**ARAŞTIRMA MAKALESİ / RESEARCH ARTICLE**

# Goals and Practices in Corporate Sustainability Communication: Doğuş Otomotiv Case

## Şirket Sürdürülebilirlik İletişiminde Hedef ve Pratikler: Doğuş Otomotiv Örneği

Ömer VATANARTIRAN[*] (ID)

**Abstract**

The concept of sustainability was introduced in 1987 by the United Nations Brundtland Commission, at a time when global society was experiencing various political, economic and social conflicts. States developed legal measures for a more sustainable life and placed the topic at the core of their political agendas. They were followed shortly by non-governmental organizations, municipalities, companies and the media, who started developing strategies for economic growth that also integrated a sustainable natural environment and society. Although sustainability practices in the business world sometimes remained superficial for some companies and did not go beyond an effort to adapt to business trends, the proportion of corporations that take genuine action for real social change has gradually increased and this has led to the development of norms in the private sphere. In Turkey, more and more companies have redesigned their communication strategies in light of the growing awareness around sustainability and the related social expectations. In this process, it became important to understand the way in which leading companies experienced this transformation and to what extent they combined sustainability practices with the values of their stakeholders. With this purpose in mind, this study focuses on Doğuş Otomotiv's sustainability values and the communication strategies they implement to spread them. Content analysis was con1ducted on sustainability reports and websites from a qualitative perspective, and an in-depth interview was held with a senior Corporate Communications manager. Accordingly, it has been concluded that sustainability is defined as a participatory, flexible, open communication-based concept among all stakeholders, as well as a dynamic and broad concept inherent in corporate ethics and company culture. It also appears that

\*    Doktor Öğretim Üyesi, Bahçeşehir Üniversitesi, İletişim Fakültesi, Halkla İlişkiler ve Tanıtım Bölümü, İstanbul, Türkiye, omer.vatanartiran@cons.bau.edu.tr, Orcid: 0000-0002-3147-4626

sustainability communication takes a different form in different channels depending on the stakeholder profile, and that in this sense, new media presents both opportunities and challenges.

**Keywords:** Sustainability, sustainability communication, corporate sustainability, public relations

**Öz**

Sürdürülebilirlik kavramı 1987 yılında Birleşmiş Milletler Brundtland Komisyonu tarafından global gündeme taşındığında, kavrama yakın ilgi gösteren küresel toplumun birçok parçası, siyasi, ekonomik ve toplumsal çatışmalar yaşıyordu. Sürdürülebilir bir yaşam için kanuni önlemler alan ve siyasi gündemlerinin merkezine bu kavramı yerleştiren devletleri; sivil toplum kuruluşları, belediyeler, şirketler ve medya takip etti ve hepsi de ekonomik büyüme kadar yaşanabilir bir çevre ve toplum anlayışı için stratejiler geliştirmeye başladılar. Zaman içinde sürdürülebilirlik, kapsamına ekonomik ve çevresel konuların yanısıra toplumsal meseleleri de almaya başladı. Her ne kadar sürdürülebilirlik uygulamaları bazı şirketler için şekilsel kalsa ve bir yönetim modasına uyum sağlama çabasından öteye gitmese de, gerçek bir toplumsal değişim için samimiyetle sorumluluk üstlenen organizasyonların sayısı giderek arttı ve sektörde bu yönde normların gelişmesini sağladı. Türkiye'de de giderek daha çok şirket, gelişen sürdürülebilirlik bilinci ve etrafında şekillenen toplumsal beklentiler ışığında iletişim stratejilerini yeniden kurguladı. Bu süreçte öncü olan şirketlerin bu dönüşümü nasıl deneyimledikleri, yeni felsefelerini paydaşların değerlerine ne derece için hale getirdiklerini anlamak da önem kazandı. Bu saikle çalışmada, Doğuş Otomotiv'in sürdürülebilirlik değerleri ve bunların yaygınlaşması için izledikleri iletişim stratejilerine odaklanılmıştır. Niteliksel bir bakış açısıyla sürdürülebilirlik raporları ve web sitelerinde içerik analizi yapılmış, ayrıca üst düzey bir Kurumsal İletişim yöneticisiyle derinlemesine görüşme gerçekleştirilmiştir. Buna göre sürdürülebilirliğin, tüm paydaşlar arası katılımcı, esnek, açık iletişim temelli, ayrıca kurumsal etik anlayış ve şirket kültürüne için dinamik ve kapsamı geniş bir kavram olarak tanımlandığı sonucuna varılmıştır. Bununla beraber, iletişiminin farklı paydaşlara göre farklı mecralarda gerçekleştiği ve hızlı değişen sürdürülebilirlik gündemlerinin giderek hızlanan yeni medya sayesinde hızla yayılmasının sürdürülebilirlik iletişimi açısından hem fırsatlar hem de güçlükler arz ettiği neticesi ortaya çıkmıştır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Sürdürülebilirlik, sürdürülebilir iletişim, kurumsal sürdürülebilirlik, halkla ilişkiler

