



Walking the green path: a study on the sustainable trends in the Brazilian footwear industry

Trilhando o caminho verde: um estudo sobre as tendências sustentáveis na indústria calçadista brasileira

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Resumo

A indústria calçadista brasileira tem passado por transformações significativas, impulsionadas por demandas crescentes por sustentabilidade e inovação. Este estudo investiga as tendências sustentáveis no setor calçadista no período pós-pandemia (2022-2023), com base na análise qualitativa temática-categorial de 21 relatórios Abinforma, publicados pela Associação Brasileira das Indústrias de Calçados (Abicalçados). Os resultados evidenciam a crescente adoção de materiais ecológicos, certificações sustentáveis e eventos setoriais como vetores da transição sustentável. Além disso, parcerias estratégicas e iniciativas corporativas têm fomentado práticas mais responsáveis, equilibrando desempenho econômico e compromisso ambiental. Conclui-se que a sustentabilidade está se consolidando como um diferencial competitivo e um elemento-chave para o futuro da indústria.

Palavras-chave: Sustentabilidade; Indústria calçadista; Certificações ambientais; Economia circular; Estratégias empresariais.

Abstract

The Brazilian footwear industry has undergone significant transformations driven by increasing demands for sustainability and innovation. This study investigates sustainable trends in the sector



during the post-pandemic period (2022-2023), based on a qualitative thematic-categorical analysis of 21 Abinforma reports published by the Brazilian Footwear Industry Association (Abicalçados). The findings highlight the growing adoption of eco-friendly materials, sustainability certifications, and industry events as key drivers of sustainable transition. Additionally, strategic partnerships and corporate initiatives have fostered more responsible practices, balancing economic performance with environmental commitment. The study concludes that sustainability is becoming a competitive differentiator and a key factor for the industry's future.

Keywords: Sustainability; Footwear industry; Environmental certifications; Circular economy; Business strategies.

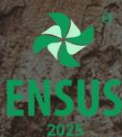
1. Introduction

The historical development of the Brazilian footwear industry traces back to the 19th century, originating from tanneries and small-scale production aimed at meeting the needs of immigrant populations (Reichert, 2004). During this period, production was concentrated in two key regions: Vale dos Sinos in Rio Grande do Sul and Franca in São Paulo, dominated by small workshops (Costa, 2004; Schemes, 2006). German immigration, beginning in 1824, played a fundamental role in shaping the industry, as German immigrants brought expertise in tanning and craftsmanship, fostering the early development of shoemaking (Costa; Passos, 2004; Schemes, 2006). While production initially relied on manual methods, the late 19th and early 20th centuries witnessed a gradual mechanization process, particularly with the adoption of steam-powered machinery, although artisanal techniques remained prevalent until the 1960s (Costa, 2004).

Significant transformations in the Brazilian footwear sector emerged post-1960s, marked by the sector's entry into the export market (Costa, 2004). Vale dos Sinos distinguished itself as a critical industrial hub due to its strong political connections, advantageous positioning in international trade, and expertise in leather production (Costa, 2004). Beginning in the 1970s, the leather-footwear industry in Rio Grande do Sul underwent a comprehensive industrialization and export-oriented transformation, characterized by increased production capacity, technological advancements, and capital investment (Schneider, 2004). However, the 1980s and 1990s brought challenges, including heightened competition from Asian manufacturers, particularly China, which contributed to a decline in the industry's value and economic crises (Costa, 2004).

Currently, the Brazilian footwear industry faces persistent challenges from Chinese production and other Asian competitors, grappling with issues such as import-export dynamics, counterfeit goods, technological advancements, and cost-effective manufacturing (Abicalçados, 2023). Despite these pressures, Brazilian brands remain distinguished by their use of high-quality leather and innovative design, ensuring their continued relevance and competitiveness in both domestic and international markets (Abicalçados, 2024).

