



GREEN MARKETING COMMUNICATION IN BUILDING AN ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY BRAND IMAGE IN THE LOCAL FASHION INDUSTRY

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Abstrak

environmental values into its marketing communication strategies. This study aims to analyze how green marketing communication is constructed by local fashion brands in building a green brand image through digital media. This study employs a qualitative approach with a constructivist perspective. Data were collected through observation and documentation of digital communication activities of local fashion brands, particularly on Instagram and TikTok. The research focuses on Sejauh Mata Memandang, Cottonink, Buttonscarves, and Kana Goods. The analysis focuses on the representation of sustainability messages, the use of digital symbols and narratives, communication consistency, and the formation of an environmentally responsible brand image. The findings indicate that green marketing communication functions not only as a promotional strategy but also as an instrument for constructing brand identity. Each brand develops a distinctive sustainability communication strategy according to its positioning. Sejauh Mata Memandang emphasizes environmental sustainability, Cottonink associates sustainability with product quality and durability, Buttonscarves integrates sustainability with social responsibility and product quality, while Kana Goods emphasizes natural materials and local production. The formation of a green brand image occurs through consistent messages, visual symbols, narratives, and product information that are subsequently interpreted by audiences. The study also finds that communication credibility is essential in preventing greenwashing. The findings propose a communication model linking brand sustainability values, green marketing communication, symbolic representation and digital narratives, audience interpretation, green brand image, and long-term brand-consumer relationships.

Kata Kunci: green marketing communication, green brand image, sustainability communication, local fashion brands, digital media..

PENDAHULUAN

Over the past two decades, environmental and sustainability issues have emerged as important agendas in business practices and corporate communication. Climate change, environmental pollution, natural resource exploitation, and increasing waste generation have encouraged companies to move beyond a purely economic orientation and to consider the social and ecological impacts of their business activities. One of the sectors facing considerable pressure in this regard is the fashion industry.

The fast-fashion model, characterized by mass production, rapid trend cycles, relatively low prices, and consumption patterns that encourage repeated purchases, contributes significantly to environmental problems, ranging from carbon emissions to water pollution (UNEP, 2023). This condition indicates that the transformation toward more environmentally responsible business practices is not only an ecological imperative but also a matter of communication between companies, consumers, and other stakeholders.

One approach that has developed in response to these demands is **green marketing communication**. This concept is not limited to promotional activities for products claimed to be environmentally friendly but encompasses the integration of ecological values into marketing processes, communication practices, products, and brand behavior. (Szabo & Webster, 2021) position green marketing communication as a concept that requires consistency between the environmental claims communicated by companies and consumers' actual perceptions of the products and business practices being implemented.

This finding is supported by (Kisieliauskas & Jančaitis, 2022), who demonstrate that the effects of green marketing communication on perceived brand value differ across consumer generations, requiring companies to develop

environmentally oriented communication that is contextual rather than generic. Thus, the effectiveness of green marketing communication is determined not only by the ability to deliver persuasive messages but also by the credibility, transparency, consistency, and authenticity of those messages.

From a marketing communication perspective, green marketing communication is important because companies do not merely offer functional product attributes but also construct meanings through symbols, narratives, visual representations, and brand identity. (Rayon & Widagda, 2021), in their study of Ades bottled drinking water consumers in Denpasar, found that green marketing communication influenced purchase decisions through brand image as a mediating variable. This finding highlights the role of brand image as a bridge between green communication and consumer behavior.

Similarly, (Mahendra & Nugraha, 2021) demonstrate that green marketing communication combined with corporate social responsibility influences purchase decisions, with consumer knowledge functioning as a moderating variable. Further supporting these findings, (Pancić et al., 2023) show that brand awareness, brand equity, and green innovativeness jointly contribute to the formation of green brand image, which subsequently encourages consumers' repurchase intentions. These findings indicate that green brand image is multidimensional and develops cumulatively rather than being determined by a single communication element. Collectively, these studies reinforce the assumption that green brand image is not automatically formed through product claims but through how such messages are processed and interpreted by consumers from multiple perspectives.