## Introduction

When Brundtland Commission was established in 1983 by the UN in order to develop "a global agenda for change" (Brundstland Report, 1987), the world was witnessing major political challenges such as Cold War, Israel and Palestine conflict as well as the rising tension between France and Lebanon. Furthermore, increasing global economic inequality was drawing more and more attention especially as news about the poverty and famine in Africa circulated in the world media. Although the Chernobyl Disaster would happen 3 years later; nuclear weapon crisis, the Ozone shield depletion, global warming, and industrial gases had already triggered environmental concerns. All of these together with issues such as AIDS, human rights problems, and growing deforestation worldwide pushed the Commission to launch the concept of sustainable development. Since then, it has had huge effects on state policies, public affairs, and business life as well as the global consumption culture.

Despite rising concerns at the state level due to the ecological aftermath of the economic growth in the 1970's, Turkey adopted this concept later compared to many Western societies. It was only in

1996 when sustainability officially entered the political agenda (Özmehmet, 2008). However, private sector rapidly latched on this idea in the 2000's and led the transformation towards a more proactive political structure as well as a responsible consumption culture. Companies started to redesign their production processes regarding the use of resources, materials, space, etc. In addition, they went towards rebranding by reviewing their values, brand promises, organizational culture and structures. Here, communication has been of great importance in developing sustainability-driven relationships with customers, stakeholders and within themselves. PR, in specific, played a crucial role in this process.

The transformation of public policies, business life, organizational culture and consumption habits cannot be thought without Public Relations' own transformation upon sustainability. In this regard, PR departments shouldered the responsibility of explaining the reasons of its importance, its goals and the way it should be strategized. Turkey's particular political, economic, social and cultural circumstances present unique stories, both success and failure, and PR professionals experience such distinctive conditions as sustainability in a global sense evolves. Thus, it is worthy of focus on the challenges Turkish companies' face in this process. Both advancements and insufficiencies together with progressive PR approaches and internal/external resistance deserve a closer look in order to develop a comprehensive understanding.

### Literature Review

Although sustainability gained wide popularity in the 1980's after the UN's emergency call, the concept dates back to the first half of the 18th century when it was used as "Nachhaltigkeit" by German dynasties to describe their forestation policies (Grober, 2007). Towards the 20th century, the launch of national parks and conversation programs paved the way for an awareness of sustainable environment and natural resources. The World War II triggered further concerns of "environmental degradation and resource limits" after the damages of weapons, chemical contaminations and atomic bombings (Robertson, 2018). Afterwards, the Air Pollution Act passed by the American National Congress in 1955 (Ross, Chmiel & Ferkol, 2012) and it led other legal mechanisms to take action and form public policies in the 1970s such as the Declaration of Cocoyok published by the UN Conference on Trade and Development in order to raise awareness of "poverty-caused environmental degradation as well as over-consumption of industrialized countries". (Lippert, 2004, p.2) In this regard, the concept mostly represented the tension between economy and ecology, the pursuit of finding the balance which allows economic growth without sacrificing present ecology and thus future economic activities (Common & Perrings, 1992). In other words, profit without people and planet cannot be considered as sustainable (Elkington, 1994).

