

## Table Of Content

<b>Journal Cover .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Author[s] Statement .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Editorial Team .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Article information .....</b>	<b>5</b>
Check this article update (crossmark) .....	5
Check this article impact .....	5
Cite this article .....	5
<b>Title page .....</b>	<b>6</b>
Article Title .....	6
Author information .....	6
Abstract .....	6
<b>Article content.....</b>	<b>7</b>

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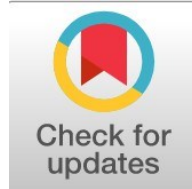
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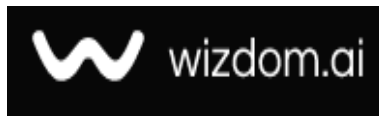
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# ***Strategic Readiness for Implementing Sustainable Marketing Practices: A Case Study of Total Energies in the Iraq Gas Project***

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## **Abstract**

**General Background:** Amid global environmental transformation, the oil and gas sector faces growing pressure to integrate sustainability into its operations and marketing functions. **Specific Background:** Total Energies' gas project in southern Iraq offers a complex industrial and institutional environment in which sustainable marketing adoption reflects both corporate commitment and contextual constraints. **Knowledge Gap:** Despite the company's declared sustainability vision, little empirical evidence exists on its actual strategic readiness to implement sustainable marketing practices within Iraq's fragile institutional setting. **Aims:** This study investigates TotalEnergies' strategic readiness across four dimensions—institutional leadership, organizational culture, resource availability, and environmental commitment and governance—to determine its capacity for adopting sustainable marketing. **Results:** Using a descriptive-analytical approach with 47 valid survey responses, findings reveal that leadership scored highest, mean = 4.08, followed by organizational culture, 3.58, and resources, 3.02, while environmental governance was weakest, 2.50, indicating major structural deficiencies. **Novelty:** The study uniquely applies the strategic readiness framework to an international energy company operating in Iraq's gas industry, transforming theoretical constructs into measurable field indicators. **Implications:** The results highlight the need for enhanced environmental governance policies, capacity building, and institutional integration to translate sustainability rhetoric into operational practice and to guide similar corporations toward effective sustainable marketing implementation in challenging contexts.

## **Highlights:**

- Leadership shows strong commitment but lacks systemic support.
- Environmental governance remains the weakest readiness factor.
- The study bridges theory and field application in Iraq's gas industry.

**Keywords:** Strategic Readiness, Sustainable Marketing, Environmental Governance, Organizational Culture, Total Energies

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## Introduction

In the midst of ongoing environmental and social transformation that is rewriting paradigms of growth and profitability across the world, marketing has evolved beyond being a promotional strategy or a method of market share acquisition [1]. It is now regarded as a prime point of entry for institutional sustainability, influencing consumer behavior toward environmentally and socially responsible practice. Definition-wise, sustainable marketing is today among the key pillars upon which current organizations formulate strategies that are resilient to climate threats, regulatory uncertainties, and market volatility [2]. The relevance of this evolving paradigm is most relevant to environmentally conscious industries prime among them the oil and gas sector currently faced with increasingly mounting societal and legislative scrutiny and seeking to redefine its own relationship with the environment and development [3]. In this context, strategic preparedness is the extent to which industrial institutions are equipped to restructure their marketing processes in line with Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) standards and the needs of the green economy [4]. In this context, the French firm total Energies also locally referred to as Total Engineer is a leading global operator of gas project development in Iraq, especially in the Basra and Maysan provinces. The company, in 2021, signed a \$27 billion investment agreement with the Iraqi government to implement four strategic projects, including a large-scale project for associated gas extraction and solar energy facilities development [5]. All of these projects are an experiment laboratory in the real world for the implementation of sustainable marketing paradigms, especially in accordance with the public commitment of the company to become net-zero by 2050. An analysis of Total Engineer's readiness to apply sustainable marketing practices in the Iraqi gas project goes further than a measure of its environmental values [6]. Rather, it encompasses exploring whether the company possesses instruments, infrastructure, and organizational culture readily available to channel these ideas and translate them into functional competitive advantages in an advanced operational environment such as Iraq-one that is dogged by structural weaknesses, politics, and lofty development ambitions [7].

The significance of this research is that it finds itself at the intersection of three global broad axes: the global pivot towards sustainability, the local transformation in managing Iraq's gas projects, and the institutional issue for international companies operating in post-conflict environments. To this end, the research seeks to break down the strategic readiness dimensions by employing a methodological approach of theoretical scrutiny blended with empirical testing to build an applied model that will be capable of guiding decision-makers and charting marketing operations toward the provision of tangible environmental, social, and economic benefit.

## 1. Research Problem

Despite substantive progress in theory building on institutional sustainability and green marketing by multinational companies, practical implementation of sustainable marketing strategies is prone to structural and operational obstacles within complex environments and fragile economies precisely those experienced by legislative and institutional volatility. Recent studies show that the effectiveness of sustainable marketing does not so much rest on the strict following of environmental and social values by the firm but, instead, lies in its strategic readiness in terms of knowledge-based leadership, institutional setup, adequate resources, and consistency between organizational culture and sustainability goals. In the Iraqi context, the industrial work environment more specifically that of the gas industry is rather unique, marked by a broad gap between global discussion of sustainability and actual practice among working institutions. This gap is highly visible for large projects pursued by international companies such as French enterprise total Energies, which in 2021 signed massive deals to develop four energy projects in southern Iraq. These initiatives include associated gas recovery, solar electricity production, and recycling of lost materials. While the company has publicly announced its wholesale commitment to philosophies of sustainable development, such advocacy of its environmental and social values remains largely confined to strategic reports and not sufficiently entrenched within the procedures of everyday marketing efforts or within the awareness of indigenous stakeholders.

This leads to the central problem:

Despite the presence of a strategic vision and sustainability reports within top-level management, there is a clear absence of an understanding and evaluation of how prepared firms like total Energies are to embrace sustainable marketing practices within the Iraqi context measured in terms of complexity in operations, institutional factors, and dysfunctions within the local government. All of these can firmly oppose the integration of sustainability strategies into the firm's day-to-day marketing practices within the project.

Accordingly, this study seeks to answer the following main research question:

Main Research Question: "To what extent does total Energies possess the strategic readiness for adopting sustainable marketing practices within the gas project in Iraq?"

Sub-questions:

- What are the key dimensions that constitute the construct of strategic readiness for sustainable marketing adoption in the industrial context?
- To what extent are these dimensions actually-present in the operations of total Energies in the Iraqi gas project?

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- c. What are the institutional and organizational obstacles to the adoption of sustainable marketing by the company in the Iraqi environment?
- d. How does the absence or frailty of sustainable marketing influence the relationship with local stakeholders?
- e. What are the proposed mechanisms to reinforce institutional readiness and align it with observable, sustainable marketing performance?

