (i.e., neutral, consumption-promoting, sufficiency-promoting), as well as the option ‘I did not see any of these posts’ and were instructed to pick which one of them was presented to them.

Socio-demographics. We assessed the socio-demographic variables gender, age, education level, income level and time spent online.

Statistical analysis

To test the hypotheses of sufficiency-promoting communication or consumption-promoting communication (H1), their interaction with peer endorsement on sufficiency behaviour (H5), as well as the covariates of universal values (H6), stepwise hierarchical logistic regression was applied, as this allowed us to measure both the direct effect of sufficiency communication, as well as how this effect changes when other predictors are included and allowed to interact with the manipulation (Field, 2009). The impact on the attitude towards the message and the sender (H7) was computed with variance analysis (ANOVAs). These analyses are computed in SPSS 25. Mediation analyses, including sufficiency-promoting communication (H2a-H4a) and consumption-promoting communication (H2b-H4b), were tested against the neutral condition in two separate models, each with a mediation analysis applying diagonal weighed least squared estimator (DWLS) in R lavaan (Rosseel, 2012; Steinmetz, 2015).

Results

Outcome and mediator variables are shown in Table 5. Sufficiency behaviour as coupon choice was rather rare, with 18.3% of participants choosing to donate their prize to an NGO for sustainable clothing, and 9.2% choosing the coupon for an online peer-to-peer second-hand marketplace, whereas the other 72.5% chose one of the two clothing shop coupons.

The influence of communication condition, peer endorsement and values as covariates on sufficiency behaviour was assessed by hierarchical logistic regression (Table 6). Hypothesis 1a was confirmed at Step 1, not including covariates. If participants were presented the sufficiency-promoting communication, they were 1.51 [95% CI 1.06–2.14] times as likely to choose the sufficiency coupon as participants in the neutral condition. Further analyses revealed that this effect was explained by participants with high self-transcendence values, shown in the interaction effect of self-transcendence and sufficiency promotion (Step 3). Additionally, high self-enhancement values decreased sufficiency behaviour. The participants who saw consumption-promoting communication did not choose the sufficiency option less often than those in the neutral condition (H1b). The stepwise procedure produced the best model fit ($\chi2(6) = 35.52$, $p < .001$) for the model seen in Table 6 that excluded peer endorsement (Block $\chi2\ (1) = 0.18$, $p = .67$), the interaction effect between communication conditions and peer endorsement (H5, Block $\chi2 = 0.49$, $p = .78$), and the interaction effect between communication conditions and self-enhancement (Block $\chi2\ (2) = 1.11$, $p = .57$), which had no effect on sufficiency behaviour.

Table 5. Descriptive variables

	Consumption promotion				Neutral condition				Sufficiency promotion			
	Peer endorsement:				Peer endorsement:				Peer endorsement:			
	without		with		without		with		without		with	
	N = 129		*N* = 145		*N* = 154		N = 146		*N* = 162		*N* = 145	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Sufficiency behaviour*	24.03%		20.00%		25.97%		25.34%		33.95%		34.48%	
Ideal level of consumption	38.48	36.8	36.46	33.84	33.44	29.58	43.02	35.02	22.64	26.19	23.26	27.26
Sufficient level of consumption	9.51	12.27	10.10	14.62	8.88	12.05	11.91	13.84	5.75	10.53	6.52	9.14
Aspiration level	24.00	22.18	23.28	21.57	21.16	18.97	27.47	21.9	14.20	16.55	14.89	16.42
Personal norm	3.21	1.12	3.19	1.13	3.17	1.04	2.99	1.11	3.33	1.03	3.45	1.04
Social norm**	2.21	0.72	2.16	0.56	2.21	0.64	2.23	0.68	2.24	0.74	2.30	0.81
Attitude towards communication	3.14	0.82	3.32	0.84	3.24	0.86	3.16	0.83	3.77	0.81	3.73	0.78
Attitude towards sender	2.49	0.48	2.52	0.48	2.66	0.49	2.69	0.45	3.25	0.59	3.23	0.64
Self-transcendence	5.18	1.21	5.13	1.09	5.32	1.15	5.2	1.05	5.23	1.23	5.08	1.10
Self-enhancement	3.68	1.11	3.57	1.08	3.52	1.19	3.5	1.12	3.37	1.16	3.57	1.01

Notes. * Dichotomous variable: percentage of participants showing sufficiency behaviour.