Despite changing and context-dependent highlights over time, Brundtland Commission improved a more inclusive approach of sustainable development defined famously as "the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."(Brundtland Commission of the UN, 1987). Thus, sustainability became a more comprehensive concept, touching social, political and cultural issues as well as environmental and

economic concerns (Henriques, 2001). Since then, it transforms both formal bodies and individual mindsets in order to provide not just biodiversity, well-preserved ecosystem, and livable planet but also a more participative, inclusive and harmonious social, cultural and political life.

Today, sustainability is a constant struggle for ethically responsible actions at all levels of society, rather than top-down strategies of leading global institutions such as UN. It involves every kind of social actors, both national and international, formal and informal, corporate and individual (Kruse, 2011). In order to reach a maximum awareness and consensus among these, communication has a dramatic role. By developing effective messages within a continuous dialogue via corresponding media or interpersonal communication channels; sustainability goals, plans and strategies reach to all social actors (Adomßent & Godemann, 2011). This increases action ability for preventing economic interest leading social inequalities, agricultural challenges, poverty, health issues, climate change, and/or political conflicts. From NGO's to public entities, professional communities, universities, independent initiatives, and corporations; there are many mechanisms contributing to this process (Kruse, 2011). Thus, both vertical and horizontal communication is used among all these actors for the spread of sustainability-focused plans and actions. While individuals as consumers and/or citizens get organized for more sustainability-driven operations, products, and services; organizations encourage them for ethically more responsible consumption and active citizenship as communication at institutional levels also proceeds (Petts, 2000).

The role that corporates play in this network of communication deserves a closer look since a wide range of concepts such as corporate citizenship or corporate social responsibility take sustainability as a basis (Carrol, Brown& Buchholtz, 2018). All these approaches oppose to the libertarian idea that the per se composition of a free market would end up with the maximum value for a business as well as the society where it blossoms. On the contrary, they all assume that corporate interests should deliberately and actively be attuned to social needs and expectations. To be specific, social responsibility does not only focus on "avoiding negative social impacts" but also on creating positive benefits. (Davis & Blomstrom, 1975, p. 39). This comes with a lot consideration of the impacts of the company operations. An ethical frame based on the duties and responsibilities towards all kinds of shareholders leads to a more sustainable environment, as the citizenship approach proposes especially for the global companies (Graves, Waddock & Kelly, 2001). This necessitates a special care to legal issues as well as values such as honesty, accuracy, openness, and transparency. In addition, an altruism leading social enhancement by realizing projects are also welcomed. To illustrate, activities including "corporate giving, product and service donations, employee volunteerism, and community development" (Carrol, Brown & Buchholtz; 2018, p. 37) strengthen the trust relationship with a society. Thus, a broader sense of responsibility transcending a profit-oriented and investor-centric economic approach and embracing legal, ethical and philanthropic aspects comes into prominence.

This transformation from profit-based business strategies towards community-oriented policies cannot be separated from the rise of the two-way symmetrical communication, a PR model developed by Grunig (1992) which encourages dialogue, transparency, participation, continuity and mutual understanding in relationships with all types of stakeholders. As a matter of fact, a two-way flow of communication among equals instead of an asymmetrical publicity imposing persuasive short-term

messages ensures "more socially responsible, sustainable, ethical and reputable organizations" (Pompper, 2018, p. ix). Moreover, sustainability relies on an effective cooperation of internal systems including human resources, R&D, marketing, or law department as well as external sources; rather than hierarchically imposed managerial imperatives (Signitzer & Prexl, 2007).