Moreover, in recent years, sustainability has emerged as a focus for the Brazilian footwear industry, reflecting a global shift towards environmentally and socially responsible production (Feitosa; Sousa, 2013; Meyer; Froehlich, 2018; Pimenta; Périco; Sindelar, 2023). This transition is driven by increasing consumer demand for sustainable products, stricter regulatory frameworks, and the recognition that long-term competitiveness depends on sustainable practices (Feitosa; Sousa, 2013; Meyer; Froehlich, 2018; Pimenta; Périco; Sindelar, 2023). The industry faces the dual challenge of integrating sustainability into its processes while addressing



traditional hurdles such as cost pressures, global competition, and technological modernization (Feitosa; Sousa, 2013; Meyer; Froehlich, 2018; Pimenta; Périco; Sindelar, 2023). Key initiatives have included adopting eco-friendly materials (Bodoga et al., 2024), optimizing resource use (Silva et al., 2020; Chagas et al., 2021), implementing circular economy principles (Vier et al., 2021), and enhancing transparency throughout the production chain (Rinaldi et al., 2022).

Furthermore, the *Associação Brasileira das Indústrias de Calçados* (Abicalçados) provides a comprehensive portfolio of services and publications for the footwear sector, including Abinforma, sectoral and annual reports, market analyses, and foreign trade assessments. This study, which investigates the post-pandemic trends and challenges within the Brazilian footwear industry during the 2022-2023 period, utilized the Abinforma reports as its primary data source. These monthly publications offer systematic updates on the developmental trajectory of the national footwear industry, enabling an in-depth analysis of the sector.

The research employs qualitative thematic-categorical content analysis to systematically examine textual data derived from the Abinforma reports. This methodological approach facilitates the identification of core themes and subthemes that characterize the sector's sustainability initiatives in the post-pandemic context. The analysis seeks to elucidate prevailing trends related to the industry's sustainability strategies during the period studied.

The study's relevance is underscored by its interdisciplinary framework, integrating empirical data from industry reports with theoretical perspectives from academic literature. In this context, we adopt especially management perspectives such as Bennett's (1998), discussing the integration of social values with business practices, and Porter and Kramer's (2011), arguing that companies can create value for both society and shareholders by focusing on areas where there is an overlap between business goals and social goals.

The primary objective of this study is to explore sustainability trend in the Brazilian footwear industry in the post-pandemic period (2022-2023). Through a qualitative thematic-categorical content analysis, the research examines practices and developments aimed at promoting sustainability within the industry.

2. Methodology

2.1 Methodological procedures, data collection and corpus construction

We conducted documentary research based on Abinforma reports by Abicalçados, focusing on extracting information to understand the phenomenon (Kripka; Scheller; Bonotto 2015). With this in mind, we focused on the textual and graphical materials contained in the reports, specifically in the news presented each month.

Between January 2022 and December 2023, Abicalçados launched a total of 21 reports in the Abinforma category. There was no report released in October 2022, and for the months of November and December, a single report was produced each year. Thus, the corpus of the empirical study included a total of 21 reports, characterized as shown in Table 1. The identification of reports in our spreadsheet was made up of their year added to the month in question, for example, 202201 comprises the report produced in January (01) of the year 2022. The list of Abicalçados report can be found in Dantas (2025).

Table 01: Composition of the document corpus – Abinforma Reports

ID	Title	No. of pages	Quant. of words
202201	“Number of franchises grows throughout Brazil”	39	13.847
202202	“Differentials qualify Brazilian footwear exports”	32	11.575
202203	“Women who develop the footwear sector”	26	8.794
202204	“Physical events boost exports”	30	10.007
202205	“Challenges of the footwear industry”	34	12.910
202206	“Footwear chain celebrates pact for sustainability”	28	10.570
202207	“Logistics is a challenge for the footwear sector”	33	11.295
202208	“The footwear industry has already generated more than 27 thousand jobs in 2022”	29	11.487
202209	“E-commerce represents more than 30% of shoes sold in Brazil”	25	8.974
202211-12	“What to expect from the Brazilian footwear industry in 2023”	31	13.054
202301	“The footwear industry is more cautious, but foresees growth”	32	10.783
202302	“Brazilian footwear show: the Brazilian footwear fair”	31	10.797
202303	“International actions increase footwear exports”	34	14.543
202304	“Four decades alongside the national footwear sector”	25	8.536
202305	“Footwear consumption is expected to increase by more than 3% in 2023”	29	12.618
202306	“Sustainability: a reality of no return for the footwear production chain”	30	13.629
202307	“Latin America produces more than 1.5 billion pairs of shoes”	26	10.496
202308	“Union of the footwear sector strengthens BFShow”	23	7.387
202309	“International scenario impacts on exports from the production chain”	28	12.717
202310	“Current scenario points to growth in the footwear industry”	33	11.207
202311-12	“First edition of BFShow mobilizes the national footwear sector”	39	13.593
Total		637	238.819

