Analyzing Social Media Utilization in Sustainability Consulting: A Comparative Study of Facebook and LinkedIn Engagement Strategies

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Abstract
In recent years, environmental consultancy firms have increasingly turned to social media platforms to communicate their sustainability efforts, engage with stakeholders, and promote their services. Social media has become an essential tool for companies to enhance their visibility, share knowledge, and raise awareness on environmental issues. Existing research highlights the effectiveness of social media for corporate communication, particularly in promoting sustainability and corporate social responsibility. However, limited studies have compared the use of different platforms, such as Facebook and LinkedIn, in this specific industry. This study employs a mixed-methods approach to analyze the social media activity of 17 environmental consultancy firms over three months—March, April, and May 2024. Posts from Facebook and LinkedIn were categorized into themes: promotional content, research dissemination, industry news, and academic events. The study examines how each platform is used across content formats and engagement levels, providing a comprehensive understanding of platform-specific usage. The findings reveal that Facebook is primarily used for public-facing promotional content, with a focus on visual media such as photos and videos. It is favored for campaigns to raise awareness about environmental services and practices. LinkedIn, in contrast, is more commonly used for professional engagement, focusing on sharing research articles, academic events, and industry updates. While Facebook is more frequently used, LinkedIn posts tend to reach a more specialized audience within the industry. This research offers valuable insights into how environmental consultancy firms can optimize their social media strategies to effectively communicate with general and professional audiences, contributing to the broader understanding of digital engagement in the sustainability sector.

Keywords
Digital Content; Environmental Consultancy; Social Media Platforms; Social Media Strategy; Sustainability Communication.

Introduction

In today's digital age, social media has transformed how companies communicate with their audiences, playing a vital role in shaping corporate narratives, promoting services, and fostering stakeholder engagement. For companies operating in environmental consultancy, this digital shift is particularly significant. As the world becomes increasingly aware of climate change, resource management, and sustainability practices, businesses in this sector are under pressure to not only provide effective solutions but also communicate their efforts transparently and in an accessible way. Social media offers a unique platform to bridge the gap between complex environmental issues and public understanding, making it a critical tool for awareness, education, and reputation building.

Environmental consultancy firms often face the challenge of engaging two distinct audiences: the general public, which requires simplified, visually engaging content, and industry professionals, who seek detailed, research-based insights. Understanding how to tailor communication strategies to these audiences is essential for maximizing the impact of social media efforts. Platforms like Facebook and LinkedIn offer distinct advantages in reaching these groups, with Facebook's visual and multimedia capabilities catering to broader public engagement. At the same time, LinkedIn's professional network fosters industry-specific communication.

Despite the growing use of social media in the environmental consultancy industry, in-depth research is lacking on how different platforms are utilized to convey sustainability and environmental services. This study aims to fill that gap by examining the social media strategies of environmental consultancy firms, focusing on the comparative use of Facebook and LinkedIn. By analyzing the content, format, and engagement patterns on both platforms, this research provides valuable insights into how firms can optimize their digital strategies to communicate effectively with both the general public and professionals in the field of sustainability.

Literature review

In recent years, social media has become a vital tool for environmental companies, enabling them to raise awareness, promote sustainability initiatives, and engage with a broader audience. Platforms such as Facebook and LinkedIn allow these companies to communicate their environmental missions, share project updates, and educate the public on sustainability issues (Okpara et al., 2021). Social media serves as an accessible, cost-effective medium for environmental companies to amplify their voices, reach stakeholders, and build a community of like-minded individuals and organizations. Studies indicate that social media use among environmental organizations has steadily increased as they recognize its potential to influence public opinion, engage in advocacy, and drive collective action toward environmental conservation and sustainability (Scholz et al., 2021).