Despite increasing community-oriented practices as mentioned above, corporate efforts for sustainability suffer from a critical discourse targeting the use of sustainability-related concepts and policies. Although fashionable notions or buzzwords such as eco-friendliness, organic, compostable, energy efficiency, or recyclable are frequently used in order to describe responsible production and consumption at a global scale, they can also be seen as instruments of a deceiving corporate discourse. Greenwashing, for example, is used by critics in order to question the gap between a company's sustainability promises and culture, operations and regulatory exemptions. (Gallicano, 2011). This inconsistency described as a "poor environmental performance and positive communication about environmental performance" by Delmas and Burbano (2011, p. 65) draw more and more attention and affects PR adversely. Rather than executing a transparent and open two-way communication with the stakeholders, corporates may invest on "green marketing communications" (Nyilasi, Gangadharbatla & Paladino, 2014) based especially on the use of social media and audience-engaging projects. Thus, they position their brand as pro-green and sustainability-sensitive although both the content and the form of their operations may be disappointing. This reactionism of green skeptics does not only infamize those who genuinely struggle for sustainability but also PR as a discipline. In fact, it serves to the view which sees public relations as a tool of manipulation for the sake of corporate benefits in guise of public good (Edwards, 2006, p. 229). According to this, public relations manufacture consent to the hegemony of power elites in a capitalist system by injecting a legitimate discourse within a network of communication. (Motion & Weaver, 2005).

## Research: A Case Study On Doğuş Otomotiv

### Aim and Methodology

This study aims to offer an insight about the way sustainability is defined, experienced and improved regarding its communication with the stakeholders involved in the process. In other words, it is an attempt to develop an understanding of sustainability from a public relations perspective. As mentioned above, sustainability has had a long journey before reaching its actual significance. Today, it cannot be detached from corporate communication strategies. Thus, both sustainability as a PR tool and PR evolving upon sustainability gain importance considering rapid business structure change in Turkey.

Case studies generally aim to develop a comprehensive understanding of a whole by concentrating on its particular dynamics (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 534). To do this, a multi-dimensional approach allowing various techniques such as archive analysis, observations and interviews is crucial. Actually, both descriptive and exploratory approaches contribute to understand a whole phenomenon in a particular context (Yin, 2003, p. 1). With this in mind, a content analysis through the current website and 2020 sustainability reports of Doğuş Company and an in-depth interview with an executive at the

Corporate Communication department are conducted. Thus, a further perspective beyond written documents is provided. In this sense, it is a triangular research which combines data provided from multiple sources (Janesick, 1999).

To improve the understanding of the phenomenon in this case, 3 questions are asked:

1. How is sustainability explained?
2. What are the communication tools to improve its practices?
3. What kind of challenges are faced?

### Sampling

The research focuses specifically on the automotive industry as it is one of the main sectors facing pressure and criticism with regards to its environmental impact. The automotive industry is thus continuously improving its manufacturing methods, as well as organizational and marketing practices (Orsato & Wells, 2007). Moreover, the industry also address challenges relating to the use of its products.

Doğuş Otomotiv is a major industry actor, which has been playing an active role in sustainability for 12 years. The company is representative of the automotive industry with 27 years of experience in commercial automotive activities through 11 international brands and 12 different product categories with 2500+ employees. Furthermore, it is one of the rare companies who shares annual sustainability reports online and regularly updates their company website on sustainability issues. In addition, the availability of the executive to be interviewed offered a chance to elaborate on official documents analyzed. Thus, both the availability of the official documents and the convenience of the interviewee led to purposeful sampling.

### Scope and Limitations

Sustainability communication at Doğuş Otomotiv impacts many stakeholders, however, this study only focuses on the company's strategies and practices. The way stakeholders define and experience them are not included. Thus, it is limited to the official documents available online and the selected company's own experiences rather than a study comprehending all actors involved.