** *N* in the above order: 121, 134, 140, 136, 150, 135 (due to option: ‘I don’t know’).

Table 6. Hierarchical logistic regression model predicting sufficiency behaviour (

		b	*se*	*Wald*	*df*	*p*	*odds ratio*	*Lower 95% CI*	*Upper 95 % CI*
Step 1	Communication condition			11.62	2	.003			
	Sufficiency promotion	0.41	0.18	5.24	1	.022	1.51*	1.06	2.14
	Consumption promotion	-0.21	0.20	1.12	1	.290	0.81	0.55	1.19
Step 2	Communication condition			10.75	2	.005			
	Sufficiency promotion	0.42	0.18	5.49	1	.019	1.53	1.07	2.18
	Consumption promotion	-0.16	0.20	0.69	1	.408	0.85	0.57	1.25
	Self-transcendence	0.18	0.07	6.86	1	.009	1.20	1.05	1.37
	Self-enhancement	-0.21	0.07	8.80	1	.003	0.81	0.71	0.93
Step 3	Communication condition			4.68	2	.097			
	Sufficiency promotion	-1.94	0.90	4.64	1	.031	0.14	0.02	0.84
	Consumption promotion	-0.82	0.94	0.76	1	.385	0.44	0.07	2.79
	Self-transcendence	-0.03	0.12	0.05	1	.823	0.97	0.77	1.23
	Self-enhancement	-0.20	0.07	7.81	1	.005	0.82*	0.72	0.94
	Interaction communication * self-transcendence			7.64	2	.022			
	Sufficiency * self-transcendence	0.45	0.17	7.16	1	.007	1.56*	1.13	2.16
	Consumption * self-transcendence	0.12	0.18	0.48	1	.490	1.13	0.80	1.60

The mediation model of sufficiency-promoting communication compared to the neutral condition on sufficiency behaviour (H2a – H4a), revealed that effects from sufficiency-promoting communication on sufficiency behaviour were mediated by a lower aspiration level for clothing (Table 7, Fig. 3). Sufficiency communication also influenced the personal norm for sufficiency (path a2, β = .13), but this did not translate into more sufficiency behaviour (path b, n.s.). The personal norm and aspiration levels were negatively correlated, β = .43. No mediation effect could be found for the social norm of other Social Media users. Since logistic regression analysis had shown that consumption-promoting communication had no significant effect on sufficiency behaviour, the mediation model for consumption-promoting communication was equally non-significant (H2-4b), and can be found in Appendix B.

Table 7. Mediation model of sufficiency-promoting communication (following Fig. 1).

	b	*se*	*ß*	*z*	*p*
Path					
a1	0.05	0.06	.04	0.82	.415
a2	0.27	0.09	.13*	3.08	.002
a3	-9.60	1.71	-.25*	-5.63	<.001
b1	-0.10	0.08	-.07	-1.26	.207
b2	0.11	0.06	.11	1.84	.066
b3	-0.01	0.00	-.24*	-3.86	<.001
c	0.13	0.11	.07	1.17	.241
Indirect Mediation effects					
Social norm	0.00	0.01	.00	-0.69	.493
Personal Norm	0.03	0.02	.01	1.59	.112
Aspiration level	0.12	0.04	.06*	3.13	.002
Total effect	0.28	0.11	.14*	2.49	.013
Covariates					
Social norm – personal norm	0.05	0.03	.06	1.62	.106
Social norm – aspiration	-1.19	0.63	-.09	-1.90	.058
Personal norm - aspiration	-8.55	1.01	-.43*	-8.44	<.001