Source: prepared by the authors according to research data.

2.2 Data analysis

The data exploration strategy adopted in this study was grounded in the thematic-categorical content analysis methodology outlined by Bardin (1997). This approach focuses on pre-defined categories aligned with the research objectives and is designed to facilitate the systematic interpretation of language, messages, and texts. Bardin’s framework emphasizes the importance of understanding the structure, content, meaning, and context of the analyzed materials. In alignment with Sampaio and Lycario’s (2021) observations, this method enables the construction of objective inferences from textual data through a rigorous process of content coding, which subsequently defines categories such as trends, results, and challenges.

The qualitative analysis of the data involved an exhaustive review of 21 Abinforma reports. Each report underwent meticulous scrutiny to map recurring themes, which were systematically recorded in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. These themes were then organized into categories and subcategories, structured into three overarching axes reflecting the research objectives: trends, results, and challenges. This categorization facilitated a coherent qualitative analysis, enabling the identification of patterns and interconnections among themes.

In the initial phase of the investigation, all 21 reports were revisited, and each piece of news was categorized based on the identified themes and subthemes. Importantly, the flexibility to assign the same news item to multiple categories proved essential for capturing the multifaceted nature of the reports. This approach allowed for a nuanced understanding of the data, revealing the complexity of the subjects addressed and the interrelations among different themes, thereby enriching the analysis and its implications.

2.3 Background of study

In previous research, we identified three central themes characterizing the Brazilian footwear industry post-pandemic (Dantas, 2025): (1) exports, internationalization and the domestic market; (2) cooperatives, associations and business fairs; and (3) sustainable aspects. This study focuses on the third theme, which follows the following key concept:

- **Sustainable aspects:** covers content about the actions and initiatives of the Brazilian footwear industry in sustainability, including adoption of eco-efficient practices in production, use of ecological materials, reduction of environmental impact, recycling and reuse programs, sustainability certifications, development of ecological products, investments in renewable energy, environmental and social awareness actions promoted by companies in the sector.

In total, we identified 339 items/news across the 21 Abinforma reports, which were classified into the three main categories outlined above, and further organized within the three sub-categories of interest—trends, results, and challenges—described in the methodology. Of these, 54 items were specifically related to “sustainable aspects of the footwear industry.” The following results, relevant to the focus of this paper, were obtained and are presented in Table 2:

Table 02: Frequency distribution of the Abinforma report categorization process

Year	Month	Sustainable aspects
		Trends
2022	Jan.	2
	Feb.	0
	Mar	0
	Apr.	0
	May	0
	Jun.	1
	Jul.	3
	Aug.	2
	Sept.	0
	Nov./Dec.	1
	2023	Jan.
Feb.		2
Mar		1
Apr.		0
May		0
Jun.		2
Jul.		0
Aug.		1
Sept.		2
Oct.		1
Nov./Dec.		2
Total	21	