### Findings

### Sustainability: Definitions, Goals and Values

Sustainability is seen as a strategic management tool in order to "become a good company". As stated on the website, "areas related to sustainability are managed by the Corporate Governance and Sustainability Committee, which is among the committees operating directly under the Board of Directors, including two Independent Members". Rather than a steady definition, it is taken as a dynamic process affected by global entities, codes of ethics, legislative procedures, trade principles, and stakeholder feedbacks. The role of international bodies such as Universal Declaration of Human

Rights, United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, and UN Global Compact is especially emphasized in this process. As stated on its website, "Doğuş Otomotiv Corporate Compliance Policy, together with the Doğuş Otomotiv Code of Ethics to which it is affiliated, are regularly reviewed in line with changing processes, developments, expectations and legislative regulations, and are updated as predicated by those terms and conditions". Thus, sustainability is something at play which is actively shaped and reshaped by related actors rather than an inflexible concept imposed from top to down. Moreover, it is defined as a "strategic priority" to be used for a "better quality life for the entire society".

This resilience is a result of an open communication and constant pursuit of "industry analyses, global changes, laws and regulations, results of surveys held regularly by our brands and departments to inquire about stakeholder opinions, organizational principles and objectives". Thanks to such researches, their 2025 strategy could be developed "in line with economic, environmental and social impact" in 2017. The emphasis on social issues is remarkable. It implies that sustainability is not only a matter of "preventing negative effects on the environment and managing energy consumption with high efficiency" or "setting waste yield to zero and increasing waste recovery rate". In addition, it also comprehends issues such as gender equality, human rights, diversity worker security, child labour management, and equal opportunity for every employee and supplier.

The vision of sustainability is not limited to company-oriented goals but comprehends more societal concerns. Together with the regions where they operate, they also aim "the right and efficient use of all the resources that the society will need in the future". Stakeholders are described as the customers, employees, suppliers, investors, dealers and all other communities; in sum as the "individuals, groups and organizations with direct impact on the Company's operations". All these stakeholders and operations are put in the frame of sustainability policy. While economic responsibility performance, efficient use of resources and climate-change caused financial risks are seen as the basic economic development policy, market presence policy highlights the importance of local economic contribution, empowerment of its employees, "equal rights for equal works", and customer relationships based on continuous communication. Moreover, the use of renewable energy resources, global warming awareness, environment-friendly methodologies, environmentalist corporate culture and fight against pollution are emphasized in order to define the "environment and energy policy".

Ethics is significantly used in order to explain what sustainability is according to the Company. In fact, ethical principles are seen as a regulator of relationships among the stakeholders and the Company's commitment to the UN Global Compact principles. While the role of state regulations, law, and international guidelines are also taken into consideration, an ethical conscience based on the values such as integrity, honesty, transparency, accountability, justice, equality, respect for rights, independence and diversity is strongly emphasized. As stated on the website, "the main axis of Doğuş Otomotiv's sustainability strategy is to improve all sustainability policies and related procedures and practices with a perspective that stretches 'beyond laws and regulations.'" Anti-bribery, anti-corruption and anti-terrorism as particular ethical topics draw attention since the company undertakes a leading role. In short, sustainability is defined on a broader scope with multiple goals

concerning the Company as well as the society they serve; based on the ethical values shared by a wide range of stakeholders.

### Empowering Sustainability Through Communication

Communication is not only used in order to raise the public awareness of the Company's sustainability-driven strategies but also for developing an organizational culture giving weight to sustainability. Furthermore, each and every stakeholder is taken as the respondent of particular communication strategies. There are various campaigns, services, brands and projects launched by the Sustainability Team with the purpose of engaging as many stakeholders as possible.