Finally, we addressed the attitude towards sufficiency-promoting communication and its sender. As hypothesised (H7), there was a significant main effect of the communication condition on the attitude towards the communication $F(2) = 42.20$, $p < .001$, partial $\varepsilon 2 = .09$. Contrasts revealed that the attitude towards the sender of sufficiency- promoting communication was more positive than to senders of both neutral communication, b(SE) = 0.57 (0.10), $t = 5.91$, $p < .001$, partial $\varepsilon 2 = .04$ and consumption-promoting communication, b(SE) = 0.41 (0.10), $t = 4.21$, $p < .001$, partial $\varepsilon 2 = .02$. Peer endorsement $F(1) = 0.12$, $p = .724$, and its interaction with communication, $F(2) = 2.15$, $p = .112$, did not have a significant effect. Accordingly, there was a significant main effect of the communication on the attitude towards the sender, $F(2) = 154.92$, $p < .001$, partial $\varepsilon 2 = .26$. Contrasts revealed that the attitude towards the sender in the sufficiency-promoting condition was more positive than both the neutral condition, b(SE) = 0.54 (0.06), $t = 8.64$, $p < .001$, partial $\varepsilon 2 = .08$ and consumption-promoting condition, b (SE) = 0.71 (0.06), $t = 11.44$, $p < .001$, partial $\varepsilon 2 = .13$. However, in this model too, neither peer endorsement $F(1) = 0.14$, $p = .709$, nor its interaction with communication, $F(2) = 0.21$, $p = .812$, had a significant effect.

Discussion

Compared to the other conditions, sufficiency-promoting Social Media communication led to more sufficiency behaviour and a better attitude towards the communication content and towards the company. Including values into the regression model revealed that sufficiency communication was mainly effective for participants scoring high on self-transcendence values. Mediation analyses further showed that, as a short-term effect, a higher aspiration level mediates the relationship between sufficiency-promoting communication and sufficiency coupon choice. Promoting sufficiency had a positive effect on the personal norm for sufficiency, yet this effect seemed to be too weak to translate into actual behaviour (this is also given for Study 1). This result is in line with an earlier study that found this lack of connection between personal norm and behaviour (Frick et al., 2021). An alternative explanation would be that the effect of personal norm is mediated through a lower aspiration level. Consumption-promoting communication, however, did not lead to less sufficiency behaviour compared to the neutral condition. This finding contrasts with past research showing the consumption-increasing effects of advertisement (e.g., Hoch et al., 2016; Kasser & Kanner, 2004). Possibly, the neutral condition of the fictional company's communication was not perceived as completely neutral but may be perceived as advertising of some sort since individuals expect companies' primary marketing goals to be consumption promotion (Stoeckl & Luedicke, 2015). Another possibility to explain this lack of difference is that, as consumption-promoting communication predominates in online environments, a habituation effect might be occurring whereby one consumption-promoting post does not make a difference, but sufficiency-promoting communication attracts more attention due to its novel character (Gossen et al., 2019).

Compared to the other conditions, sufficiency-promoting communication also positively affected attitudes towards the communication and sender whereas consumption-promoting communication did not cause a change in these attitudes. This finding is in line with previous research on institutional sufficiency-promoting marketing, which found that a message amplifying sufficiency behaviour boosts favourable attitudes towards green demarketing advertising (Reich & Armstrong Soule, 2016) and enhances customers' perceptions of the firm (Ramirez et al., 2017). Consumption-promoting communication may not have an effect compared to a neutral condition due the fact that advertising is so common that it is not actively processed. This effect may also have influenced perceptions of the fictional company in our laboratory experiment.