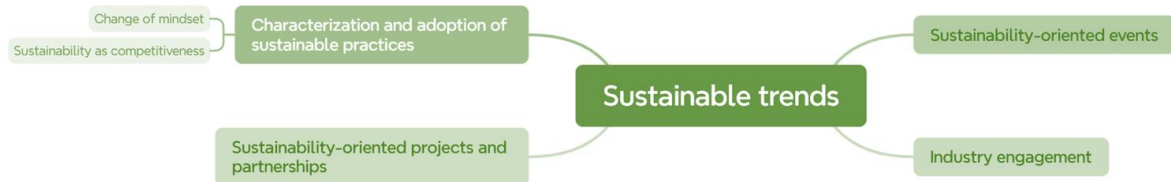
Source: prepared by the authors according to research data

3. Results and discussions

The analysis of 21 reports from 2022 and 2023 highlights 21 trends related to sustainability in the Brazilian footwear industry (Figure 1). These trends reflect a growing awareness of

environmental challenges and the adoption of sustainability as a relevant aspect of the sector's strategy (Feitosa; Sousa, 2013; Meyer; Froehlich, 2018; Pimenta; Périco; Sindelar, 2023).

Figure 01: Categorization of report findings



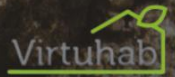
Source: prepared by the authors according to research data

Firstly, we look at the role of trade fairs as a vehicle for promoting sustainability (Abicalçados, 2022a; 2022g; 2023a). Therefore, events such as FIMEC (International Fair for Leather, Chemical Products, Components, Machinery and Equipment for Footwear and Tanneries) (Abicalçados, 2022a), InspiraMAIS (Abicalçados, 2023a), and the CICB (Brazilian Tannery Industry Center) Sustainability Forum (Abicalçados, 2023b) have played an important role in promoting discussions, exchanging knowledge, and sharing best practices. Moreover, we understand that these initiatives have encouraged the engagement of companies, entities, and professionals, emphasizing the sector's commitment to sustainable practices.

FIMEC, for example, integrated sustainability at the core of its programming, with a strong focus on presenting solutions that would drive the industry toward a more eco-responsible future (Abicalçados, 2022a). In this context, one of the proposed interventions was the “Estúdio Fimec”, designed to create a sensory experience where attendees could explore the latest trends in sustainable materials and technologies. This space seeks to showcase eco-friendly products from exhibitors but also served as a hub for discussing consumer behavior trends, helping professionals make informed decisions in developing sustainable collections (Abicalçados, 2022a). The initiative featured a diverse array of materials that demonstrated the potential for innovation in eco-conscious production, fostering collaboration between manufacturers and designers committed to responsible practices (Abicalçados, 2022a). The exhibition also highlighted natural materials sourced from artisanal communities, such as buriti fibers, cotton, and seeds, promoting ethical production practices and supporting local economies (Abicalçados, 2022a).

Similarly, InspiraMAIS strides in advocating for sustainability across multiple dimensions—environmental, economic, social, and cultural (Abicalçados, 2023a). The event emphasized the need for industry-wide cultural change, pushing the boundaries of sustainability beyond environmental concerns to include social and economic factors. A key focus was the promotion of eco-responsible materials and production processes, with an emphasis on transparency and traceability within the supply chain. As Silvana Dilly, the executive director of Assintecal (Brazilian Association of Component Companies for Leather, Footwear and Artifacts), noted, the salon has played a role in accelerating the industry's adoption of sustainable practices by bringing together suppliers, manufacturers, and designers to discuss and implement eco-friendly solutions (Abicalçados, 2023a).

Given was presented in the Abicalçados (2023a) report, the 2023 edition saw a significant increase in the number of sustainable products showcased, reflecting the growing demand for such solutions, especially in international markets. We notice that this shift towards sustainability was driven by the need for companies to adapt to increasingly stringent global



standards regarding environmental impact, further reinforcing the importance of events like InspiraMAIS in shaping a sustainable future for the fashion industry, disseminating materials and practices among producers (Abicalçados, 2023a).

