

A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ON SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS MODELS IN RESTAURANTS, ZERO FOOD WASTE PRACTICES, AND CONSUMER AWARENESS

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Abstract

The study uses a systematic literature review technique to examine prior studies on sustainable restaurant business models and consumer behavior. We searched the Web of Science database using terms such as "sustainable restaurant models," "consumer awareness," "zero food waste," and "sustainable dining." The inclusion criteria focused on articles published during the last decade to ensure that the review covered the latest advancements and trends in the area. We located, analyzed, and categorized publications on our topic into themes related to sustainable business practices, zero-waste restaurant policies, and consumer behavior.

The studies compiled in the review also highlight recurring trends, difficulties, and how consumer awareness affects sustainable restaurant decisions. Numerous studies indicate that consumer education, together with effective marketing, must exist to promote zero-

food waste behaviors. Furthermore, restaurants that emphasize sustainability by efficiently utilizing resources and serving eco-friendly food tend to attract more ecologically sensitive customers. The results of the study show that raising consumer awareness through focused instruction and transparent marketing can have a substantial effect on consumer behavior, thus increasing demand for environmentally friendly restaurants and helping the sector minimize food waste.

Keywords: Sustainable restaurant models; consumer awareness; consumer behavior; zero food waste; Prisma; literature review; sustainability marketing.

JEL Classification: Q56

1. INTRODUCTION

Rising environmental issues and shifting consumer demands have brought increasing pressure on the worldwide food and hospitality sector to adopt sustainable practices in recent years. The effects of global warming and the resulting decline in biodiversity provide two major concerns for the hotel sector (Epstein, 2018). The diverse activities within food systems significantly affect the environment, many of which are inherently linked to the utilization of natural resources (Westhoek, Ingram, Van Berkum, Özay, & Hajer, 2016). The food sector, encompassing a diverse array of participants from small local enterprises to prominent multinational corporations with established brands, constitutes the largest economic sector in numerous locations, including the EU (Underwood, et al., 2013). Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a strong competition in the market among food sector businesses. A business would typically want to be cost-efficient in highly competitive and globalizing marketplaces, which frequently results in the externalization of environmental costs (Westhoek, Ingram, Van Berkum, Özay, & Hajer, 2016). On the other hand, food and hospitality companies are under stress from stakeholders (i.e., customers and competitors) as a result of the ongoing environmental concerns (Sun & Nasrullah, 2024). The food and hospitality industry has been forced to go green due to these strict environmental measures (Sun & Nasrullah, 2024).

With their efforts to reduce food waste and adopt sustainable business models, restaurants have become one of the industry's most important areas in promoting eco-friendly behavior and lessening their influence on the environment. Demand for dining experiences that reflect sustainable ideals is rising along with consumer awareness of environmental challenges.

By systematically reviewing studies conducted over the last ten years, this paper seeks to investigate the relationship between customer behavior and a restaurant's sustainable policies. In this respect, it highlights issues of importance, including resource efficiency, zero-waste initiatives, and consumer education. This study also looks for ways to help restaurants lessen their environmental effect while influencing customer decision-making and sustainable dining practices.

The topic of this paper is related to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (United Nations, 2015) and to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), presented in Figure 1.



Figure 1. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
(Source United Nations, 2015)

Specifically, the issues examined in this paper are related to the following SDGs:

SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production

SDG 2: Zero Hunger - through reduction of food waste and improved food security

SDG 13: Climate Action - since reducing food waste cuts down greenhouse gas emissions

SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being – by promoting consumer awareness of sustainable and healthy food choices.

2. METHODOLOGY

We employed a systematic approach for the study selection in order to find relevant papers about Sustainable Business Models in Restaurants, Zero Food Waste Practices, and Consumer Awareness. Furthermore, the systematic literature review was based on the Prisma 2020 standards and recommendations (Page *et al.*, 2021).

2.1. Search approach

The Web of Science Core Collection database, which is regarded as the most trustworthy database (Ding, Rousseau, & Wolfram, 2014), was chosen for this study's research purposes. After filtering the data from Web of Science Core Collection for keywords: "sustainab*" OR "restaurant*" OR "model*" AND

"consumer*" OR "awareness*"AND "zero*" OR "food*" OR "waste*" AND "sustainab*" OR "dining*" for the period 2015 till 2025 only in English Language and in the field of Economics, Business and Management remained 63 publications. As seen in Figure 2, we removed a total of 11 papers after screening due to duplicate records. Whereas 26 papers were excluded due to the ineligibility issues. Finally, a sample of 26 papers was included in the study.