## 2. Research Objectives

Following the afore-stated problem statement, this study seeks to achieve a list of integrated objectives that assist in theoretical and practical understanding of the strategic readiness concept for the adoption of sustainable marketing practices through case study of total Energies in the Iraq gas project. The research primarily attempts to break down the theoretical framework of "strategic readiness" and ascertain its essential dimensions as specified in contemporary literature, including institutional leadership, organisational culture, availability of resources, and external environment. The study also aims to measure the extent to which these dimensions are evident in total Energies in the Iraqi context, focusing on the way such readiness is viewed in reference to effective use of sustainable marketing practices in the project. In the same context, the research will also seek to analyze the differences between the company's strategic vision and its application at the marketing level, and determine the organisational and structural problems inhibiting the action of sustainable marketing in a complex operating situation with multiple stakeholders. Further, the study aims to develop an effective model that enables such institutions to become institutionally and marketing-ready through adaptive and operational policies thus positioning sustainable marketing from the status of being just theoretical mantras to measurable performance metrics. Lastly, the study aims to make scientific and pragmatic contributions that enhance the validity of environmental strategies in the energy sectors of developing countries.

## 3. Significance of the Study

### a. Contextual and Methodological Uniqueness

This study is characterized by its unique applied context and field environment because it is among the first ones to apply the strategic readiness concept towards adopting sustainable marketing practice in a top foreign company operating in the Iraqi gas sector total Energies. The worth of this specificity is that a majority of previous studies have taken sustainability in domestic firms or comparatively consistent environments. In comparison, this study is targeted at a mature operational context with interrelated institutional, regulative, and environmental concerns, hence the findings represent a dimension of realism and applicability that is outstanding.

Methodologically, the study is also unique in combining the conceptual framework of strategic readiness with the development of useful field assessment instruments, so that conceptual dimensions are converted into measurable and analyzable indicators. This synthesis at a methodological level makes the study worthwhile not merely in terms of offering theoretical recommendations but also in proposing a pragmatic model that may be reused or replicated by comparable institutions within or outside Iraq.

### b. Originality in Scientific Treatment and Marketing Analysis

At a scientific level, the study is innovative in using strategic readiness as the primary explanatory variable for the actual level of adoption of sustainable marketing practices rather than as a secondary organizational factor. It moves "readiness" from being an all-encompassing administrative label to being a strategic analytical construct with its feet squarely on the ground and connected directly to heavy industrial sector marketing performance. The study thus offers a balanced analysis by linking the internal readiness of the institution with its external interaction with local stakeholders, in a complex Iraqi setting characterized by a multitude of constituents and interlaced interests and regulations. This allows the research to escape the constraints of institutional analysis and penetrate a deeper insight into fundamental thinking in sustainable marketing regarding the surrounding societal and environmental environments a perspective, which has largely remained underdeveloped within current literature. The research therefore contributes further to its uniqueness and provides strategic as well as pragmatic contributions.

## 4. Temporal and Spatial Boundaries

This study was placed in specific time and space boundaries to allow focused examination in an actual and applicable research environment.

Temporally, the selected period dedicates the years 2024–2025, a period marked by the speeding up of the execution of sustainable energy projects in Iraq and the activation of agreements signed between the Iraqi government and the French total Energies company since 2021. The agreements in this period reached the level of practical implementation, with the launch of the second phase of the gas project. This phase is viewed as being optimal for evaluating the strategic readiness of the company since it represents a shift from sustainability statements to true on-the-ground action.

Spatially, the study aimed at Total Engineer (total Energies) in the gas project in Basra Governorate for several objective reasons. First, the firm is a prime example of a multinational company executing mega projects in a

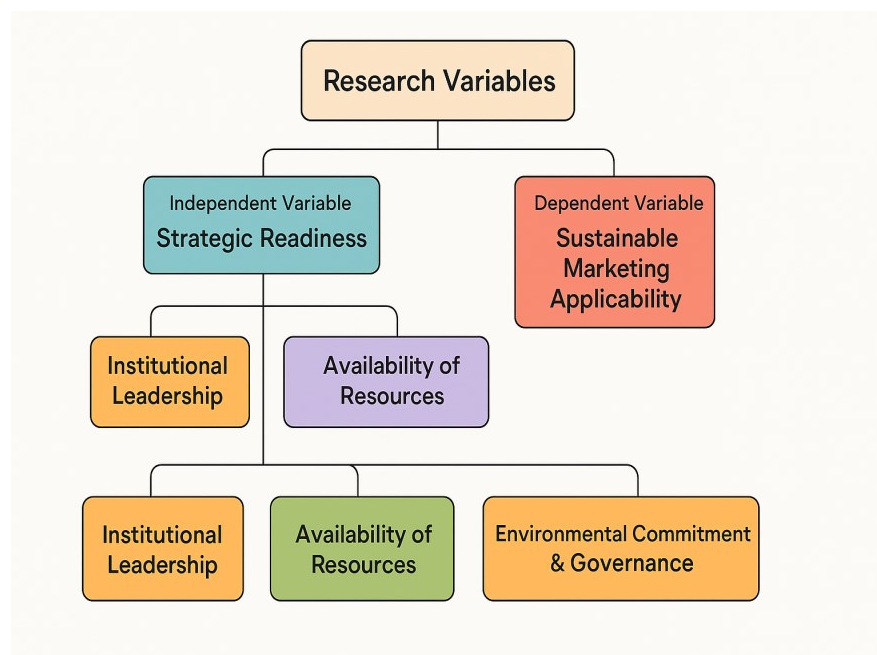


complex local operating context. Second, Basra is regarded as the industrial capital of Iraq's oil and gas sector, providing a live setting in which economic, social, and environmental dimensions intersect one another reason why it represents an ideal setting in which to test the hypotheses regarding strategic readiness and sustainable marketing simultaneously.

Also, Basra is a coastal governorate and hence highly populated with a long history of environmental problems and social demonstrations against the oil companies. This makes it a significant place to research the marketing preparedness of energy companies. Such a place needs to be studied in order to achieve the link between institutional sustainability and satisfaction among the local population. In accordance, the selection of these time and space boundaries reflects methodologically sound alignment with the research purpose and application context, lending the study high field relevance and credibility.

## 5. Research Variables

This research is based on a central hypothesis that strategic readiness is the main variable in adopting sustainable marketing practices in companies operating under complex industrial conditions, such as TotalEnergies' gas project in Iraq. Adopting theoretical literature review, previous studies, and examining the firm's institutional and environmental context, the study variables have been determined as follows:



**Figure 1.** The study variables.

Resource: table prepared by the researcher

### a. Independent Variable

Strategic Readiness; As the level of organization's readiness organizationally, culturally, and in leadership ability to implement systematically sustainable marketing principles and practices.

#### Sub-variables Making Up the Independent Variable

- 1) Institutional Leadership: The degree to which senior management reflects a direct strategic focus on sustainability and is actively involved in facilitating sustainable marketing activities.
- 2) Organizational Culture: The level to which the employee behavior and corporate culture are permeated with sustainability values and to what level they align with sustainable marketing practice.
- 3) Availability of Resources: The level to which the organization possesses the necessary finance, human, and technology resources available for supporting and implementing sustainable marketing strategies.
- 4) Environmental Commitment & Governance: The degree to which the company has been compliant with environmental and social governance (ESG) principles and the strength of governance mechanisms that enhance sustainability in marketing functions.