This phenomenon has become increasingly relevant to the development of the Indonesian local fashion industry. (Ray &

Nayak, 2023) emphasize that the future direction of sustainable fashion marketing will increasingly depend on supply-chain transparency and communication narratives that can be verified rather than on marketing slogans alone. This demand is also relevant to local fashion brands in Indonesia, which have increasingly incorporated environmentally responsible values into their products and communication strategies. In the Indonesian context, (J. Tan, 2023) in their study of the streetwear brand Erigo, found that both firm-created content and user-generated content contribute to shaping Generation Z consumers' perceptions and purchase intentions toward local fashion brands.

Communication concerning environmental values is increasingly conducted through digital media, particularly Instagram, TikTok, and other visual-based platforms. (Manggopa, 2023) found that social media marketing has a positive effect on brand trust among Generation Z, highlighting the importance of consistent digital narratives in building long-term credibility. This finding is further supported by (Ghoni & Soliha, 2022), who demonstrate that brand image, together with other digital communication elements such as online reviews and promotions, plays a significant role in shaping consumer decisions. These findings indicate that brand image in digital environments is constructed cumulatively through multiple points of interaction rather than through a single message communicated by the company.

However, the increasing use of environmentally oriented narratives in marketing communication also raises concerns regarding message credibility. Environmental claims that are unsupported by evidence or inconsistent with actual corporate practices may lead to **greenwashing**, which can undermine the very green brand image that companies seek to establish. (Zhang, 2023) demonstrates that greenwashing can widen the gap between corporate promises and actual actions, ultimately eroding consumer trust and brand loyalty. This phenomenon presents a significant challenge because consumers are increasingly capable of comparing corporate claims with other

information available in digital spaces. Consequently, inconsistencies between communication and actual practices may reduce credibility and negatively affect brand image.

This issue becomes particularly important when considered in relation to younger consumers, who demonstrate high levels of engagement with digital media. Consumers are no longer merely recipients of marketing messages but can also become producers, disseminators, and evaluators of brand-generated content. (Lavuri et al., 2021) found differences in the behavioral responses of Millennials and Generation Z toward environmentally friendly messages, with green purchase intention functioning as an important mediating variable. This finding suggests that the meaning of environmentally friendly symbols such as the color green, leaf symbols, and terms such as *eco-friendly* is not necessarily interpreted uniformly. Instead, interpretation depends on how different consumer segments evaluate and assess the credibility of such messages.

The aforementioned studies, covering green marketing communication, green brand image, sustainable fashion, digital communication, greenwashing, and consumer interpretation, consistently demonstrate that the effectiveness of environmentally oriented communication depends on its credibility, consistency, and the ways in which messages are interpreted by consumers. However, most of these studies employ quantitative-correlational approaches, examining relationships through variables such as purchase intention, brand trust, and purchase decision. Moreover, many focus on multinational brands or non-fashion product categories, such as bottled drinking water, cosmetics, and digital marketplace applications.

The most significant research gaps can be identified in two areas. First, relatively limited research has positioned green marketing communication as a **process of meaning construction** that is, how environmentally oriented symbols, narratives, and visual representations are designed, combined, and communicated by brands, rather than merely measuring their

effects on purchasing behavior. Second, such studies remain limited in the context of **local fashion brands**, even though this sector is among those most affected by the pressures associated with fast fashion and is highly active in using social media as a channel for communicating environmental values.

The novelty of this study lies in addressing these two gaps simultaneously by analyzing **how green marketing communication is constructed by local fashion brands in digital media and how such constructions contribute to the formation of green brand image**. This approach differs from previous predominantly quantitative studies by examining green marketing communication as a communicative and meaning-making process rather than solely as an independent variable influencing consumer behavior. Based on the foregoing discussion, this study aims to analyze **green marketing communication in building green brand image in the local fashion industry**. The study is expected to provide theoretical contributions to the development of marketing communication and environmental communication scholarship, as well as practical implications for local fashion brands in designing green marketing communication that is more credible, transparent, consistent, and grounded in substantive environmental practices rather than merely relying on the use of ecological symbols.