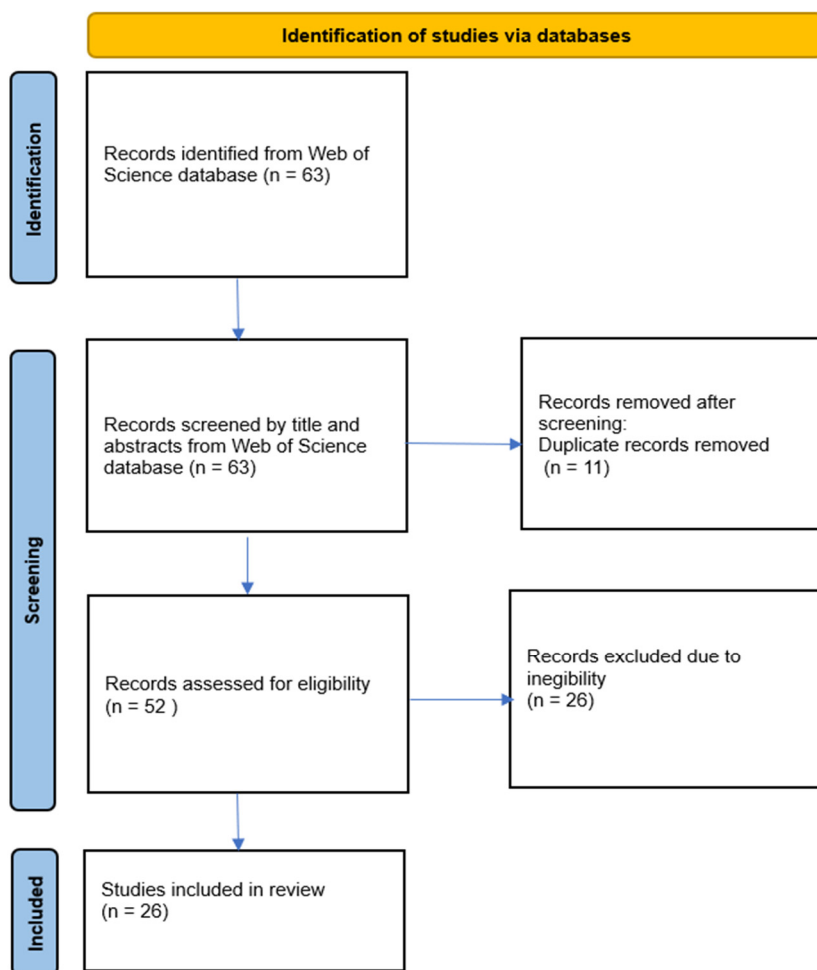


Figure 2. Paper collection flow strategy (adapted from PRISMA 2020; Page *et al.*, 2021)

3. RESULTS

The final sample of 28 papers has been subjected to a content analysis. For each article in the sample, the following elements were exported in Microsoft Excel: Table 1 contains the following information: (1) author(s), (2) year of publication, (3) title, (4) research type, (5) research methodology, and (6) key findings. In addition to helping us produce descriptive statistics, this technique provided us with a broad understanding of the structure and evolution of the literature.

As can be seen in table 1, from 26 studies included in the sample, 24 were qualitative studies (12 were systematic literature reviews; 9 were literature review; 2 were case studies analyses and 1 was survey typed), whereas 2 were quantitative studies (1 was survey-type and 1 was survey typed and Structural Equation Modeling).

Table 1. Overview of all articles used in the systematic literature review

Authors	Publication Year	Article Title	Research Type	Research Methodology	Key findings
Kuasoski, M; Doliveira, SLD	2023	Sustainability transition in the agrifood system: a systematic review focused on food loss and waste	Qualitative	Systematic Literature Review	Understanding the features of sustainability transitions, particularly in the context of agri-food systems (AFS), has proven to be made possible by agent-based modeling (ABM).
Jacob-John, J; D'Souza, C; Marjoribanks, T; Singaraju, S	2023	Sustainable Development Goals: a review of SDG 12.3 in food supply chain literature	Qualitative	Systematic Literature Review	There is a need for the Reduction of Food Loss and Waste (FLW), as a result of non-sustainable consumption and production, in order to achieve SDG 12.3. Academic research does not address the factors that motivate and hinder FLW reduction.
Bourke, BC; Mccarthy, MB; Mccarthy, SN	2024	Behavioural Factors Influencing Consumer Acceptance of Sustainable Healthy Food: A Review and	Qualitative	Systematic Literature Review	Theory of Planned Behaviour predominates in the literature, which reveals a prevalence of cognitive/motivational theories and conceptions on Food-