According to Porter and Kramer (2011) perspective, such collective efforts can create shared value, a concept in which businesses, through innovative strategies, address societal challenges while also enhancing their own competitiveness. Thus, this approach goes beyond traditional corporate social responsibility, embedding social and environmental goals into the core operations and long-term strategies of businesses (Park et al., 2023). By working together in initiatives like trade fairs, companies can foster partnerships and collaborations that drive economic growth, contributing meaningfully to resolving broader social and environmental challenges within industries (Brailly, 2016; Park et al., 2023). These efforts can lead to more sustainable business models that benefit the companies involved and the communities and ecosystems they impact on, creating a scenario that amplifies positive outcomes across multiple stakeholders (Brailly, 2016; Park et al., 2023).

Further, collaboration and partnerships have also emerged as drivers of sustainability in the Brazilian footwear industry (Abicalçados, 2022g; 2022h). Projects like those developed by Sindifranca (Franca Footwear Industry Union) and ILSA Brasil for industrial waste management (Abicalçados, 2022g; 2022h), as well as the Sinbi (Birigui Footwear and Clothing Industries Union) Charity Campaign (Abicalçados, 2022h), demonstrate practical efforts to reduce environmental impacts.

In the reports, we found that the recent collaboration between the Sindifranca and ILSA Brasil exemplifies how industrial collaboration can address environmental challenges while enhancing sectoral performance (Abicalçado, 2022g). ILSA Brasil, a global leader in biotechnology, has demonstrated the potential of converting leather industry waste into high-performance agricultural fertilizers, effectively bridging the gap between industrial waste management and agricultural productivity (Abicalçado, 2022g). This initiative represents a response to a long-standing need for sustainable waste solutions, as articulated during the formalization of a protocol of intentions to establish a processing unit in Franca (Abicalçado, 2022g). The planned facility, anticipated to begin operations within 18 months, aims to manage leather-related waste streams, reducing environmental burdens while fostering economic opportunities within the region (Abicalçados, 2022g).

Moreover, collaborative efforts directed at social sustainability within the textile and footwear sectors seek to offer societal impact. The “Lençóis do Bem” campaign, spearheaded by the Sinbi and the Acib (Birigui Commercial and Industrial Association), addresses urgent healthcare needs by mobilizing resources for the local Santa Casa hospital (Abicalçados, 2022h). By acquiring and transforming donated fabrics into bed linens for hospital patients, this initiative exemplifies how industry associations can leverage their networks to address community-specific needs (Abicalçados, 2022h). Such programs demonstrate a holistic approach to sustainability that transcends environmental considerations, integrating social welfare into the core of industrial responsibility (Abicalçados, 2022h). This commitment to sustainability underscores the potential of these partnerships to catalyze systemic change, fostering resilience and inclusivity within local ecosystems (Everard et al., 2017; Kozar et al., 2019).

These initiatives highlight the importance of cooperation among organizations, which, as Bonassi and Lisboa (2003) argue, can lead to innovative solutions for complex problems. The results of these partnerships include waste reduction and a more structured approach to environmental responsibility, suggesting that collaborative strategies are instrumental in advancing sustainability in the sector (Everard et al., 2017; Kozar et al., 2019).



In addition to collaborative efforts, there is growing awareness and integration of sustainability into the operational strategies of the footwear industry (Abicalçados, 2022h; 2023a; 2023b; 2023i). Campaigns such as “Sustainability in Practice” in Nova Serrana (Minas Gerais), the “Sustainability Rounds”, and exhibitions at InspiraMAIS reveal an industry-wide shift toward sustainable practices (Abicalçados, 2022h; 2023a; 2023b; 2023i).

First, the “Encontro Sustentabilidade na Prática” can be seen as a strategic effort to promote the use of sustainable materials in production processes (Abicalçados, 2022h). During the 13th Febrac event in Nova Serrana/MG, industry stakeholders from Abicalçados, Assintecal, and Sindinova reinforced the importance of sustainability across the footwear production chain. Highlighting environmental, social, economic, and cultural dimensions, the event introduced the Origem Sustentável certification, the only global certification for ESG-compliant footwear production processes (Abicalçados, 2022h). Aline Santos, Marketing and Relationship Manager at Assintecal, emphasized that the certification, audited by external entities such as Senai and Bureau Veritas, ensures the alignment of all processes and materials with international ESG parameters (Abicalçados, 2022h). Beyond environmental preservation and the safeguarding of human rights, this certification contributes to enhancing competitiveness by appealing to a growing base of environmentally and socially conscious consumers (Abicalçados, 2022h).