One key trend in the rise of social media usage among environmental companies is the increased focus on sustainability topics. Sustainability-related content, such as posts on renewable energy, waste management, climate change, and circular economy practices, has gained substantial traction on social platforms. Environmental companies use these platforms to highlight their commitment to sustainability by sharing content that addresses pressing environmental challenges and provides solutions (Lovejoy et al., 2021). These topics resonate not only with consumers but also with policymakers, investors, and activists. The visibility and accessibility of social media make it easier for companies to showcase their sustainable practices and environmental impact, thereby positioning them as leaders in the global movement toward a more sustainable future.

The rise of sustainability topics on social media has also fostered a growing interest in corporate social responsibility (CSR) and green marketing. Environmental companies are increasingly using social media platforms to communicate their CSR initiatives, including reducing carbon footprints, building sustainable supply chains, and advancing energy efficiency (Gupta et al., 2022). By sharing such initiatives, companies aim to build trust with consumers and differentiate themselves in a market where sustainability is

becoming a key purchasing driver. Studies have shown that sustainability messaging on social media can improve brand image, increase customer loyalty, and even influence purchasing decisions as consumers become more aware of their choices' environmental and social impact (Siano et al., 2021).

Furthermore, social media analytics has become essential for environmental companies to track the success of their sustainability campaigns and adjust their strategies accordingly. Social media analysis allows companies to monitor engagement with sustainability-related content, measure public sentiment toward environmental issues, and identify emerging trends in the sustainability discourse (Bennett et al., 2020). This data-driven approach enables environmental companies to refine their messaging, target the right audiences, and make informed decisions aligning with environmental goals and business objectives. As the demand for sustainability continues to rise, social media will remain a critical platform for environmental companies to advocate for sustainable practices and contribute to the global dialogue on environmental stewardship.

Environmental consulting companies in Romania play a crucial role in helping businesses and government organizations comply with environmental regulations and adopt sustainable practices. These companies offer a wide range of services, including environmental impact assessments, waste management strategies, pollution control, and sustainability consulting. As Romania aligns its environmental policies with the European Union's Green Deal and other global sustainability goals, the demand for environmental consulting has grown significantly. Some companies provide expertise in areas such as renewable energy, sustainable resource management, and circular economy practices. These firms also assist in obtaining environmental permits, ensuring compliance with Romania's environmental laws, and advising on corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives related to sustainability. The rise of environmental awareness and the shift toward green business practices in Romania have positioned these consulting firms as key partners for both local and international companies seeking to improve their environmental performance and reduce their ecological footprint. Additionally, these firms increasingly leverage digital tools and social media platforms to communicate their sustainability achievements and engage with stakeholders.

Studying the social media content of environmental companies in Romania is essential for understanding how these organizations communicate their sustainability efforts, engage with the public, and influence environmental awareness. As social media has become a primary platform for disseminating information, analyzing the content shared by these companies can reveal insights into public attitudes toward environmental issues and corporate responsibility. By examining their posts, interactions, and campaigns, researchers can assess how effectively Romanian environmental companies promote sustainable practices and how they contribute to the broader discourse on climate change, pollution, and resource conservation.

Additionally, this analysis can identify trends in green marketing, the use of digital platforms for environmental advocacy, and the strategies these companies use to build credibility and trust among consumers. Understanding this dynamic is crucial as Romania works to align with European sustainability goals and foster a culture of environmental responsibility among businesses and the public.

The research objectives are: (1) to explore the mix of online communication channels chosen by the Romanian environmental consulting companies; (2) to identify specific social media content strategies of Romanian environmental consulting companies on Facebook and Instagram; (3) to find the most used content categories and format types on their social media accounts.

Methodology

Research design

This study employs a quantitative content analysis method to examine the social media activity of environmental companies in Romania. The analysis focuses on identifying the types of content shared, the sustainability-related themes, and engagement patterns on social platforms such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram. A purposive sampling method will be used to select environmental consulting companies in Romania with an active social media presence, ensuring a focus on organizations that frequently engage with their audience and promote sustainability practices.