A. LITERATURE REVIEW

a. Green Marketing Communication

Amid growing consumer pressure on environmental issues, green marketing communication has become a key element bridging sustainable business strategy with the way companies convey that value to the public. (Hendra et al., 2023), in their book *Green Marketing for Business*, define green marketing communication as the entirety of a company's efforts to convey environmentally friendly value through various marketing channels, which functions not only as a promotional tool but also as a means of educating the public about sustainable business practices. (Correia et al., 2023) through empirical research on

Portuguese consumers, define green marketing communication as the degree of consumer attention to environmental information conveyed by companies, which is influenced by demographic characteristics such as education and gender. These two perspectives complement one another: (Hendra et al., 2023) book emphasizes the message-production side by the company, while Correia et al.'s research confirms that the success of that message is ultimately determined by how it is received and attended to by its audience.

b. Green Brand Image

Green brand image is a perceptual construct that forms gradually in consumers' minds, not an instant result of a single product claim. (Chen, 2021) defines green brand image as part of a green brand identity built through consumer trust and satisfaction with a brand's environmental commitment, which ultimately becomes the foundation for long-term loyalty. (Z. Tan et al., 2022) reinforce this view by defining green brand image as the outcome of the interaction between green knowledge, attitude, and environmental knowledge among consumers, which together shape a positive perception before influencing purchase intention. From both definitions, it becomes clear that green brand image is not merely an attribute attached to a product, but the result of a cognitive and emotional process that consumers build up cumulatively over time.

c. Sustainability in the Fashion Industry

Sustainability in the fashion industry demands comprehensive change across the entire value chain, not just claims made about the final product. (Garcia-Torres et al., 2022), define fashion sustainability as traceability and transparency throughout the apparel supply chain, which is a prerequisite before a brand can credibly claim to be sustainable. (Moazzem et al., 2022) complement this definition from the perspective of tangible environmental impact, namely the extent to which the apparel supply chain and textile products succeed in reducing their environmental footprint at every stage of production. Both definitions show that fashion sustainability

is measurable and verifiable throughout the production chain, not merely a marketing narrative that stops at the product-communication stage.

d. Digital Communication in Brand Image Formation

Digital media has transformed how brand image is formed, shifting it from one-way communication into an ongoing, interactive process between a brand and its audience. (Nardo et al., 2024), in the book *Branding Strategy di Era Digital* (Branding Strategy in the Digital Era), define a brand in the digital era as an entity no longer limited to physical elements such as logos or products, but also encompassing online interaction, social media engagement, and the ability to adapt to technological change. (Tarabieh, 2022) reinforces this view empirically by defining brand image as the accumulation of consumer memory about a brand that continually evolves, in which social media marketing activity plays an important role in shaping consumer awareness and engagement before ultimately forming that image. From both sources, it can be concluded that brand image formation in digital spaces is dynamic and continuously reconstructed through interaction, rather than being fixed once and lasting forever.

e. Greenwashing and the Credibility of Green Communication

Credibility is what is fundamentally at stake when companies claim environmentally friendly practices, as consumers today are increasingly critical in assessing the gap between claims and reality. (Rahman & Nguyen-Viet, 2022) define greenwashing as a phenomenon arising from a mismatch between green advertising receptivity, non-deception, green brand image, and corporate transparency all four of which must be present simultaneously for green communication to be trusted by consumers. (Xiao et al., 2022), define the impact of greenwashing more specifically as a trigger for brand avoidance, whereby consumers who detect dishonesty in environmental claims will actively distance themselves from that brand. Both definitions show that the credibility of green communication is fragile once consumers detect a gap between claims and actual

practice, the impact not only erodes trust but can drive active rejection of the brand.

f. The Relationship Between Green Marketing Communication and Green Brand Image

The relationship between green marketing communication and green brand image has been extensively tested empirically, generally through mediation models that confirm a sequential link between the two. (Jabeen et al., 2023), define this relationship as a direct one, in which green marketing communication and corporate social responsibility both influence green brand image, which then becomes the primary mediating variable leading to consumers' green purchase intention. (Khan et al., 2023), extend this relationship by defining it in a layered manner, whereby green brand image influences green brand equity through green customer satisfaction as a further mediating variable. From both definitions, it can be concluded that the relationship between green marketing communication and green brand image is sequential in nature effective communication builds image, and consistently formed image produces downstream effects in the form of trust, satisfaction, and ultimately long-term brand equity.

B. RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach grounded in the constructivist paradigm and case study method. The qualitative approach was chosen because the study aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the process of meaning construction in green marketing communication carried out by local fashion brands in building a green brand image. (Creswell, 2023) explain that qualitative research is used to explore and understand the meanings that individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. In line with this view, the present study positions green marketing communication as a social phenomenon that needs to be understood through the meanings, experiences, and interpretations that emerge in the communication process between brands and audiences.

The constructivist paradigm is used to understand social reality as the outcome of construction through interaction and interpretation. (Haq et al., 2023) explain that interpretivist and constructivist paradigms reject the assumption of a single, objective reality that exists independently of social meaning; reality is instead understood as socially constructed, contextually situated, and mediated through interpretation. In this study, a brand's image as environmentally friendly is not treated as an objectively formed reality, but rather as meaning constructed through communication, the use of symbols, sustainability narratives, and consumer experience in digital space. The study therefore does not merely analyze the messages produced by brands, but also examines how those messages are understood and interpreted by audiences.

The case study method is used to obtain a contextual and in-depth understanding of green marketing communication practices among local Indonesian fashion brands. (Miller et al., 2023) explain that case study research is appropriate when a study seeks to understand a contemporary phenomenon in depth within its real-life context, particularly when the boundaries between the phenomenon and its context are not clearly evident. Based on this consideration, the study employs a multiple-case study design involving several local fashion brands that actively communicate sustainability. The selection of the multiple-case design draws on the systematic approach proposed by (Adams et al., 2022), who emphasize the importance of explicit case-selection criteria and consistent cross-case analysis procedures so that findings can be meaningfully compared across cases. The research focus is directed at digital communication activities on Instagram and TikTok, particularly content addressing sustainable fashion, eco-friendly, ethical fashion, and environmental concern.

Case selection was carried out purposively, taking into account the extent to which brands actively communicate sustainability values through digital media. (Ahmad & Wilkins, 2025), in the purposive sampling framework they developed based on input from methodology experts across

disciplines, argue that purposive sampling allows researchers to select cases or informants deemed information-rich and directly relevant to the study's purpose and context, while also requiring flexibility and iterative decision-making throughout the research process. Based on this consideration, the study selected local fashion brands whose identity and communication activities are relevant to sustainability issues.

Research subjects were selected using purposive sampling techniques, based on criteria relevant to the research focus. Informants consisted of three groups: managers or practitioners of local fashion brands involved in planning and implementing green marketing communication; consumers particularly Generation Z and millennials who follow, interact with, or have experience using products from local fashion brands that promote sustainability values; and academics or marketing communication practitioners as supporting informants. Informant selection was based on their experience, knowledge, and level of engagement with the phenomenon under study.

Data collection continued until data saturation was reached, that is, the point at which further data collection no longer yields new substantive information or themes. (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022), through a systematic review of empirical studies on data saturation, show that saturation in qualitative research with relatively homogeneous populations and narrowly defined objectives is typically reached within a range of nine to seventeen in-depth interviews, although this figure should still be adjusted to the context and diversity of the study's informants. In this study, data collection was conducted in stages and was stopped once the information obtained from informants exhibited recurring patterns and no longer produced new substantive findings relevant to the research focus.

The object of this research is the strategy of green marketing communication in building a green brand image among local fashion brands. The analysis focuses on the verbal and visual messages used in digital

communication, including sustainability narratives, slogans, captions, visual symbols, color use, content design, hashtags, digital campaigns, and forms of brand audience interaction. In addition, the study examines the process by which consumers make meaning of the sustainability symbols and messages communicated by brands.

Data were collected through digital observation, in-depth interviews, documentation, and literature review. Digital observation was conducted on brands' communication activities on Instagram and TikTok to identify patterns of messaging, symbols, visualization, narrative, and audience interaction. Semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with the predetermined informants to obtain information regarding green communication strategies, experiences, perceptions, and interpretations of sustainability messages.

Documentation was used to collect screenshots of social media content, videos, campaign photographs, captions, logos, and other relevant communication materials. Literature review was used to strengthen the conceptual foundation concerning green marketing communication, symbolic communication, sustainable fashion, green brand image, and greenwashing. (Creswell & Poth, 2023) position interviews, observations, and documents as important data sources in qualitative research because they enable researchers to gain an understanding of a phenomenon from multiple perspectives.