The most recent example is the "Bir'iz Employer Brand" which communicated with all kinds of employees working under different conditions during the pandemic. Furthermore, it encouraged entry-level employees under the age 35 to share their opinions since it is believed that the younger generation has particular sensitivities, values and expectations in professional life. It offered an open sphere to participate in managerial decision-making process seeking ways of business continuity in this period of uncertainty. As pointed out on the website, "the message 'we act together, we leave a trace' is communicated throughout the company with the brand ambassadors formed internally". Furthermore, the Committee of Volunteering encourages employers to get involved in voluntary programs within working hours such as supporting animal shelters or environmental cleanups. Actually, this campaign shows the importance attached to employee loyalty and satisfaction in sustainability-driven organizational culture. Moreover, the stress on the employees as key stakeholders and their feedback and participation in the executive process also display that internal communication is a priority for sustainability. In particular, Corporate Sustainability Reports published annually since 2010 serve raising awareness and loyalty of them.

As mentioned above, ethics are eagerly mentioned in order to make the definition of sustainability for the Company; and Ethics Line – 444 38 45 (ETIK) serves to employees need of reporting ethical concerns. By providing an anonymous communication and the monitoring of an independent institution, it aims to raise the working quality, prevent any discrimination and violation. Moreover, training programs are held by the sustainability department in order to raise awareness on the ethics, equality, diversity, human rights, as well as economic and environmental issues. Induction programs arranged for new employees are given a special significance due to the belief that the foundation forms further actions touching sustainability issues. In fact, a performance system named as "D-Human" continuously searches the needs for education and training programs in contact with all levels of workers; thus, sustainability covers self-enhancement-driven values as well.

For every stakeholder, there is a different engagement policy with changing goals, frequencies and activities. While quarterly internal bulletins and publications, happy hours, daily news reports, CEO messages ten times a year, "I Have an Idea" platform, employee satisfaction and loyalty surveys conducted biannually, picnics, trainings, end of year dinners, seniority encouragement awards engage employees in order to focus on sustainability areas; fairs and shows, secret customer researches, Value and Care Center (DIM), Safe and Economic Driving Trainings, Warranty Services, e-bulletins,

assistant lines, seasonal maintenance campaigns, certified advanced driving techniques trainings are executed for engaging the customers in sustainability-driven policies. Moreover; information meetings twice a year, monthly and annual presentations as well as scientific reports are prepared for the investors in order to raise awareness on economic, societal and environmental risks and opportunities. Finally, local community is engaged through events and campaigns organized for road safety, support programs for equal educational and employee volunteering.

Memberships of entities such as Swedish Chamber of Commerce, Turkish Quality Association, German-Turkish Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Corporate Governance Association of Turkey, Turkey Investors Relations Society, Automotive Distributers Associations and Turkish Advertisers Association contribute to stakeholder engagement in different regions, industries as well as governmental fields. Furthermore, collaborations with universities, NGO's, public entities and global associations also improve the quality and quantity of engaging multiple stakeholders. From AFAD (Ministry of Interior, Disaster and (Emergency Management Presidency) to Foundation for Supporting Contemporary Life, Darüşşafaka Society, Istanbul Technical University, Bahcesehir University, WHO, ÇEVKO (Foundation of Environmental Protection and Packaging Waste), a wide variety of institutions collaborate with the company to enhance sustainability practices in education, public health, safety, gender equality, business and environment.

While cooperations with Turkish Oil Industry and Association of Accumulator and Recycling Industrialists raise awareness on waste management among related communities and involve municipalities for recycling different materials, "Trafik Hayattır! – Traffic is Life!" Campaign mobilizes different target audiences for road safety, sustainable transportation and livable cities. Launched in 2004, it is the longest sustainability campaign of the company and it shows the diversification of the use of media throughout the years. A campaign inaugurated through the conventional media and within face-to-face communication channels then started to actively use social media. In 2020, it announced a distant learning project to be executed on e-learning platforms.