Authors	Publication Year	Article Title	Research Type	Research Methodology	Key findings
		Research Agenda			based dietary and sustainability recommendations
da Silva, ADS; da Silva, WV; da Silva, LSCV; da Cruz, NJT; Su, ZH; da Veiga, CP	2025	Interdependence between supply chains and sustainable development: global insights from a systematic review	Qualitative	Systematic Literature Review	Supply chains and sustainable development are closely related. Environmental sustainability is the main theme, and in order to fully address the challenges of global sustainability, it is recommended that circular economy principles be more fully integrated and that food supply chains receive special attention.
Pramudika, GF; Astanti, RD; Ai, TJ	2024	Energy Issues in Sustainable Retailing: A Systematic Literature Review	Qualitative	Systematic Literature Review	Articles related to sustainable retailing are grouped into four clusters, with the following characteristics: 1) energy issues related to food waste; 2) energy issues related to cooled storage; 3) energy issues related to general energy issues and energy efficiency, including green models in retail buildings; and 4) energy issues related to transportation in retail.
Kim, J; Rundle-Thiele, S; Knox, K	2019	Systematic literature review of best practice in food waste reduction programs	Qualitative	Systematic Literature Review	According to the study, the majority of food waste programs rely on non-voluntary methods and lack essential social marketing components. However, programs that use the marketing mix and behavior change theory are more successful, suggesting that future food waste

Authors	Publication Year	Article Title	Research Type	Research Methodology	Key findings
					reduction initiatives could use more effective voluntary strategies.
Santos, PHA; Martins, RA	2021	Food Waste and Performance Measurement Systems: A Systematic Review of the Literature	Qualitative	Systematic Literature Review	Few articles focus on performance measurement systems for the whole supply chain, with a particular emphasis on sustainability
Hariyani, D; Mishra, S	2023	Barriers to the adoption of integrated sustainable-green-lean-six sigma-agile manufacturing system (ISGLSAMS): a literature review	Qualitative	Systematic Literature Review	The integrated sustainable-green-lean-six sigma-agile manufacturing system (ISGLSAMS) provides a solid platform for meeting both the customers' variety needs and business sustainability requirements, but due to various barriers are not able to be fully implemented.
Tiwari, P; Panicker, S	2017	Sustainability Balanced Scorecard as a Framework for Performance Measurement in Facility Management - A Literature Review	Qualitative	Systematic Literature Review	By creating, putting into practice, and upholding sustainable facility practices, the facility manager can create long-lasting value for the company with the right financial and strategic planning tools.
Singh, A; Trivedi, A	2016	Sustainable green supply chain management: trends and current practices	Qualitative	Systematic Literature Review	Particular attention must be paid to waste management, closed-loop supply chain management, and reverse logistics in order to attain environmental sustainability.
Florence, ES; Fleischman, D; Mulcahy, R; Wynder, M	2022	Message framing effects on sustainable consumer behaviour: a	Qualitative	Systematic Literature Review	Using a combination of two message frames, such as positive-negative and self-other, is more effective in

Authors	Publication Year	Article Title	Research Type	Research Methodology	Key findings
		systematic review and future research directions for social marketing			encouraging environmentally sustainable behavior than using a single frame.
Ghose, A; Chandra, B	2020	Models for Predicting Sustainable Durable Products Consumption Behaviour: A Review Article	Qualitative	Literature Review	Consumers' confidence, environmental attitude, values, past experience, consumers' willingness, social pressure, perceptions, and feelings also influence consumers' purchase intention and behaviour towards sustainable product consumption.
White, K; Habib, R; Hardisty, DJ	2019	How to SHIFT Consumer Behaviors to be More Sustainable: A Literature Review and Guiding Framework	Qualitative	Literature Review	Psychological factors: Social influence, Habit formation, Individual self, Feelings and cognition, and Tangibility encourage pro-environmental behaviors.
Jones, P; Comfort, D; Hillier, D	2016	Interpretations of The Concept of Sustainability Amongst the UK's Leading Food and Drink Wholesalers	Qualitative	Analyses of Case Studies	The leading food and drinks wholesalers' commitments to sustainability are principally driven by business imperatives, as by any fundamental concern to maintain the viability and integrity of natural and social capital.
Taucean, IM; Ivascu, L; Miclea, S; Negrut, M	2019	Synergies between lean and sustainability: a literature review of concepts and tools	Qualitative	Literature Review	There is compatibility and synergy between lean and sustainability, because waste elimination will benefit both the companies and the environment.
Palazzo, M; Vollero, A	2021	A systematic literature review of food sustainable supply chain management	Qualitative	Literature Review	The main research directions in food sustainable supply chain management (FSSCM) considering the opportunities in