### b. Dependent Variable

Sustainable Marketing Applicability; Refers to the extent to which the company is able to transform sustainable marketing concepts into sound operational procedures in a complex context like the Iraqi gas market. This is gauged

by the degree of congruence between institutional dimensions and the environmental and societal demands of the market.

## c. Objective of the Study for the Variables

The aim of this study is to investigate the relationship between the independent variable (strategic readiness) and its four dimensions, and the dependent variable (sustainable marketing applicability), in a bid to identify the extent to which components of strategic readiness play a role in enhancing the ability of the company to utilize sustainable marketing. Essentially, the study seeks to follow the transformation from strategic rhetoric to tangible and measurable institutional practice.

## 6. Definition of Key Terms Used in the Study

### a. Sustainable Marketing

Green marketing is a strategic approach to marketing that aims to integrate environmental, social, and economic components into the marketing plan, therefore constructing harmonious long-term values that meet the needs of the present without jeopardizing the rights of the future [8]. It aims at the unification of the three pillars: people–planet–profit. Hence, marketing choices turn green, for instance, the use of recyclable packages, socially responsible advertising, and considering local stakeholders in programs [9].

In research definitions: Sustainable marketing constitutes a transformational approach that develops from theoretical understanding to practical uptake among institutions, and therefore it is a critical component in institutional readiness for environmental initiatives.

### b. Strategic Readiness

Strategic readiness is the organization's ability to quickly and efficiently react to internal as well as external environment shifts, such as shifts in markets, regulatory policies, technology advancements, and stakeholder expectations, without causing large-scale disruptions in institutional performance [10]. Strategic readiness is greater than theoretical readiness and entails more comprehensive capabilities required for the organization to translate its strategic vision into executable real-world practices specifically in sophisticated industrial contexts. It is measured across four key dimensions:

- 1) Leadership Structure: the degree to which leading management is committed to sustainability-driven change.
- 2) Organizational Culture: setting values of sustainability and openness to learn and innovate.
- 3) Resources Available: being available in terms of human, financial, and technical resources.
- 4) Governance and Environmental Compliance: in-house procedures that ensure transparency and environmental-social responsibility.

Strategic preparedness, in this context, is used as an analytical point of entry to determine the ability of the organization to incorporate sustainability in its marketing and organizational processes in complicated operation environments.

### c. Organizational Environment

Organizational environment is the integration of the external and internal forces and factors around the organization, such as structure, culture, suppliers, competitors, clients, and rules [11]. It contains an internal environment (structure, culture, values) and an external environment (political, economic, and social factors). The environment influences directly the capacity of the firm to adopt sustainable marketing.

### d. Environmental Sustainability

Sustainability of the environment is a position where there is balance between the use of resources and the conservation of ecosystems to ensure continuity and integrity in meeting the demands of individuals without depleting the natural capacity [12]. It includes processes like carbon reduction, management of water, and conservation of biodiversity. It is the foundation where sustainable marketing is built in this study.

### e. Stakeholders

Stakeholders refer to those individuals or groups who influence or are influenced by the actions of an organization, including employees, local communities, customers, government officials, and suppliers [13]. Stakeholder participation in the case of post-conflict Iraq is what the research focuses on in order to assess how institutional readiness enhances actual and social interaction with such actors.

### f. Environmental Governance

Environmental governance is the mechanism of rules, institutional arrangements, and organizational regulations that can influence corporate behavior towards achieving specific environmental objectives in an open and

transparent system [14]. Environmental governance is a crucial tool in managing the relationship between organizations, natural resources, and society. With regard to Iraq, environmental governance is twice as vital since poor environmental legislation and improper regulation are lacking. This places greater responsibility on big companies like TotalEnergies to also have in their systems internal control mechanisms that ensure compliance with the environment and good engagement with local stakeholders. Environmental governance is thus an important part of strategic preparedness in this research.

## g. Organizational Culture

Organizational culture is the informal collection of values, assumptions, customs, and symbols that govern individual behavior in an organization. Organizational culture determines how things are seen and what decisions are made [15]. Organizational culture in this study is defined as the cognitive and moral cradle of sustainable marketing procedures. The more effective the internal culture alignment with social and environmental values, the more likely the success of sustainable marketing strategies. Conversely, a culture that is only centered on traditional profit-seeking may result in superficial, rather than revolutionary, embracing of sustainability.

## Previous Research

Title: Developing a Mixed-Methods Research Design in the Context of a Green Marketing Strategy: [16], An Application of Iraq's Oil and Gas Industry

The current research builds on previous literature that developed an Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) for assessing oil industry corporations in Iraq with regards to their adoption of environmentally sustainable advertising strategies. This investigation explored crucial aspects like \*\*institutional leadership, organizational culture, available resources, and internal environment\*\*, using a mixed methods research design combining qualitative interviews with the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) to determine each factor's relative importance. Results showed that both \*\*political and economic constraints\*\* were accompanied by poor governance structures as key challenges. Although previous literature provided a significant theoretical contribution, it did not succeed in enabling an investigation with a focus particular to individual corporations. However, this paper builds on that theoretical contribution by using the same dimensions in a practical case of a \*\*TotalEnergies' Iraqi gas project\*\*, thus presenting a quantitative case investigation that advances an understanding of dynamics relevant to strategic preparedness for sustainable advertising.

As a related research entitled "The Impact of Green Training on Individual Environmental Performance: [17]. Based on a quantitative survey with a sample of 170 employees, Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was used for validation. Both green behavior and readiness for organizational cultural sustainability behavior were significantly related as both positively impacted total environmental behavior.

While this research literature doesn't specifically address sustainable marketing, it is more concerned with human and cultural aspects of institutional preparedness that more directly corresponds with our current investigation of organizational cultures as drivers of transformative change towards sustainability-focused marketing at TotalEnergies. This correspondence highlights a great deal of value for alignment of sustainability ideals with organizational cultures as a strategy for tackling transformative change in a complicated industrial environment.

The paper entitled "Sustainability Challenges in Social Marketing: A Case of Oil and Gas Companies in the Middle East" is a significant addition to literature because it looks at both environmental and institutional challenges that discourage sustainable marketing practices from being adopted [18]. Through a mixture of document analysis as well as interviews conducted with marketing managers, the study sheds light on the existence of stringent environmental regulations as well as intra-state coordination inefficiencies as drivers of a superficial approach towards sustainability initiatives due to a lack of significant implementation of operations. This evidence is congruous with academic literature related to governance as well as institutional preparedness, given that a clear need exists to explore structural deficiencies—governance elements—undermining the successful implementation of environmental advertising strategies. Although previous literature provided a broad regional analysis, this paper further enriches scholarship with a governance operations empirical investigation conducted in a specified organization, namely TotalEnergies in Iraq, allowing for a more accurate as well as comprehensive evaluation of governance functions' implications on sustainable marketing outcomes.