Additionally, the 4th Sustainability Business Roundtables further underscores the footwear sector's commitment to sustainable practices (Abicalçados, 2023i). Organized by Assintecal in partnership with Abicalçados and the CICB, the event focuses on connecting suppliers and buyers of sustainable materials (Abicalçados, 2023i). According to Santos, this initiative addresses a critical demand within the footwear production chain, offering a streamlined platform where businesses can efficiently establish partnerships aligned with sustainable goals (Abicalçados, 2023i). By promoting the adoption of ecologically responsible materials, the event not only facilitates the transition towards sustainable production but also positions companies to meet the expectations of increasingly discerning consumers (Abicalçados, 2023i). These efforts collectively demonstrate the strategic alignment of the Brazilian footwear industry with global sustainability standards, reflecting a paradigm shift in production and consumption practices (Abicalçados, 2023i).

In this context, Nishimura and Triska (2021) emphasize that industries integrating environmentally conscious approaches are better prepared to address the evolving demands of markets and regulatory frameworks, a perspective that aligns with the changes observed in the footwear sector. Such integration reflects a broader shift in consumer behavior and governmental policies, which increasingly prioritize transparency, accountability, and environmental stewardship across global supply chains (Gardner et al., 2019; Esan; Aribidesi; Olawale, 2024). Consequently, these proactive measures position businesses to remain competitive in dynamic markets while fostering long-term growth and ecological balance (Sharma; Vredenburg, 1998).

This focus on sustainability also indicates a gradual shift in the mindset of companies (Abicalçados, 2022a; 2023c). Increasingly, sustainability is viewed not just as a compliance requirement but as an opportunity for long-term competitiveness and differentiation. Research from the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), commissioned by WWF, highlights a 71% surge in online searches for sustainable products across 54 countries, which represent 80% of the global population (Abicalçados, 2022a). This growing interest is influencing markets worldwide, including emerging economies like Brazil. Letícia Sperb Masselli, Commercial Promotion Coordinator at Abicalçados, emphasizes the global nature of this shift, noting that international importers frequently seek Brazilian sustainable footwear brands, many of which are showcased on the “BrazilianFootwear.com” platform (Abicalçados, 2022a). This initiative,



part of the Brazilian Footwear program by Abicalçados and ApexBrasil, aims to promote sustainable exports and bolster the international visibility of over 200 brands, 34 of which already offer eco-friendly products (Abicalçados, 2022a).

In this context, we notice that several Brazilian footwear companies exemplify this shift toward sustainability through innovative practices and products (Abicalçados, 2022a). Piccadilly, for instance, has adopted an ESG-driven strategy to ensure continuous improvement in social, environmental, and economic projects, producing animal-free shoes with eco-conscious materials like PrimeTech and recycled EVA (Abicalçados, 2022a). Similarly, Grendene offers 100% vegan and recyclable footwear, with initiatives like the Melissa Free line made from Sugarcane-based EVA and the Rider R4 designed around circular principles (Abicalçados, 2022a). Moreover, we can also use companies like Bibi and Boaonda as examples, with Bibi focusing on atoxic materials and recycled production waste, while Boaonda's "*Walking to the Future*" project incorporates recycled materials into its Hope line, powered by renewable energy and reduced CO₂ emissions (Abicalçados, 2022a). These advancements underscore the rising consumer demand, reflecting a broader industry commitment to sustainable innovation (Feitosa; Sousa, 2013; Meyer; Froehlich, 2018; Pimenta; Périco; Sindelar, 2023).