Authors	Publication Year	Article Title	Research Type	Research Methodology	Key findings
		(FSSCM): building blocks and research trends			neglected emerging countries.
Gurralla, KR; Hariga, M	2022	Key Food Supply Chain Challenges: A Review of the Literature and Research Gaps	Qualitative	Literature Review	Advanced technologies and optimization models are the most predominant tools for addressing Food Supply Chain challenges. Food loss and waste, coordination, globalization, resilience, robustness, and food-security challenges are one of the identified research gaps.
Chandra, S; Verma, S	2023	Big Data and Sustainable Consumption: A Review and Research Agenda	Qualitative	Literature Review	Businesses deploy Big Data to create sustainable consumer experiences, predict consumer buying patterns, design and alter business models, and create nudges for sustainable consumption, while consumers are forcing businesses to develop green operations and supply chains to reduce the latter's carbon footprint.
Bahrololoum, S; Kermani, MMM; Koohzadi, F	2022	Ecopreneurs and agricultural waste management	Qualitative	Case studies analyses	The innovative potential of ecopreneurs encourages startups that create the new jobs needed to address the environmental problems and increased food demands.
Sharma, AP	2021	Consumers' purchase behaviour and green marketing: A synthesis,	Qualitative	Literature Review	The concern for eco-environment, eco-labelling, past experiences, and perceived usefulness

Authors	Publication Year	Article Title	Research Type	Research Methodology	Key findings
		review and agenda			have been identified as major influencers of green consumer behaviour. Lack of environmental knowledge, price, perceived associated risks, organizational image, trust, and willingness to pay has been identified as barriers of consumers towards green products.
Prakash, G	2018	Review of the food processing supply chain literature: a UK, India bilateral context	Qualitative	Literature Review	The UK researchers have addressed vertical integration, coordination, safety, competitiveness and transparency and information technology. Indian researchers have focused on issues such as consumer perceptions, retail format choice, organic, health and wellness products.
Gursoy, ÖB; Akbas, I	2024	Can Sustainability Reporting Make a Difference: A Qualitative Analysis on Sustainability Reports of BIST Listed Agri-Food Companies in Turkey	Qualitative	Survey typed	The agri-food sector is lagging in sustainability reporting compared to other sectors. Companies are more ready to comply with issues that are legally regulated. Environmental problems are more addressed than social and economic sustainability standards.
Wang, HJ	2017	Determinants of consumers' purchase behaviour towards green brands	Quantitative	Survey typed and Structural Equation Modeling	The purchase intentions are positively associated with purchase behaviour and mediate the impacts of green perceived quality, green perceived value, information costs

Authors	Publication Year	Article Title	Research Type	Research Methodology	Key findings
					saved, and green perceived risk on purchase behaviour.
Bigliardi, B; Filippelli, S	2022	A review of the literature on innovation in the agrofood industry: sustainability, smartness and health	Qualitative	Literature Review	Benefits deriving from the adoption of digital technologies, the ever-increasing involvement of consumers in health and environmental issues, and the introduction of the open innovation concept in the agrofood industry.
Fenta, Y; Singh, M; Gautam, RK	2024	Antecedents of consumers' green product purchase intention: an insight from Ethiopia	Quantitative	Survey typed and Structural Equation Modeling	Attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control had a direct and environmental knowledge indirectly impacted the intention to make green purchases
Maesano, G; Carra', G; Peri, I	2019	How do Consumers Perceive Sustainable Wine? A Review	Qualitative	Systematic Literature Review	Consumers have positive perceptions regarding sustainable wine and a willingness to pay a price premium, though the awareness about the broad concept of sustainability is still vague.