Peer endorsement did not moderate the relationship between communication and any of the dependent variables. One reason for this might be that the fictional posts and comments were perceived as 'fake'. For that matter, also the laboratory setting of the study lacks external validity because the posts were isolated and not presented in a newsfeed along with other posts, as is common on Instagram. This isolation resulted in less distraction than in a real-world setting. Most previous studies that have found effects of social norms included social information from real peers that participants actually knew. The study at hand, conversely, showed comments and likes of other Social Media users that participants did not personally know. Social norms of the more distant peer group of Social Media users are thus not as effective as social norms transported by close peers.

General discussion

We find that sufficiency-promoting communication in Social Media can be effective for enhancing sufficiency behaviour and attitudes in the short term. Table 8 provides an overview of hypotheses and respective results.

Table 8. Overview of hypotheses and results

		Study 1	Study 2
H1a	Sufficiency-promoting communication increases sufficiency behaviour compared to a neutral communication condition.	No	Yes
H2a	The perceived descriptive social norm mediates the positive impact of sufficiency-promoting communication on sufficiency behaviour.	No (only path a)	No
H3a	The personal norm for sufficiency mediates the positive impact of sufficiency-promoting communication on sufficiency behaviour.	No	Only path a
H4a	A decrease of the aspiration level for clothing mediates the positive impact of sufficiency-promoting communication on sufficiency behaviour.	No (only path b)	Yes
H5a	Peer endorsement moderates the positive impact of sufficiency-promoting communication on sufficiency behaviour.	-	No
H1b-5b	Effects for consumption-promoting communication	-	No
H6	Individuals with high self-transcendence values show more sufficiency behaviour whereas individuals with high self-enhancement values show less sufficiency behaviour	-	Yes
H7a, b	Sufficiency-promoting communication leads to a more positive attitude towards the communication and sender than neutral communication (a) and consumption-promoting communication (b).	-	Yes

In the field experiment, all participants reduced their level of clothing consumption regardless of whether or not they had seen the intervention. Therefore, either the engagement with the questionnaire itself (especially among individuals with a high interest in sustainability) could have evoked behaviour change towards sufficiency or participants were in different consumption cycle stages. Despite these shortcomings, the study shows the practical limitations of Social Media when it comes to behaviour change. Compensating the methodological weaknesses of the field experiment, the laboratory experiment showed significant short-term effects of sufficiency-promoting communication on sufficiency behaviour and attitudes towards the communication and its sender. With the sufficiency-promoting communication, participants were 1.5 times more likely to choose a sufficiency-oriented coupon and rated the communication and its sender more positively than under the neutral condition. Interestingly, this effect was apparent mainly for participants with high self-transcendence values, meaning that the intervention was most effective for target groups already engaged in the topic.

The effects of universal self-transcendence and self-enhancement values (e.g., Geiger & Keller, 2018) could be replicated for sufficiency behaviour in the clothing domain: whereas a strong emphasis on self-enhancement consistently decreased sufficiency choice, self-transcendence interacted with the sufficiency communication. Although the effect size was relatively small, it is still worth noting that the short-term effect of sufficiency-promoting communication was as influential as self-transcendence or self-enhancement. From this finding, we draw two conclusions. First, the short-term effects may best unleash their potential when the intervention is timed shortly before a relevant consumption decision (e.g., before customers of an online shop move to the cashier). As a practical implication, sufficiency-promoting communication would be valuable as a sufficiency nudge (Thaler & Sunstein, 2008). Second, as we only found short-term effects; long-term effects remain to be tested in future research. Although, in our study, single Social Media posts were too weak as an intervention (as was also found by Young et al., 2017), it remains to be explored in greater depth whether, for example, a more repeated exposure to sufficiency cues from several sources or incorporating social norms from direct peers (as in Bond et al., 2012) has an effect.