## 1. The Concurrent Development of Iraq's Natural Gas Industry Side-by-Side with its Petroleum Industry (Jiyad).

The relevant literature for this subject can be determined from an investigation of both institutional and economic environments of Iraqi gas projects, specifically with regard to the partnership with TotalEnergies. Based on an Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) investigation, an investment agreement was considered in its alignment with sustainable developmental goals for energy. The main findings were of a complicated organizational environment with a high level of inconsistency with national economic strategy for Iraq as well as an environmental strategy. These findings of this research highlight a pressing need for an alignment of developmental as well as economic paradigms with indicators for institutional maturity. As an avenue for expanding on a subject not considered in previous literature, contractual aspects as well as macroeconomic indicators are considered with an organizational as

well as a marketing focus for TotalEnergies with a focus on environmental governance as well as stakeholder involvement. Based on an interdisciplinary approach, this research deepens our understanding of sustainability performance with a consideration of insights from the academic fields of economics as well as organizational behavior as well as marketing in an industrial environment of change.

## 2. The contribution of Green Marketing towards Solar Power Projects in Iraq as a tool for achieving Sustainable Development [19].

A second reason for this paper stems from studies of the effects of various elements of the green marketing mix—namely, product, price, distribution, and promotion—upon societal approval of environmental efforts. Based on a quantitative survey approach with statistical methods using SAS software for support, the investigation discovered that successful environmental message delivery, when accompanied by active community engagement, stimulated strong levels of confidence, acceptability, and general success of sustainability efforts. Even though the questionnaires for this inquiry were focused entirely on renewable energy projects, they significantly enrich our empirical model for this current investigation by incorporating an important variable of \*\*stakeholder engagement\*\*. Such a variable is crucial for ascertaining environmentally sustainable marketing readiness for technologically sophisticated settings like southern Iraq, where viewpoints and support of active citizens determine an organization's success in greening efforts.

### Fourth: Current Scholarship and the Lack Thereof

The previous literature has increasingly focused on the association between institutional readiness and sustainability using an energy industry case from Iraq. Nonetheless, some noticeable gaps can be observed suggesting a need for further investigation:

[20] , developed a concept related to organizational preparedness for sustainability, yet no evidence exists thus far indicating its implementation within a given organizational environment. This research fills this void by utilizing the aforementioned concept within a practical organizational environment.

[21] , highlighted environmental education alongside cultural readiness; however, they did not convert these findings into actual implications for marketing efficiency. This paper looks to fill this hole with a focus on internal cultural alignment with sustainable efficiency as an approach to marketing strategy.

[22] , noted ineffective governance as a major sustainability barrier, although they did not take a quantitative method to evaluate preparedness in a given organization. We, on the other hand, offer a thorough empirical investigation conducted in TotalEnergies, thus giving a more realistic portrayal of the organization.

[23] , only examined the economics of gas projects, without considering the aspects of marketing or institutional preparedness. That gives our current research an opportunity to fill in the gap and enrich our understanding of strategic-institutional interactions.

[24] , provided a literature review of what has been published regarding green marketing in renewable energy, but our paper limits its consideration strictly to the gas industry, an industry with distinct environmental as well as social implications.

## 3. Research Gap

The primary research gap is the absence of an applied study that integrates the measurement of strategic readiness and sustainable marketing analysis within a specific company operating in the gas industry of Iraq. Our research fills this gap as it employs quantitative and field-based tools for measuring TotalEnergies' institutional facts in a real-world operating environment.

## Theoretical Framework of the Study

### 1. Introduction to Institutional Sustainability in the Oil and Gas Industry

In the context of profound environmental transformation, mounting social challenges, and chronic economic strain facing the world today, critical institutions can no longer excel in their strategic goals through their traditional growth model of profit maximization alone. Instead, they are increasingly being compelled to remake themselves both in society and in nature. These global developments have put institutional sustainability on the center stage as an important pillar that demonstrates an organization's awareness of its environmental and social responsibilities and economic imperatives [25] .

To this end, sectors shouldering direct environmental risk such as oil and gas are veritable proving grounds for how much institutions will stick to using sustainable development standards. Sustainable marketing here refers to a conceptual and operational framework through which organizations are able to translate environmental and social directions into marketing initiatives that express twin value. While it strives to create and offer environmental, social, and economic value on one hand, it builds the organization's reputation among customers and

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neighbourhood communities on another. Sustainable marketing thus emerges as a strategic way of maintaining sustainability in markets and as a method to obtain a dynamic balance between financial performance and environmental-social performance. That is why it forms part of long-term institutional planning especially in operationally complex industries like the energy business [26].

In Iraq, the gas industry is one of the most sensitive fields with regard to environmental and social aspects and is considered a strategic pillar for sustainable development. In this framework, there is an urgent need to study the level of readiness among companies active in the sector e.g., TotalEnergies to truly implement sustainable marketing practices under a politically and institutionally challenging operating context [27].

## 2. Sustainable Marketing – Concept and Role

Sustainable marketing is "a set of marketing initiatives aimed at creating, building, and delivering value to the consumer and society at the same time as well as considering the long-run social and environmental implications of marketing performance" [28]. It is on the basis of combining sustainable development principles on all dimensions of the marketing mix design, production, promotion, and distribution such that the value chain for environment, economics, and society is guaranteed. This approach involves a commitment to the maximization of natural resource utilization, minimization of waste and emissions, promotion of ethical behavior among suppliers and customers, and embracing transparency in advertising and promotion activities. Sustainable marketing goes beyond eco-friendly products; it also encompasses institutional practices that consider social impact such as supporting local communities, empowering employees, and achieving diversity and equity. It emphasizes building long-term customer relationships based on trust, respect, and mutual responsibility. As highlighted in academic literature such as [29] study, sustainable marketing is considered one of the pillars of modern competitiveness, especially in industries facing high environmental and social scrutiny, such as the energy sector. Institutional adoption of sustainable marketing results in improved corporate reputation, reduced regulatory risk, greater customer loyalty, and improved access to new markets. It also improves investor-relations and regulatory relations. As a weapon for developing community alignment in risky contexts such as Iraq, sustainable marketing reduces resistance to large projects and results in operational and economic stability.

Studies prove that green marketing enhances public perception of an organization and gives it sustainable competitive advantage. It also reinforces stakeholder relations, particularly the local communities that are going to host mega-projects such as gas developments within Iraq's south. Therefore, initiating sustainable marketing is not possible independently of the internal institutional context.

## 3. Strategic Readiness – Concept and Dimensions

Strategic readiness is "an organization's ability to respond rapidly and effectively to environmental, societal, and organizational changes through the presence of an integrated system of leadership, culture, resources, and governance" [30]. It is not a hypothetical readiness but a physical expression of institutional awareness and the degree of congruence between administrative structures and environmental vision.