Data collection

The data for this study were collected from the official social media accounts (Facebook and LinkedIn) of selected environmental companies in Romania. The companies were identified based on their relevance to the environmental sector, including those specializing in sustainability consulting, waste management, renewable energy, and environmental impact assessments. The analysis timeframe covered three consecutive months during the busy season (March, April, and May) to capture a robust dataset of their activity. The data collected will include social media posts, captions, engagement metrics (likes, shares, comments), and posting frequency. Tools like Netlytic were used to automate data scraping from these platforms.

Content categorization

Each post was categorized into pre-defined content themes based on its subject matter, as presented in Table 1, including:

Table 1. Content themes

Content Theme	Description
Sustainability and Environmental Awareness	Posts related to environmental protection, climate change, and resource conservation.
Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)	Posts about the company's efforts to implement sustainable business practices and engage in community initiatives.
Promotional Content	Advertising of products, services, or events related to environmental consulting.
Educational Content	Informational posts aimed at educating the public or clients on environmental issues, regulatory changes, or best practices.

Content Theme	Description
Industry News and Events	Updates related to environmental policies, conferences, or industry-specific news.

Each post was examined to determine its format, which refers to how the content is presented. The formats included several options, such as text-only posts, posts combining text with images, or posts featuring text alongside videos. Additionally, the analysis looked at whether the posts contained external links directing users to other websites or resources or if they were shared from other social media accounts or pages. By categorizing posts based on these different formats, the study aimed to understand how companies use various content types to engage their audience and whether certain formats are more effective in capturing attention and generating interaction.

Data analysis

The collected data was analyzed using a thematic content analysis approach to uncover the main trends and patterns in the messaging used by the companies. This method helped identify the dominant themes and topics, such as sustainability, corporate social responsibility, and promotional content, within the posts. The focus of the analysis was to explore how these companies frame sustainability and environmental issues, as well as to track the frequency with which key themes appeared in their posts. Furthermore, a comparative analysis was conducted across Facebook and LinkedIn to determine if there were significant differences in content themes and posting frequency between the two platforms, providing insights into how each is utilized for different communication strategies.

Results and discussion

From a social media strategy perspective, the consistent posting over three months suggests that these environmental companies are committed to maintaining an active presence across multiple platforms. However, the content is carefully tailored to the platform's audience. Facebook posts focus on consumer outreach, often using simple, engaging visuals to educate and promote environmental behaviors. Meanwhile, LinkedIn posts cater to a more specialized, professional audience, using the platform to communicate more formal research findings, industry news, and policy updates.

The table provides a detailed look at how environmental companies use social media platforms, specifically Facebook and LinkedIn, to engage with their audience and promote sustainability, recycling, energy, and environmental protection initiatives. The total number of posts for March, April, and May 2024 shows consistent activity, with Facebook having a slightly higher number of posts across all months than LinkedIn. This pattern highlights the companies' use of Facebook for more frequent, consumer-oriented engagement, while LinkedIn serves as a platform for professional, research-focused, and B2B communication.

Table 2. Social media platform usage

Platform	March 2024	April 2024	May 2024	Total Posts	Percentage of Usage
Facebook	63	61	70	194	55.30%
LinkedIn	43	43	50	136	44.70%
Total	106	104	120	330	100%

The most active companies, such as Reciclad'OR and FEPRA SA, demonstrate the importance of staying relevant through frequent updates. This frequency helps maintain engagement and build brand recognition in the context of sustainability and environmental responsibility. Additionally, companies leveraging both platforms demonstrate the duality of their mission: driving public awareness and change while maintaining credibility and influence within professional and regulatory circles.