Furthermore, Bennett (1998) argues that adopting sustainable practices can strengthen the competitiveness of enterprises by improving their resilience and market positioning, a trend that continues to gain relevance in industries worldwide, and in the Brazilian footwear industry (Abicalçados, 2022a). Sustainability has evolved from a peripheral concern to a strategic imperative, driven by increasing consumer demand for ethical practices and accountability (Evans; Welch; Swaffield, 2017; Tomşa; Romoñi-Maniu; Scridon, 2021). Companies are now leveraging sustainability as a differentiator, integrating it into their core strategies to enhance brand value, reduce risks, and capture new market opportunities (Lloret, 2016; Ioannou; Serafeim, 2018).

A survey carried out by Abicalçados in 2021 shows that the Brazilian footwear sector is taking great strides towards becoming increasingly sustainable, but that there is a path to be taken. **The entity's survey indicates that 87% of companies in the sector carry out environmentally appropriate disposal of waste, either completely or partially, 73% control restricted substances and 48% consume clean energy from renewable sources.** "We have one of the most sustainable industries on the planet and we need to communicate this to the market. "*Origem Sustentável*" [Sustainable Origin] came to assist in this task with all stakeholders in the national and international market", highlights Schlindwein, highlighting the image gains provided by the certification (Abicalçados, 2023c, p. 13, translated by us, our emphasis).

Therefore, this transition reflects a broader shift in consumer and corporate mindsets, where long-term environmental and social considerations are seen as integral to business success rather than optional add-ons (Lloret, 2016; Evans; Welch; Swaffield, 2017; Tomşa; Romoñi-Maniu; Ioannou; Serafeim, 2018; Scridon, 2021). As seen in the reports, sustainability becomes synonymous with innovation and progress (Abicalçados, 2022a; 2023c), therefore, businesses that adapt proactively are better positioned to thrive in an evolving market landscape (Lloret, 2016; Ioannou; Serafeim, 2018).

4. Final considerations

The Brazilian footwear industry has existed for centuries, going through a process of craftsmanship, mechanization, exports, until reaching the wider adoption of sustainable



practices. In this context, this study explored the trends practices within the Brazilian footwear industry during the post-pandemic period (2022–2023). Using qualitative thematic-categorical content analysis, the research identified key patterns and categories by analyzing reports from the Brazilian Footwear Industry Association (Abicalçados). This methodology allowed for a systematic understanding of industry trends.

Therefore, the findings indicate a growing commitment to sustainability within the sector, driven by regulatory changes, consumer demand, and industry-wide initiatives. Key trends include the integration of sustainable materials, the expansion of certification programs such as “Origem Sustentável”, and the role of trade fairs in disseminating best practices. Furthermore, collaborative efforts among industry players have contributed to the development of eco-conscious solutions, from waste management strategies to corporate social responsibility programs. These elements reinforce the positioning of Brazilian footwear brands in both national and international markets as they seek to balance economic performance with environmental and social concerns.

From these results, we conclude that sustainability has become an integral aspect of the industry’s long-term strategy. Beyond regulatory compliance, companies are increasingly recognizing sustainability as a competitive differentiator that can drive innovation, enhance brand reputation, and ensure resilience in global supply chains. The transition towards more responsible production processes suggests that sustainability is no longer perceived as a niche concern but rather as a fundamental driver of business success. Nevertheless, achieving deeper systemic change will require ongoing investment, broader adoption of circular economy principles, and continuous stakeholder engagement.

Despite its contributions, this study has some limitations. The research is based on documentary analysis of reports produced by Abicalçados, which, while comprehensive, may not fully capture the perspectives of all stakeholders within the industry, such as small-scale manufacturers and independent designers. Future research could complement this approach by incorporating interviews or surveys with industry professionals to provide a more nuanced understanding of sustainability practices. Additionally, comparative studies between Brazil and other footwear-producing countries could offer perspectives into best practices and global positioning. Expanding the scope of analysis beyond the post-pandemic period would also be beneficial in assessing the long-term evolution of sustainability trends in the sector.

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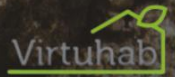
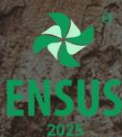
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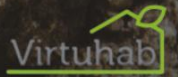
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