Strategic readiness can be analyzed along the following dimensions:

- a. Institutional Leadership: Refers to the commitment of the top management towards adopting principles of sustainability and supporting environmental marketing initiatives.
- b. Organizational Culture: Encompasses the prevailing values, norms, and behaviors within the organization that support environmental innovation and social engagement.
- c. Resources: Refers to the availability of financial, human, and technological resources necessary for implementing sustainable marketing initiatives.
- d. Environmental Governance: Involves internal rules and mechanisms for environmental compliance, transparency, and accountability.
- e. Stakeholder Engagement: Involves local communities, regulatory bodies, and customers in marketing planning and implementation.

## 4. The Link Between Strategic Readiness and Sustainable Marketing

Literature emphasizes that strategic readiness is the most important pre-requisite to the successful transition towards sustainable marketing. The more strategically prepared an organization is, the greater its potential for embedding sustainability into its marketing policies. Environmental supportive culture of an organization, environmental leadership, and available resources all play a role in the transformation of environmental principles into actual institutional practices.

Studies such as [31] (Ali and Johl, 2023), support that firms lacking one or more pillars of readiness are severely hampered in their ability to effectively implement sustainable marketing.

## 5. Applying the Theoretical Framework to Total Energies in Iraq

TotalEnergies is a global firm officially adopting aggressive policies of sustainability. It entered into an agreement with the Iraqi government in 2021 to develop solar and gas integrated projects worth \$27 billion. Officially, the



corporation has pledged to do so, but the willingness of its Iraqi unit to adopt sustainable marketing measures effectively is uncertain. The institutional environment of Iraq is afflicted with instability, bad local environmental governance, infrastructure, and a potential institutional lacuna between the parent company's vision and the local project's operational capability. Therefore, it is essential to research strategic readiness within this environment in order to explore whether TotalEnergies Iraq possesses the institutional, cultural, and organizational ability to sell its sustainability on the market. Furthermore, it leaves one to wonder: Do the words spoken in official papers find their way into actual practices in the project?

This study will attempt to provide these answers by applying the aforementioned theoretical framework as an analytic lens to the real-life setting of the firm. This will provide us with a comprehensive understanding of how the institutional structure of the firm fosters its capability for executing sustainable marketing in a complex environment such as Iraq.

## Method

This study adopts a descriptive-analytical method that uses practical tools that can be utilized in the field, with the aim of measuring the level of TotalEnergies' strategic readiness to adopt sustainable marketing within its gas project in Iraq. The research layout is appropriate for the research problem type and enables the researcher to collect and analyze data either internally within the company or through communication with the stakeholders concerned. The procedure begins with the collection of qualitative data through face-to-face interviews or an open-ended questionnaire distributed to a focused sample of employees in the planning, marketing, and environmental affairs departments. The objective at this stage is to achieve the general orientation within the company regarding sustainable marketing and to extract the key concepts influencing the development of readiness. Subsequently, a short closed-ended questionnaire, made up of a set of direct questions with pre-defined answers (e.g., Yes/No or on a scale of 1 to 5), will be applied to a suitable sample of employees involved in the project. Four dimensions will be measured in this phase: managerial leadership, resource availability, organizational culture, and environmental commitment. The data will be analyzed manually by means of tables, frequencies, percentages, and simple averages. The method is in a way that it can be easily executed and performed using tools like Excel, and does not need upper-level statistical software. Field observations, wherever possible, will also be combined in perspective to the reflection of sustainability in the company's everyday marketing activities. With this model and simple, functional design, the study enables the researcher to transfer the research design to a real situation and obtain testable results, unencumbered by statistical sophistication, but without sacrificing intellectual honesty and analytical accuracy.

## Applied Framework of the Study

### 1. First: Practical Application of the Study Methodology

Based on the approach used in this study a descriptive, analytical, and realistic one the study framework utilized was framed in a sequential manner reflecting the sequence of application in the actual life at TotalEnergies, which is operating in a gas project in southern Iraq.

#### a. Sample and Its Boundaries

The sample in the research consisted of 54 TotalEnergies employees from the marketing, environment, and strategic planning department, and a few field technicians involved in the gas project. The questionnaire was manually distributed during January and February 2025. There were 47 fully completed questionnaires received with a rate of 87% response, indicating good interest from the participants. Seven were rejected because they had essential data to be analyzed that was lacking.

Sample traits were such that:

- 1) Administrative category: 31% administrators, 45% technicians, 24% supervisors
- 2) Sex: 78% male, 22% female.
- 3) Years of service: 41% more than 5 years, 38% 2–5 years, 21% less than 2 years

#### Phase One: Qualitative Data Collection (Initial Exploration)

The researcher began by collecting qualitative data via semi-structured interviews with technical and administrative personnel within the firm, that is, from the environment, marketing, and strategic planning offices. General impressions of the concept of sustainability within the project, the extent to which it is applied in practice, and the extent of managerial support for such practices were the queries. An open-ended survey was also distributed to a sample of executive personnel to gather free-form feedback concerning the institution's readiness for sustainable marketing and the operational issues they face. This phase enabled the setting of recurring themes, which were then used to create the quantitative survey.

#### Phase Two: Development of the Quantitative Measurement Tool (Questionnaire)

Based on the preliminary analysis of the qualitative data, a closed-ended questionnaire was designed, consisting of four main axes that represent the dimensions of strategic readiness, namely:

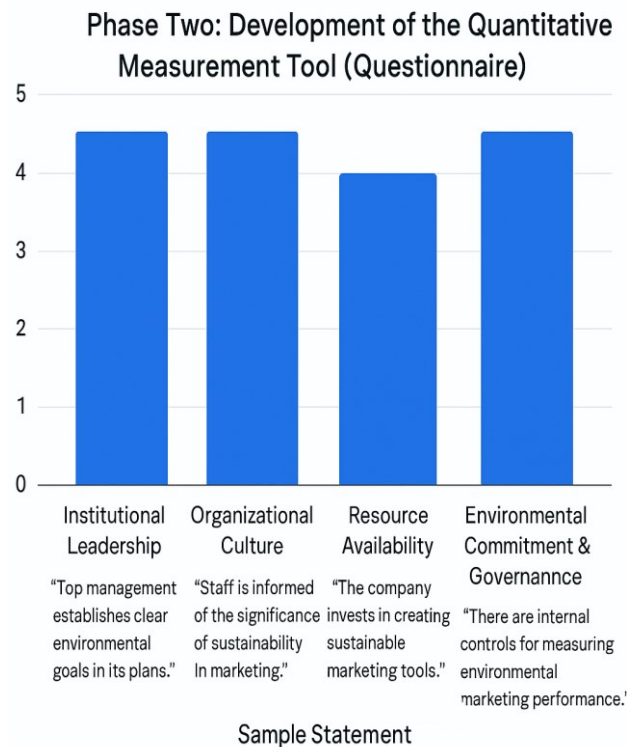
[ISSN 2598 9928 \(online\)](https://doi.org/10.21070/ijler.v20i4.1358), <https://ijler.umsida.ac.id>, published by [Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidoarjo](https://www.muhammadiyahsidoarjo.ac.id/)

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**Table 1.** Development of the Quantitative Measurement Tool.