Table 3. Total posts per social media platform

Month	Total Facebook Posts	Total LinkedIn Posts	Overall Total Posts
March 2024	63	43	106
April 2024	61	43	104
May 2024	70	50	120
Total	**194**	**136**	**330**

From a social media content perspective, the data reveals distinct strategies companies use on Facebook and LinkedIn. Over the three months (March, April, and May 2024), 330 posts were analyzed, with 194 of these being on Facebook and 136 on LinkedIn. The higher activity on Facebook reflects its role as the preferred platform for more interactive, public-facing content. In contrast, LinkedIn, with its fewer posts, is utilized for more professional and research-based communication.

With its 194 posts, Facebook was predominantly used for promotional content and awareness campaigns, especially those related to sustainability, recycling, and corporate initiatives. Companies used this platform to engage a broader audience, including environmentally conscious individuals and the general public. The typical Facebook post format combined text with photos or videos, a strategy aimed at maximizing visual engagement. This multimedia content was often tied to real-time events, campaigns, or environmental initiatives, suggesting a focus on fostering day-to-day interactions through visually compelling posts. Promotions and campaigns on recycling, energy efficiency, and sustainability were the central themes on Facebook, indicating that companies relied heavily on the platform to humanize their brand and increase awareness of their environmental efforts.

On the other hand, LinkedIn, with 136 posts, had a more reserved but professional tone. It was primarily used for sharing corporate updates, research insights, and industry-specific achievements. LinkedIn posts often took the form of text with links to external resources or text with photos, reflecting the platform's function as a space for thought leadership and professional networking. Companies use LinkedIn to engage with

industry peers, stakeholders, and business partners, focusing more on sharing knowledge and building credibility in their respective fields. Topics like corporate responsibility, research findings, and academic events were more frequently discussed here. The difference in post volume between Facebook and LinkedIn also highlights how companies prioritize visual storytelling and interactive content on Facebook, while focusing on informative, research-based content on LinkedIn.

An interesting trend emerges when analyzing post activity across months. March and April had similar activity levels, with slight increases in Facebook posts compared to LinkedIn. These months likely saw a continuation of ongoing campaigns or events, with companies maintaining a consistent level of communication. However, May marked a notable increase in posts on both platforms, particularly on Facebook, which rose from 61 in April to 70 in May. This spike suggests that companies timed their increased communication efforts to coincide with key environmental events, such as Earth Day in April. May is a follow-up period to continue engagement and awareness around these campaigns. The increase in LinkedIn posts in May, from 43 to 50, could correspond to end-of-quarter updates or the conclusion of academic or industry events that companies wanted to highlight.

Regarding content formats, Facebook favored multimedia posts, especially those combining text with photos and videos, which effectively engage a wider audience. Companies use these formats to promote their services, share success stories, and run awareness campaigns, all aimed at creating a stronger emotional connection with their audience. Meanwhile, LinkedIn focused more on text+link posts, directing followers to industry reports, research papers, or news articles. LinkedIn's fewer but more targeted posts reflect its use as a platform for knowledge dissemination and corporate transparency rather than public engagement.

Overall, companies used Facebook primarily for frequent engagement with a broader, more casual audience, while LinkedIn was used to build credibility within the industry through professional, research-based content. The spike in activity in May suggests that companies align their communication strategies with significant environmental and industry events, posting more frequently around these key times.

Facebook: focus on promotion and public awareness

Facebook has emerged as the dominant platform for these companies, with most posts centered on promotions, public awareness campaigns, and educational content. For example, Reciclad'OR and FEPRA SA extensively posted about recycling initiatives, material collection, and general awareness of environmental responsibility. These posts often use text+photo and text+video formats, which are effective in visually conveying their message to a broader audience. The heavy use of multimedia content—images, videos, and infographics — aligns with Facebook's strengths as a visually driven platform, enabling companies to engage consumers more effectively and in a more relatable way. Posts that provide practical tips for recycling or energy efficiency also create direct engagement opportunities through shares, likes, and comments, encouraging the viral spread of environmental consciousness.

Another key observation is that companies like EcoPositive SRL and GreenTech SA use Facebook to showcase their services while simultaneously educating the public about

the importance of sustainability. By presenting real-world impacts, project results, and case studies through video and photo formats, they build trust and legitimacy while driving action.