The laboratory Study 2 showed a mediation effect: Sufficiency-promoting communication changes the self-reported aspiration level in the short-term, which then influences sufficiency behaviour. In the field experiment, the relationship between the aspiration and consumption level was also present. Yet, no changes could be detected for the mediator social norm for sufficiency in either study, and only a tendency for the personal norm as a mediator for sufficiency was found in Study 2. The interventions in both studies included sufficiency-promoting messages addressing normative motives (Joanes et al., 2020) and hedonistic motives (Herziger et al., 2020). Apparently, these messages had an effect only in the laboratory setting. The sufficiency-promoting communication may have activated normative motives, as suggested in previous research, which found that activating normative goals weakens hedonistic consumption motives (Maio et al., 2009). Also, finding the aspiration level to be a strong mediator shows how environmental psychology could enable more knowledge on behavioural determinants to be gained by examining factors of unsustainable behaviour (Thøgersen, 2014). Whereas normative determinants and intentions in favour of pro-environmental behaviour have been thoroughly studied (e.g., Schwartz, 1977; Stern et al., 1999), gain and hedonistic motives that hinder pro-environmental behaviour are less often included in empirical studies (Thøgersen, 2014, but see; Frick et al., 2021). As well as strengthening personal norms and pro-environmental values, attenuating hedonistic motives, such as aspiration levels, materialism, or fashion consciousness, may be a viable strategy to increase well-being and foster a sufficiency-oriented lifestyle (e.g., Geiger & Keller, 2018; Steg et al., 2012).

Peer endorsement from users of the respective Social Media platform did not influence sufficiency behaviour. The perceived norms within this group did not have a significant effect on sufficiency behaviour. We conclude that it might be necessary to readjust expectations on how Social Media may be able to change behaviour through social norms (e. g., Ballew et al., 2015; Goldsmith & Goldsmith, 2011). Prior research showed that peer action on Social Media can influence behaviour (e.g., Bond et al., 2012) and that social norms are most effective when the influencing individuals are personally known in real life (Abrahamse & Steg, 2013). Perceiving peer endorsement from one's own social network has been found to be more influential than that from unknown people (Senbel et al., 2014). In our study, peer customers or Social Media users did not fulfil that condition.

Nonetheless, companies can benefit from their communicational efforts to support sufficiency behaviour. Our research showed that attitudes towards the communication and its sender are positive after receiving a sufficiency-promoting intervention. This finding supports the results of other studies that emphasise the beneficial effects of sufficiency-promoting marketing on the reputation and credibility of the respective company (Ramirez et al., 2017; Reich & Armstrong Soule; 2016).

Strengths and limitations of the studies

The combination of a field experiment with a laboratory experiment presents a strength of our study. Whereas the field experiment provides valuable practical and exploratory insights, the laboratory experiment allowed us to adopt best-practice strategies such as full randomisation and ethical approval. The studies both have behavioural outcome variables, which have been called for to enhance environmental psychology studies (Kormos & Gifford, 2014): In Study 2, actual consumption decisions, also known as revealed preferences, could be measured by a real-world coupon raffle. Such money-allocation tasks are commonly used behavioural measures (Lange & Dewitte, 2019). The consumption level in Study 1, although it is self-reported behaviour, has the advantage of being measured differently to Likert-scale measures, with a specific time-frame and frequency (as opposed to an unspecific frequency measure such as “often”, Lange & Dewitte, 2019). Recalling the number of clothing items acquired is prone to memory bias, yet this affects both times of measurement equally, holding a possible bias constant.

Both studies, however, also had their restrictions. We encountered a number of practicability issues of the transdisciplinary approach, where we conducted the whole research process of the field experiment together with an existing online shop. These issues included the selective convenience sample, the quasi-experimental assignment to conditions, poor control over the communication during the intervention, and the limited number of research questions that could be asked. At the same time, we gained practical and methodological insights on the design, dissemination, and evaluation of sufficiency-promoting communication, which we find have practical implications and are valuable for the research community. Overall, it still must be considered that the methodological challenges of the field study limit the explanatory power of the intervention. Since the laboratory experiment presented Social Media posts outside the usual context of an Instagram newsfeed, it may lack realism. Further, given the hypothetical nature of the company, it is not completely clear whether individuals would react in accordance with our findings in situations with real brands, which bring a plethora of brand associations and histories. From a methodological perspective, improvements in designing and implementing future studies are also advisable, e.g., the assignment to experimental or control group should be randomized, instead of self-assessed by the respondents. Since we suggest that the behavioural changes found in our field study result from a mere-measurement effect, this assumption should be tested in future research.