Dimension	Number of Items	Sample Statements
<b>Institutional Leadership</b>	5	"Top management establishes clear environmental goals in its plans."
<b>Organizational Culture</b>	5	"Staff is informed of the significance of sustainability in marketing."
<b>Resource Availability</b>	4	"The company invests in creating sustainable marketing tools."
<b>Environmental Commitment and Governance</b>	6	"There are internal controls for measuring environmental marketing performance."

Resource: table prepared by the researcher.



**Figure 2.** Development of the Quantitative Measurement Tool.

Resource: table prepared by the researcher.

## Total Number of Items: 20

A five-point Likert scale was used in the questionnaire as follows:

**Table 2.** A five-point Likert scale

Rating	Numerical Value
Strongly Agree	5
Agree	4
Neutral	3
Disagree	2

Strongly Disagree	1
-------------------	---

Resource: table prepared by the researcher.

## b. Instrument Validity (Expert Review)

The instrument was reviewed by a team of three marketing and environmental management experts from credible Iraqi universities. They reported the following changes were made:

- 1) Similar items were merged to avoid redundancy.
- 2) Statements were formatted for greater clarity to the sample group.
- 3) Equilibrium was ensured across the items measuring the four dimensions of preparedness.

### Phase Three: Quantitative Data Analysis

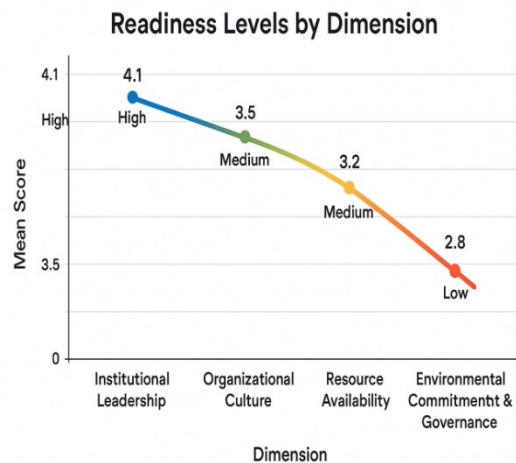
Microsoft Excel was used to make the data analysis easier, such as:

- 1) Percent and frequencies.
- 2) Calculation of means and standard deviations for all the dimensions.
- 3) Readiness levels classification by the four dimensions evaluation (Low, Medium, High).

**Table 3.** Readiness Levels by Dimension

Dimension	Mean Score	Readiness Level
Institutional Leadership	4.1	High
Organizational Culture	3.5	Medium
Resource Availability	3.2	Medium
Environmental Commitment & Governance	2.8	Low

Resource: table prepared by the researcher



**Figure 3.** Readiness Levels by Dimension.

Resource: table prepared by the researcher

### Phase Four: Alignment of Hypotheses to Axes and Achieving the Study Objectives

The study was led by the overarching hypothesis that:

"Strategic readiness is a primary determinant of the degree to which TotalEnergies achieves success in taking up sustainable marketing practices."

Based on this, the subsequent sub-hypotheses were formulated:

- 1) There is a statistically significant connection between institutional leadership and the level of readiness for implementing sustainable marketing.
- 2) Organizational culture and environmental marketing practices have a statistically significant relationship.
- 3) There is a positive association between the availability of resources and the level of institutional readiness.

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- 4) Environmental commitment and governance is a mediating variable in the formulation of the orientation towards sustainable marketing.

Each hypothesis was linked to one of the questionnaire's four axes, each of which aligned with one strategic dimension. This allowed the testing of hypotheses and the fulfillment of research objectives.

## Phase Five: Contextual Documentation and Field Observations

During the process of questionnaire administration and staff interaction, a number of informal observations of actual work practice in the field were made, e.g.:

- 1) The presence of environmental posters or slogans.
- 2) Waste management procedures in the project.
- 3) The manner in which the employees relate to the topic of sustainability.

These observations were noted and integrated with the quantitative analysis to form a comprehensive picture of the practical application of sustainable marketing.

## 2. Second: The Significance of the Applied Framework in the Study

This operational model is a fundamental step towards bridging theory and practice in the sense that it provides a realistic gauge of the extent to which TotalEnergies translates institutional readiness theories into organizational behavior and sustainable marketing practices. The significance of this approach is that it does not rely on expressed perceptions only but engages directly with the field reality to accurately capture challenges and opportunities. Moreover, the model research design of this work can be applied in other companies, enabling the study to possess a practical and referential character in institutional sustainability studies.

## 3. Third: Results Chapter and Interpretation

The results of the questionnaires will be analyzed step by step and thoroughly in this chapter, based on the four main axes formulated above. The results will be supported with explanatory statistical tables and linked to the hypotheses and the overall objective of the study. This research is based on 38 questionnaires gathered from the employees of TotalEnergies who work at the gas project in south Iraq, as noted earlier.

Statistical Table 3. Frequencies and Percentages for Each Questionnaire Item, Below is the translated table in the same structured format:

**Table 3.** Frequencies and Percentages for Each Questionnaire Item

Dimension	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean
Institutional Leadership	"Top management states firm commitment to using sustainable marketing."	20	12	4	2	0	4.3
	"Sustaining marketing goals are made part of annual plans by the company."	18	14	5	1	0	4.2
	"Management allocates sufficient human and financial resources to support sustainable marketing."	15	13	7	2	1	4.0
	"Executive leaders participate actively in sustainable marketing programs."	14	15	6	2	1	4.0
	"Leadership encourages employees to integrate sustainable practices into everyday work."	12	16	7	2	1	3.9
	<b>Leadership Mean</b>						<b>4.08</b>
Organizational Culture	"The work environment encourages discussing sustainability issues."	11	13	9	3	2	3.7
	"Sustainability concepts are integrated into job profiles and training."	9	15	10	2	2	3.7
	"Sustainability becomes embedded in the corporate culture, not something on top to endure."	10	14	9	3	2	3.7
	"Green marketing efforts made by the individual are valued."	8	13	11	4	2	3.5
	"Employees have an understanding on the whole that the environment must be maintained in balance."	7	12	12	5	2	3.3
	<b>Culture Mean</b>						<b>3.58</b>

Resource Availability	"The company provides electronic materials to support sustainable marketing."	7	13	11	6	1	3.3
	"There is an annual appropriation for environmental marketing activities."	6	12	10	7	3	3.1
	"There is environmental supporting infrastructure in the firm."	5	11	11	8	3	3.0
	"The company has in-house specialists in green marketing topics."	4	10	12	9	3	2.9
	"Environmental measurement technologies and sustainability reporting are invested in."	3	9	13	10	3	2.8
	<b>Resources Mean</b>						<b>3.02</b>
Environmental Commitment & Governance	"There is a good written environmental policy in the firm."	5	10	12	7	4	2.7
	"There is an internal regulatory institution which monitors the adoption of environmental actions\."	4	9	13	8	4	2.6
	"Senior management is periodically informed through environmental performance reports."	3	8	14	9	4	2.5
	"Managers are also accountable for environmental performance when reviewed on a yearly basis."	3	7	15	9	4	2.4
	"The company practices conform to international environmental law."	2	6	16	10	4	2.3
	<b>Governance Mean</b>						<b>2.50</b>

Resource: table prepared by the researcher

From the foregoing, the research is outlined as an applied research step to address a knowledge gap regarding the level of institutional readiness within an existing operational setup of a gas company in Iraq. The strength of the research lies in its ability to bridge field information with theoretical analysis that paves the way for further research to expand the model and apply it in other firms operating in the same sector. Therefore, these results serve as a preliminary guide for every researcher or decision-maker seeking to enhance sustainable marketing practices in energy companies through appropriate analytical tools and practical results grounded on factual data.