The sample included 26 articles published between 2015 till 2025. Figure 3 shows the distribution of the articles over the years. The highest number of studies in the sample was published in 2019, 2021, 2022, 2023, and 2024 (four studies), followed by 2021 (three studies). Additionally, two studies on our sample were published in 2016 and 2017, whereas our sample included one study from 2018, 2020, and 2025. No studies from 2015 were included in the sample.

Based on our systematic literature review, we try to synthesize the literature and aim to accomplish the research paper goal by investigating the relationship between customer behavior and a restaurant's sustainable policies.

Industrialization and economic progress had unfavorable effects, most notably resource depletion and environmental problems (da Silva *et al.*, 2025). Food waste is a major problem for the environment, communities, and society worldwide, wasting both financial and material resources (Gustavsson, Cederberg, Sonesson, Van Otterdijk, & Meybeck, 2011). Food waste disposed in

landfills is thought to be responsible for 8% of global warming (FAO, 2015).

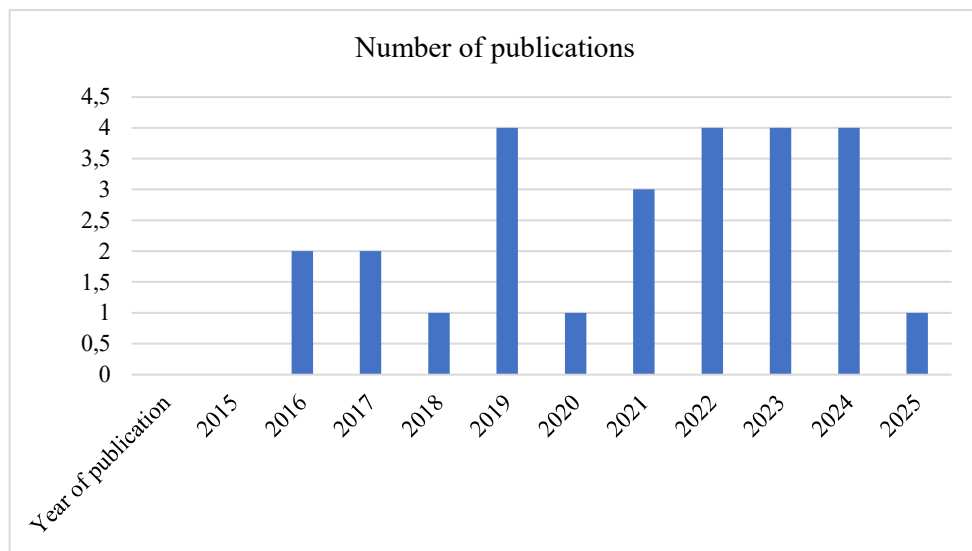


Figure 3. Annual studies distribution

Source: Authors

It seems counterintuitive that over a billion tonnes of food are wasted annually that could be used to feed the ten percent of people who are starving and living in extreme poverty (Jacob-John, D'Souza, Marjoribanks, & Singaraju, 2023). In such situations, the use of qualitative methods to reduce food losses and waste is essential. In this case, Lean, Six-Sigma, and Lean Six-Sigma can be applied. Lean and sustainability are compatible and work well together because reducing waste will help businesses and the environment (Tăucean, Ivaşcu, Micle, & Nergut, 2019). In their literature review paper Hariyani & Mishra (2023), pointed out that although the integrated sustainable-green-lean-six sigma-agile manufacturing system (ISGLSAMS) offers a strong foundation for satisfying the diverse needs of consumers and corporate sustainability standards, it is unable to be completely implemented due to a number of obstacles.

According to Wen *et al.* (2018), half of China's food waste is produced by the country's foodservice industry. The reasons for this issue can be numerous. According to Sakaguchi, Pak, & Potts (2018), who investigated how restaurant owners in the USA saw FLW from a legal standpoint, whereas the majority of restaurants avoid donating food because of a "unfounded fear of the legal liability," which contributes to FLW. Food retail firms and restaurants face a number of sustainability-related problems, including consumerism, food waste, energy efficiency, and carbon emissions from retail transportation (Pramudika, Astanti, & The Jin, 2024). In light of food shortages, reducing food loss and waste

(FLW) due to non-sustainable production and consumption is necessary to meet SDG 12.3 (Alonso-Adame, Van Meensel, Marchand, Van Passel, & Farahbakhsh, 2024). According to Alonso-Adame *et al.* (2024), the forces that drive and hinder FLW reducing are not examined sufficiently in academic research

The demand for healthful foods has grown recently. Although food-based dietary guidelines offer professional advice on what to eat, few people follow them, and few of them incorporate sustainability considerations (Bourke, McCarthy, & Sinéad). Sustainable consumer behavior is sometimes referred to as pro-environmental or ecologically responsible behavior (Florence, Fleischman, Mulcahy, & Wynder, 2022). The sense of moral obligation is a strong determinant for environment-friendly behaviour (Ghose & Chandra, 2020).