Another challenge was the operationalisation of the concept behind sufficiency behaviour. In the field experiment, we equated clothing sufficiency behaviour with the reported number of purchased items. Thus, we applied a broad understanding of the concept, which included reduced clothing consumption but also alternative forms of consumption that help to decrease purchases of new products (e.g., sharing or second-hand purchases). Yet in the laboratory setting, a behavioural measurement fit for short-term effects had to be found. It was important that the dependent variable measures actual behaviour and not just intentions or attitudes. To address this, we used a coupon choice, with the downside that ‘consumption reduction’ could not be promoted as an option. Thus, participants could opt for donating to a clothing-related NGO or choose a voucher for a second-hand marketplace. This indicator of sufficiency behaviour was adapted from theory (e.g., Jenny, 2016; Kleinhückelkotten & Neitzke, 2019). However, the sufficiency vouchers could have been chosen for other reasons.

In contrast to second-hand vouchers or donating to a NGO for sustainability, the option of not participating in the raffle had no biospheric cues (see Appendix A). As data security concerns could also have impeded people from choosing any voucher at all, we decided not to define this choice as a sufficiency behaviour. Apart from that reason, there is no indication that other, unrelated reasons such as novelty or attractiveness would not be randomly distributed between experimental and control groups. Therefore, they were not expected to alter results but could increase measurement error and thus, statistical power. Future research may further refine this measurement.

Future research

Implications for future research firstly relate to the question of how sufficiency-promoting communication has to be designed to have long-term effects on sufficiency behaviour. Because the Social Media posts were presented in the context of a laboratory experiment, the effect should be replicated in another study, for example by integrating the communication posts in participants' newsfeeds. Due to the fictional sender and the related limitations, it would add support to test findings when existing companies and real Social Media communication are used. Future research should also consider the timing and nature of the sufficiency-promoting message, for instance whether more concrete communication (i.e., fast fashion and textile waste) would be more effective than more abstract ones (i.e., overconsumption and sustainability) (Peifer et al., 2020). Also, the laboratory experiment revealed that both the personal norm as a normative motive and aspiration level as a hedonic motive influence sufficiency behaviour. Thus, future environmental psychology research should examine not only pro-environmental motives but also motives that might pose a barrier towards sustainable consumption. Our research showed that peer endorsement through comments and likes of other Social Media users not personally known to participants does not influence sufficiency behaviour. To find out more on this issue, future research could compare in a real-world scenario the social norms of known peers with those of unknown people. Another research direction would be to investigate from the perspective of environmental psychology other influential factors that may moderate the effects of sufficiency-promoting communication.

Our findings imply that, especially in a real-world setting, single-post interventions may be too weak to change behaviour, yet further studies are needed to find out more about the possible long-term effects of Social Media communication and peer endorsement, especially in relation to how well-known peers are to the participants. It would be of great interest to reinvestigate the effects of Social Media interventions with field experiments including a representative sample, randomized group allocation, and a more intense intervention with communication clearly asking participants both to reduce consumption and to do so repeatedly. Also, the laboratory testing of other peer groups that may transfer pro-environmental social norms offers an interesting path for future research.

Examining other sufficiency fields prevalent in online environments, for example plant-based nutrition or the avoidance of air travel, could be promising, as could studying the effectiveness of a message depending on the sender of the communication. Although we could not find reactance to possible greenwashing in the sample with a fictional company, differences could be tested between actual companies with varying sustainability reputations, and also non-governmental or governmental organisations.