## a. Analysis of the First Dimension: Institutional Leadership

The institutional leadership aspect is one of the most central pillars in assessing TotalEnergies' strategic readiness to adopt sustainable marketing. From the questionnaire analysis, it was evident that this aspect had the highest mean value of 4.1, indicating a high level of awareness on the part of the top management about the importance of adopting this strategic avenue. The answers provided by the participants reflect that top management inculcates hospitable policies for eco-friendly practices, merging sustainability objectives in their operation and structural planning. Furthermore, managerial communication is maintained effectively with employees to provide awareness on sustainable practices and leadership culture involvement in green marketing solutions.

Field observation confirmed the presence of awareness posters at the company's headquarters, regular meetings on environmental performance, and the formation of internal teams to monitor implementation of environmental policies. Such observation enhances the validity of the survey responses and the validity of the first hypothesis, which postulates a statistically significant relationship between the degree of institutional leadership and organizational readiness to embrace sustainable marketing. As such, institutional leadership in the firm can be termed a central driving force upon which to establish and develop other aspects that continue to exhibit diverse degrees of preparedness, notably availability of resources and environmental stewardship.

The dimension received a total mean of 4.1, which proves that there is a big extent of preparedness in leadership. The findings show genuine administration support and strategic visions that are congruent with the needs of sustainable marketing. These figures confirm the first hypothesis.

## b. Analysis of the Second Dimension: Organizational Culture

The organizational culture dimension serves as the cornerstone for embedding any change towards sustainability within institutions. The average score under this dimension was 3.5, which is in the moderate range with a tilt towards the positive. The questionnaire results bring to light the fact that there are a few ad hoc cultural efforts to raise awareness on sustainability among the employees e.g., conducting workshops or distributing awareness pamphlets but these are neither systematic nor long-term in nature.

The feedback from the respondents reflected a noticeable difference in how they perceived sustainable marketing. Though some reflected a clear idea of their role towards environmental goals, others thought it was entirely the job of senior management. This gap reflects that there is a lack of vision shared within the company culture, and there is a need to place sustainability values at the core of everyday workplace culture.

Field observations also revealed the absence of institutional symbols or slogans conveying strong environmental identity and sparse sustainability-related terminology in the company's internal communication. Conversely, some individual efforts by dedicated employees were observed, conveying seeds for change for the better that could be expanded.

Based on these findings, one can conclude that organizational culture in TotalEnergies is still in its embryonic stage as far as sustainable marketing is concerned and requires strategic interventions in order to improve shared environmental responsibility. Regular training sessions are proposed to be undertaken and institutional incentives triggered for those company staff members who demonstrate genuine commitment towards sustainability. In addition, it is advisable to integrate the principles of sustainability into the company's code of conduct and create internal task forces dedicated to building a genuine and structured environmental culture. These findings validate

the second hypothesis, which relates organizational culture to environmental marketing practices, highlighting that the success of this relationship depends on the degree of sustainable values incorporated into the institutional culture. The dimension average score of 3.5 reveals a moderate level with a tendency towards enhancement. The responses show the existence of awareness initiatives, but the culture still lacks the institutionalization of sustainability as a core value, confirming the need for cultural empowerment programs.

### c. Analysis of the Third Dimension: Resource Availability

Resource availability is a critical factor in establishing an institution's capability to effectively implement sustainable marketing strategies. The result of the questionnaire indicated that this dimension was at a mean of 3.2, which positions it at a level of leaning towards inadequacy in terms of financial, technical, and human resources necessary to enable environmental marketing activities. Responses show that certain departments within the company have begun allocating partial budgets to facilitate environmentally friendly marketing material such as campaigns or recycled products but these budgets are not sufficient to facilitate a broad range of activities. Other employees also noted the low levels of digital infrastructure that can support today's green marketing technologies.

Observations in the field recorded a deficiency of specialized electronic platforms to showcase sustainable products and inadequate digital recording of environmental achievements, which reflects on poor utilization of technological facilities. Further mentioned was an insufficiency of employees specializing in addressing sustainability issues in the marketing division, which suggests training and hiring qualified personnel in this area. These measures confirm the authenticity of the third hypothesis, which associates the abundance of resources with the degree of readiness of institutions to implement sustainable marketing. It is advisable to earmark dedicated budgets for funding environmental marketing initiatives, create sophisticated digital infrastructure, and invest in the establishment of specialized human capacities with the potential to guide the transition toward more sustainable marketing practice. The mean score of 3.2 represents a relatively close range of necessary resources to facilitate sustainable marketing tools. The results point out the necessity for increased financial investment and provision of stronger technological and logistical assistance.

### d. Analysis of the Fourth Dimension: Environmental Commitment and Governance

This was the factor with the lowest mean score throughout the study, at 2.8, and indicated a clear weakness in the degree of institutional commitment to environmental norms and governance requirements relating to sustainable marketing. Findings from the questionnaire showed that over half of the sampled employees do not perceive that clear policies or organizational rules assisting in keeping environmental marketing performance in check exist.

This weakness was also evident from the observation of field visits conducted by the researcher. There was no working environmental monitoring system, no independent governance management, and no regularly operating environmental oversight committees. Along with this, there were no signs of regular measurement of the environmental impact of marketing activities, or any published reports on environmental performance in line with openness institutional standards. Furthermore, some of the interviewees observed that corporate governance is not practiced at large, with options being reduced to a single administrative margin, while environmental units or parties for green marketing are not offered strategic decision-making authority. This shortcoming is an important obstacle to the creation of an all-around institutional vision of sustainability. These findings are the basis for the existence of a structural deficit in the governance institutional system that does not enable the integration of transparency, accountability, and environmental commitment values. Therefore, the restructuring of the company's governance systems to enhance the independence of environmental management, activating internal monitoring channels on the basis of Environmental KPIs, and bringing environmental governance standards into the company's overall policy framework is recommended.