Kim, Rundle-Thiele, & Knox (2019) discovered in their systematic literature study that social marketing elements are not fully used in food waste programs. In addition they found that utilizing the social marketing elements of behavioral change, theory, and marketing mix increased program effectiveness, suggesting that voluntary techniques may be employed more frequently in the future (Kim, Rundle-Thiele, & Knox, 2019). Reducing food waste is seen as something that requires the engagement of all actors throughout the supply chain in restaurants and other food stores.

By systematically reviewing the literature Santos & Martins (2021) found that performance measuring systems for the entire supply chain, with a focus on sustainability, are not often covered in the articles of their research sample. The main fields of study for food sustainable supply chain management (FSSCM), is underserved by developing nations (Palazzo & Vollero, 2022). Singh & Trivedi (2016) in their review of the literature found that during the past ten years, researchers and practitioners have become more interested in the topic of sustainable green supply chain management and that there is a universal need to achieve sustainability through the adoption of greener practices. The facility manager is the one who visualizes the entire process in the organization and often turns out to be the advocate for sustainable and green practices (Tiwari & Panicker, 2017). In order to attain environmental sustainability, particular attention must be paid to waste management, closed-loop supply chain management, and reverse logistics (Singh & Trivedi, 2016).

The most common tools for tackling issues in the food supply chain are optimization models and advanced technology (Gurralla & Hariga, 2022). Customers are more likely to act environmentally friendly when the message or context makes use of the following psychological elements: “*social influence, habit development, individual self, feelings and cognition, and tangibleness*” (White, Habib, & Hardisty, 2019). Accurate demand forecasting has the greatest potential to reduce food waste since it avoids overproduction of meals and oversupply of food items, which lowers the likelihood of spoiling (Jonesa, Comforth, & Hillier, 2016; Filimonau, Fidan, Alexi, Dragoev, & Marinova, 2019).

Among the identified study gaps are issues related to food loss and waste, coordination, globalization, resilience and robustness, and food-security (Gurralla & Hariga, 2022). Consumers are pressuring businesses to create green supply chains and operations to lessen their carbon footprint, whereas, businesses are using big data to create sustainable consumer experiences, forecast consumer purchasing patterns, design and modify business models, and create nudges for sustainable consumption (Chandra & Verma, 2023). Green consumer behavior has been found to be significantly influenced by perceived utility, historical experiences, eco-labelling, and environmental concern. Consumer obstacles to green products have been identified as lack of environmental awareness, price, perceived dangers, corporate image, trust, and willingness to pay (Sharma, 2021). Ecopreneurs' creative potential supports new businesses that generate the new jobs required to solve environmental issues and rising food demands (Bahrololoum, Mahmood, & Koohzadi, 2022).

By reviewing the literature, Prakash (2018) compared the literature in UK and India. He found that UK researchers in the literature focus on Information technology, safety, competitiveness, transparency, vertical integration, and coordination whereas Indian researchers have been concentrated on topics including organic, health and wellbeing, and consumer attitudes (Prakash, 2018). When it comes to sustainability reporting, the agri-food industry is trailing behind other sectors (Gürsoy & Akbaş, 2024). According to Bigliardi & Filippelli (2022), agrofood industry can benefit from the adoption of digital technologies and the introduction of the open innovation concept.

The benefits of green perceived risk, green perceived quality, green perceived value, and information costs saved on purchase behavior are all mediated by purchase intentions, which are positively correlated with purchase behavior (Wang, 2017). The intention to make green purchases was influenced indirectly by environmental knowledge and directly by attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Fenta, Singh, & Gautam, 2024). Although consumers' understanding of the general notion of sustainability is still lacking, they have favorable opinions about sustainable products such as wine and are willing to pay more for it (Maesano, Carra, & Peri, 2019).

4. CONCLUSIONS

Based on our systematic literature review we can conclude that there is scarcity in the literature regarding sustainable restaurants and zero food waste policies. Most of the literature of our sample speaks about the consumer awareness on sustainability, natural resource use and insufficiency and for the environmental issues.

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