Finally, our research did not investigate marketing techniques such as personalisation based on the evaluation of personal data from Social Media, user profiles, or community forums. The increasing importance of micro-targeting, on- and offline tracking, big data evaluations, and personalised advertising compared to traditional advertising formats might cause their importance for sufficiency-promoting communication to grow as well. As Study 2 showed sufficiency-promoting communication to be most effective for people already interested in the topic, personalisation may target these groups. At the same time, people with low pro-environmental values may show even less sufficiency over time if they are only confronted with conventional marketing content. Either way, further research is needed in this area.

Conclusion

Our research demonstrated that sufficiency-promoting communication in Social Media can be successful in increasing sufficiency behaviour in the short-term. Companies can also benefit from their sufficiency efforts since customers' attitudes towards Social Media communication and its sender are mostly positive. For establishing social norms for sufficiency, our attempts to boost the effect through the endorsement of distant peer groups, such as fellow customers or Social Media users, proved to be non-effective. This lack of effectivity possibly dampens the often-articulated hope that Social Media is a tool for behaviour change. With this research, we contribute to a better understanding of the opportunities and pitfalls of sufficiency-promoting communication. Finding positive short-term effects of sufficiency promotion raises hopes: Companies are able to be actors of change. And online communication fostering sufficiency can help in understanding that, in affluent societies, consumption reduction is better for people and the planet.

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CRediT authorship contribution statement

Vivian Frick: Conceptualization, Methodology, Formal analysis, Investigation, Resources, Writing – original draft, Visualization.

Maike Gossen: Conceptualization, Methodology, Investigation, Resources, Writing – original draft.

Tilman Santarius: Conceptualization, Methodology, Investigation, Resources, Writing – review & editing, Supervision.

Sonja Geiger: Conceptualization, Resources, Writing – review & editing, Project administration.

Appendix A

Items of Study 1

Sufficiency behaviour, consumption level (T1, T3):

We would like to know in which way you acquired clothing for yourself during the last four weeks.

Please estimate the amount of clothes for each. All wearable textiles should be included, e.g. shirts, pullovers, pants, jackets, underwear or socks (1 pair counts as 1 piece of clothing).

	0 clothing items	1	2	3	4	5	6 or more clothing items
Local shop	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

(e.g. department store, chain store)							
Online shop (e.g. Zalando, Tchibo, Otto, Avocadostore, other shops or online brands)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Social norm for sufficiency (T1, T2):

Customers of the online shop…

… buy new clothes regularly. (recoded)

… only buy clothes if they really need them.

… try to keep the number of new purchases of clothing low.

… repair their clothes or have them repaired when they are torn, instead of buying new ones.

… treat their clothes with care, so that they last longer.

Personal norm for sufficiency (T1, T2):

I feel obliged to only buy new clothes when I really need them.

My own values tell me that it is wrong to buy unnecessary clothing.

It would give me a bad conscience to buy a new piece of clothing, despite having enough clothes in my cupboard already.

Aspiration level (T1, T2):

Given limitless availability of money and time, how many pieces of clothing (outerwear) would you ideally like to buy annually? [Commentary: Please only indicate the number of outerwear, such as trousers, T-shirts or jackets, not including socks or underwear]

☐ no clothing items

☐ 1-5

☐ 6-10

☐ … in steps of 5

☐ 55-60

☐ more than 60

And how many pieces of clothing would you need to buy annually for your well-being not to be restricted?

Here, we would like you to give an estimation on how many pieces of clothing (outerwear) you would need to buy in order for your well-being not to be restricted.

[Commentary: Please only indicate the number of outerwear, such as trousers, T-shirts or jackets, not including socks or underwear]

☐ 1-5

☐ 6-10

☐ … in steps of 5

☐ 55-60

☐ more than 60

☐ clothing is not relevant for my well-being

☐ I would prefer not to buy any clothes at all

Environmental awareness (T1, Geiger 2019):

I am happy about initiatives which promote sustainable ways of living (e.g. ecovillages, slowfood-movement).

It makes me angry when I see that Germany misses its goals for climate protection.

More environmental protection means improved quality of life and health for everyone.