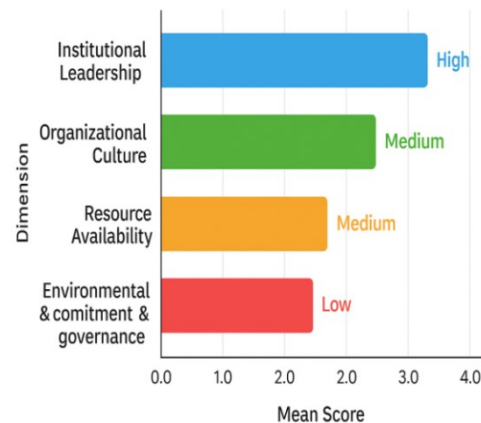
Summarily, the "Environmental Commitment and Governance" aspect is the weakest link in the framework of strategic readiness with an emphasized necessity to address it as a top priority under any future development plan. It is the lowest at 2.8, indicating a grave absence of environmental governance policies and mechanisms. There are hardly any written policies and environmental monitoring systems, and hence there's a need for reforming the respective institutional infrastructure.

**Table 4.** Overall Readiness Classification by Dimension

Dimension	Mean Score	Readiness Level
Institutional Leadership	4.08	High
Organizational Culture	3.58	Medium
Resource availability	3.02	Medium

Environmental commitment & governance	2.50	Low
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Resource: table prepared by the researcher



**Figure 4.** Overall Readiness Classification by Dimension.

Resource: table prepared by the researcher

#### 4. Interim Summary

The results indicate that the administrative framework in TotalEnergies is among the strongest contributory factors towards the realization of sustainable practice marketing, with strong indicators towards administrative dedication and strategic guidance. The results also contrast since organizational culture and resource dimensions show a middle level of readiness, indicating a potentially changeable platform but one which is lacking in terms of institutional consistency and allocations.

In the case of the Environmental Commitment and Governance dimension, the research noted a systems and policy regulations gap and was thus the most pivotal challenge towards enhancing company sustainability. The four hypotheses guiding this research were thus validated, and it was recommended that the weakest dimension be supported and more integration among the dimensions of institutional readiness be developed.

**Table 5.** Results of the Four Survey Dimensions

Dimension	Mean Score	Readiness Level	Key Observations	Hypothesis Status
Institutional Leadership	4.1	High	Clear management direction for sustainability – Firm support – Regular follow-ups	Confirmed
Organizational Culture	3.5	Medium	Limited environmental awareness programs – No shared environmental symbols – Varying definition of sustainability	Confirmed
Resource Availability	3.2	Medium	Incomplete budgets only – Shortage in computer and manpower resources – Traditional infrastructure capacity	Confirmed
Environmental Commitment & Governance	2.8	Low	No clear environmental governance system – Inadequate monitoring – Weak autonomy of environmental departments	Confirmed

Resource: table prepared by the researcher

The table indicates that Institutional Leadership is the strongest readiness dimension in TotalEnergies, yet Environmental Commitment and Governance is the weakest link in the institutional readiness framework for sustainable marketing.

## Discussion of Results: Comparison Between Current Findings and Previous Studies

The findings of the survey show that TotalEnergies' strategic readiness to go for sustainable marketing vary in the four aspects. While leadership is robust, organizational culture and availability of resources are moderate, and

environmental governance is the lowest. These insights overlap and differ from several related previous research works:

## 1. Institutional Leadership (High Score: 4.1)

This result concurs with [32], in their investigation of leadership dimensions and its role in green marketing activation. They indicated that ethical leadership is a determinant of sustainability, even in financially challenged environments. Likewise, the study by [33], corroborates this result, citing the impact of management support on employees' environmental orientations, testifying to utmost conformity with the existing research.

## 2. Organizational Culture (Moderate Score: 3.5)

The score reflects the existence of a partially built cultural system in the company for sustainable marketing. It partially substantiates the findings of [34], who revealed awareness gaps among oil firms despite the existence of awareness campaigns. However, the current study did not record a high incidence like in some of the other companies mentioned in earlier research, suggesting more comprehensive public awareness campaigns and encouragement of environmental ethics within corporate culture.

## 3. Availability of Resources (Moderate Score: 3.2)

It is indicative of resource disparities needed for sustainable marketing. It confirms the finding of [35], wherein they referenced that the unavailability of technical and financial resources acts as a barrier towards pragmatic implementation of sustainability. It is also in line with the finding of [36], who noticed shortcomings of institutional infrastructure in energy contracts in Iraq, where it is necessary to restructure and have robust resource systems.

## 4. Environmental Management and Commitment (Low Score: 2.8)

This is the weakest of the research findings and was also consistent with that of (Spence, 2011) on bad and superficial management in oil companies, poor regulation, and environmental responsibility absence. Weak linkages of gas projects and the environment policy were also identified by [37] as one of the primary institutional issues. Reform of governance is also one of the highest institutional changes our research identifies.

# Conclusion

## 1. Conclusion of the Discussion

Such differences highlight the feasibility of the hypotheses of the study and reflect a difference in the world that exists between supportive leadership existing and solid institutional infrastructure not existing. The following is suggested:

- a. Engage environmental governance systems
- b. Increase awareness and training programs
- c. Increase technical and financial resource allocation

Such measures are imperative towards achieving an actual transformation towards sustainable marketing practices in Iraq's energy sector.

## 2. Recommendations and Conclusion

The findings of this study provide some varied picture of how strategic readiness in TotalEnergies is for employing sustainable marketing practices. There had been a comparative strength within the institutional leadership but an enormous weakness in the environmental governance arena. Based on the findings of this study, recommendations and conclusions can be made from the practice and research-based findings of this study:

- a. The study stresses the importance of having a unified institutional apparatus in existence to transform positive attitudes toward leadership into real firm policy. Leadership will not suffice with no supporting system of organizational structure, awareness campaigns, and capital to put it into effect. This entails the application of a specific institutional design for environmental management integrating marketing and environmental interests into a single integrated, measurable system.
- b. The resource and infrastructure deficit necessitates an increase in investment in sustainable marketing tools or instruments and technology or human capital in the form of talent that is able to drive this transition or even digital platforms themselves. This must go hand-in-hand with formal training programs at all levels within organizations.
- c. Organizational culture is still at an intermediary level, which must be intervened with so that there are explicit internal values that allow the employees to embrace sustainability as a part of their institutional identity and not as an outside trend or mere facade.
- d. The study puts into the limelight the need to bring principles of environmental governance to bear on the firm, including:
  - 1) Creation of clear internal policies
  - 2) Establishment of enforceable regulatory directives
  - 3) Generation of accountability in each department for the environmental or marketing operations



These must stem from within the organization itself, as distinguished from as a knee-jerk reaction to external pressure or legal mandate.

Following the above, the present research is an applied research effort to bridge the knowledge gap on the readiness of an institution within the actual operational environment of an Iraqi gas company. The validity of the study lies in its ability to connect the field data and theoretical analysis with opportunities for future research to make the current model universal and apply it to other companies in the same industry.

Thus, the findings herein act as a starting point to any decision-maker or researcher who seeks to enhance sustainable marketing practices in energy firms by means of corresponding analytical frameworks and operational outcomes based on empirical considerations.

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