### Challenges and Opportunities

Sustainability communication may face challenges such as the speed of change in issues, the increasing urgency of global climate change requiring the cooperation of all stakeholders, and the effects of the pandemic in employee loyalty and interaction, according to the interviewee working at a managerial position at the corporate communication department of Doğuş Otomotiv. However, such possible challenges that any sustainability communicator may encounter are not experienced as difficulties in the company.

The first one actually implies the management of social media in a global perspective. There are news rapidly changing the agenda, feedbacks on sustainability trends which may go out of control, easy circulation of counter-arguments and citizen journalism highlighting issues that companies did not take into account before. However, Corporate Communication follows hashtags, mentions, trending topics, direct messages and related agenda on social media 7/24. The flexible structure allows them to organize "WhatsApp groups" to take immediate action rather than waiting for official

announcements or hierarchical intranet mailings. They also take the support of certain social media agencies. Here, they value the ability of flexible and rapid communication and organization.

Secondly, the climate emergency necessitates more proactive communication and cooperation of all kinds of publics. The importance of dialogue-based communication grows since every action of suppliers or consumers matter in this process. Thus, Corporate Communication undertakes the responsibility of reminding the significance of sustainability-based operations. To do this, the interviewee stresses the importance of composing stakeholder-customized messages to be communicated through different media so that the communication triggers behavior change in favor of sustainability. In other words, the corporate communication must be more vigilant and alive than ever due to the urgency of the global crisis. Here, the communication is not defined as transmitting message but rather an ongoing process which also includes the supervision of the realization of received messages. In this regard, Corporate Communication also develop strategies for after the communication action step in order to assure that messages are internalized in a correct way and changed everyday routines.

Finally, remote working due to the pandemic also offered some challenges for sustainability communication. Above all, it caused some loyalty issues since some employers experienced a lack of motivation. Thanks to the perpetual feedback mechanism with the employees, Human Resources were invited to improve their situations and increase their quality of work. This inevitably contributed to a more effective stakeholder dialogue since the corporate mission could be embraced more. Furthermore, some internal projects for sustainability met with challenges as well since face-to-face communication was restricted during the pandemic. Again, both flexibility and reactivity stand out in enhancing sustainability communication.

Doğuş Otomotiv counts itself lucky since their founding values already comply with sustainability issues. Rather than adapting a whole structure, set of values or operational praxis, Corporate Communication took the responsibility of connecting already functioning practices in the field within a theoretical frame. However, assuring that sustainability does not only comprehend ecological awareness but also financial and social issues has been a departmental objective. Furthermore, they consider that these challenges are seen as opportunities for the company. For example, the speed and hard-to-control networks on social media also offer rapid and effective ways of solution. They also believe that the pandemic has illustrated for all that local and global sensitivities, risks, and subjects are interconnected.

## Conclusion

As the global awareness on sustainability becomes more and more urgent considering the environmental, economic and social issues occupying the global agenda in the beginning of the 2020's, the significance of its communication inevitably increase. Although companies reconsider their values, structures and operations from a lens of sustainability which evolves hand-in-hand with corporate ethics and social responsibility, the role of public relations must be highlighted. Particularly, a two-way symmetrical communication with all kinds of stakeholders including the

internal community raises the efficiency of sustainability goals. Here, the effective use of new media in relation with both local and global audiences contribute to the quality of communication as well as keeping conventional media and interpersonal channels up-to-date. Moreover, the realization of sustainability does not only depend on an awareness facilitated by public relations but a continuous supervision of everyday practices also play an essential role in this transformation. Similar to strategizing the sustainability, its communication needs to have tangible targets as well. Furthermore, the consistency between organizational values and sustainability goals help communicators to connect with internal and external publics in a more influential way, otherwise, they struggle with a negative perception of public relations as greenwasher. In this sense, Doğuş Otomotiv case complies with such a sustainability communication perspective. It corroborates the importance of integrative, open and transparent communication between the company and its various publics. Although this study attempts to explain the case from company data, future studies could offer further perspectives on these publics' experience and interpretation of the process.

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