There are natural limits of growth which our industrialised world has already reached.

Every individual has a responsibility for ensuring a habitable environment for subsequent generations.

We have to find ways to live well independently of economic growth.

I buy ecologically cultivated foods.

When shopping, I choose products with eco-labels (e.g. blauer Engel, EU organic label or EU eco-label).

For my daily travel, I use the bike, public transport or I walk.

Cued recall of intervention (T1):

Did you perceive the communication on the topic „Less is more“?

Please tick the box, if you saw the following:

[Screenshots of Social Media posts and newsletter]

☐ No ☐ Yes, once ☐ Yes, twice ☐ Yes, more than twice

Additional items in Study 2

Sufficiency behaviour:

Within this survey a raffle of 10 vouchers worth 10 EUR each will be held.

If you win in the raffle, which of the following vouchers worth 10 Euros each would you like to receive. The raffle will take place within the next 4 weeks.

☐ 10 EUR donation to getchanged.net

You will not receive a voucher personally; instead the amount will be donated to Get Changed - The Fair Fashion Network. This non-profit organization promotes fair and ecological clothing production.

☐ 10 EUR voucher from H&M

H&M is a clothing store where you can find a wide range of fashionable clothing online or in a branch near you.

☐ 10 EUR voucher from C&A

C&A is a clothing store where you can find a wide range of fashionable clothing online or in a branch near you.

☐ 10 EUR voucher from kleiderkreisel.de

At Kleiderkreisel.de you can buy second-hand clothes from other users and you can also resell your own used clothes.

☐ I don’t want to participate in this raffle

Social norm for sufficiency:

Most Instagram users…

... buy new clothes regularly.(recoded)

…. Wear clothes of the newest fashion. (recoded)

… search for clothing online or in stores for fun. (recoded)

… only buy clothes if they really need them.

… treat their clothes with care, so they will be longlasting.

… repair their clothes or have them repaired when they are torn.

… pay attention to longevity when buying clothes.

… buy clothes second-hand instead of new.

Attitude towards communication:

… appeals to me.

… is annoying. (recoded)

… is attractive.

… is easy to understand.

… is informative.

Attitude towards the sender used (Armstrong Soule & Reich, 2015):

What do you think of the organisation „Clothing Company“ on the basis of their instagram appearance? The organisation…

… is trying to increase their profit. (-)

… is trying to win new clients. (-)

... is trying to please existing customers. (-)

… feels morally obliged to help the environment.

… is trying to give something back to the community.

… honestly cares for the well-being of the environment.

… is trying to present their products as more attractive, in order to set higher prices. (-)

… is using the green trend to increase takings. (-)

… does not really care about the environment. (-)

The full survey of study 2 can be found in the supplementary material. The universal values scale can be found with Steg et al. (2012).

Appendix B

Table 9. Mediation for consumption-promoting communication

	b	***se***	***z***	***β***	***p***
Path					
a1	-0.03	0.06	-0.62	-.03	.538
a2	0.08	0.09	0.84	.04	.399
a3	-0.14	1.86	-0.08	.00	.938
b1	-0.02	0.10	-0.15	-.01	.879
b2	0.09	0.07	1.32	.10	.187
b3	-0.01	0.00	-2.34	-.16*	.019
c	-0.16	0.12	-1.32	-.08	.187
Indirect mediation effects					
Social norm	0.00	0.00	0.15	<.01	.882
Personal norm	0.01	0.01	0.71	<.01	.479
Aspiration level	0.00	0.01	0.08	<.01	.938
total	-0.15	0.12	-1.23	-.07	.217
Covariates					
Social norm - personal norm	0.08	0.03	2.63	.11	.008
Social norm - aspiration level	-1.37	0.64	-2.14	-.10	.032
Personal norm - aspiration level	-10.65	1.35	-7.88	-.46	<.001

Appendix C. Supplementary data

Supplementary data to this article can be found online at https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvp.2021.101595.

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