LinkedIn: professional engagement and research communication

LinkedIn, on the other hand, is more heavily utilized for professional engagement, research dissemination, and corporate updates. Companies like Carbon Expert SRL and ARCADIS România used LinkedIn to share updates on environmental policies, research results, and conference participation. The text+link format was common on LinkedIn, reflecting its role as a platform for sharing detailed, in-depth content such as articles, reports, and studies. LinkedIn posts often cater to a more specialized audience, including industry professionals, academics, and stakeholders in the environmental sector.

This distinction is clear in the activities of companies such as GreenWEEE International and GEOSTUD SA, which post about academic events, research collaborations, and sustainable technology innovations on LinkedIn, using it as a tool to network with peers and establish thought leadership in the environmental space. LinkedIn's professional tone and content also align with companies' efforts to communicate with potential business partners, investors, and governmental bodies.

Discussion of results compared to other studies

The findings of this study align with existing literature that emphasizes the distinct roles of different social media platforms in corporate communication, particularly in industries focused on sustainability. Previous research has shown that Facebook is widely used for public engagement due to its broad reach and visual appeal, making it an effective tool for simplifying complex environmental issues for the general public (Huang & Zhang, 2021). This study confirms these patterns, with Facebook being the dominant platform for promotional and educational content related to sustainability and environmental awareness. LinkedIn, on the other hand, as supported by previous studies, is recognized for its value in professional networking and knowledge dissemination, especially for industry-specific content such as research updates and policy news (Etter et al., 2019).

Unlike studies focusing on other sectors, such as corporate social responsibility in general, this research highlights the unique challenges environmental consultancy firms face in communicating technical and research-based information to general and professional audiences (Saxton et al., 2019). The results further support research by Bonsón et al. (2019), which emphasizes the importance of platform differentiation for citizen and stakeholder engagement. This study builds on those findings by showing how environmental firms are leveraging LinkedIn’s professional ecosystem to foster deeper industry connections and share technical content, aligning with the insights from Martínez-Navalón et al. (2020). These findings reinforce the conclusion that companies in the environmental sector must adopt a differentiated social media approach, strategically using each platform to meet the diverse needs of their audiences. This contributes to a broader understanding of how sustainability-focused companies can effectively harness social media to reflect their commitment to transparency and industry leadership.

Limitations

One limitation of this study's methodology is that it relies on publicly available social media data, which may not capture private interactions or detailed audience demographics. Additionally, the study focuses on companies with an active social media presence, potentially overlooking smaller companies that do not use these platforms extensively. Finally, sentiment analysis tools may not always accurately capture nuanced opinions or cultural context, which could affect the interpretation of engagement data.

By combining qualitative content analysis with quantitative engagement metrics, this methodology provides a comprehensive understanding of how environmental companies in Romania utilize social media to promote sustainability and engage with the public.

Conclusions

This study provides a comparative analysis of social media usage by environmental consultancy firms, focusing on the distinct roles of Facebook and LinkedIn. The findings reveal that Facebook is primarily used for public-facing promotional content, leveraging visuals like photos and videos to engage a broader audience. It is an effective platform for raising awareness about sustainability initiatives and services. In contrast, LinkedIn is utilized for professional communication, focusing on industry news, research dissemination, and academic events, targeting a more specialized, professional audience.

The analysis highlights the importance of tailoring social media strategies to suit each platform's unique strengths. Companies can maximize their impact by using Facebook for broader public engagement and LinkedIn for sharing professional insights and industry-specific developments. By strategically aligning content with platform-specific audiences, environmental consultancy firms can enhance their digital presence and effectively communicate their sustainability efforts.

This research contributes to the growing understanding of how social media can be optimized for environmental communication. It offers valuable insights for firms aiming to enhance their outreach and engagement in the sustainability sector.

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