Data analysis employed the interactive model (Miles et al., 2024), comprising data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. This model views qualitative data analysis as a process that unfolds interactively and continuously throughout the study. At the data condensation stage, information obtained from observation, interviews, and documentation was selected, categorized, and grouped according to research themes, such as green communication strategy, sustainability symbols, sustainability narrative, consumer perception, green brand image, and indications of greenwashing. The data were then presented in thematic descriptions to identify patterns, relationships, and linkages among findings.

The final stage involved drawing conclusions and continuous verification by comparing multiple data sources.

To strengthen interpretation, the study employed symbolic analysis and framing analysis. Symbolic analysis was used to identify the meanings constructed through signs, colors, logos, slogans, visuals, and sustainability narratives. This approach was adopted because communication does not merely convey information literally, but also generates meaning through signs and symbols used in social interaction. Framing analysis, meanwhile, was used to examine how brands select, emphasize, and frame environmental issues in digital communication in order to shape particular perceptions of brand identity and image. (Choi et al., 2023), in their study of strategic environmental risk communication, show that threat-type framing and gain loss framing significantly influence how the public responds to environmental messages indicating that the way an environmental issue is framed, not merely its content, also shapes audience acceptance of that message.

Data validity was tested through source triangulation, method triangulation, theory triangulation, member checking, and prolonged engagement. (Adler, 2022), positions trustworthiness as the primary criterion for establishing confidence in the findings of qualitative research, replacing the conventional validity and reliability criteria derived from the quantitative research tradition. Source triangulation was carried out by comparing information from brand managers, consumers, and academics or communication practitioners. Method triangulation was carried out by comparing the results of digital observation, interviews, and documentation. Theory triangulation was carried out by applying several conceptual perspectives to test and enrich the interpretation of research findings.

Member checking was carried out by confirming specific interpretations with informants to ensure their consistency with informants' experiences and statements. (Adler, 2022), affirms that member checking is an important technique for enhancing the credibility of findings, as it allows researchers to obtain confirmation from data sources regarding the resulting

interpretations. In addition, discussions with supervisors or peers were used to test the consistency of interpretation and reduce the potential for researcher bias.

The study was conducted on local fashion brands in Bandung City that actively use digital media and maintain communication related to sustainability. This location was selected because Bandung is one of Indonesia's developing creative and local fashion industry hubs, with a creative business ecosystem that makes extensive use of digital strategy. The research space encompasses both the brands' physical locations and digital space particularly Instagram and TikTok as the arenas in which communication between brands and audiences takes place.

C. RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Results

The research findings were obtained through observations of the digital communication practices of local fashion brands on social media platforms, particularly Instagram and TikTok, as well as through documentation of messages, narratives, symbols, and visual representations related to sustainability. The study focuses on how *green marketing communication* is represented and employed in building a *green brand image* among local fashion brands.

Based on the research findings, several major forms of sustainability communication were identified, including the representation of sustainability messages in digital media, the construction of green brand image, the consistency of green marketing communication, and interactions between brands and audiences.

a. Green Marketing Communication Practices among Local Fashion Brands

Observations of digital communication platforms indicate that the four local fashion brands examined in this study Sejauh Mata Memandang, Cottonink, Buttonscarves, and Kana Goods demonstrate different characteristics of green marketing communication. These differences can be observed in the sustainability messages, visual identities, product information, and campaign formats communicated through

digital media. Demonstrates a relatively strong sustainability-oriented communication approach as an integral part of its brand identity. The messages identified through digital observation emphasize environmental conservation, the use of more responsible materials, the preservation of local culture, and efforts to reduce the negative environmental impacts of the fashion industry. Sustainability is therefore communicated not merely as a product attribute but as a broader value embedded within the brand's identity and communication practices.

Cottonink demonstrates a more moderate approach to sustainability communication. Its brand communication primarily emphasizes product quality and durability, while sustainability is presented as part of more responsible business practices. In this case, environmental values are not always positioned as the central theme of communication but are incorporated into broader narratives concerning product quality, responsible consumption, and brand practices.

Buttonscarves, meanwhile, places greater emphasis on product quality, design innovation, and a premium brand image. Nevertheless, the observations also identified communication related to social responsibility, collaborations, and appeals for consumers to value and use products over a longer period. These forms of communication suggest that sustainability-related values are incorporated into the brand's broader communication narrative rather than being presented as its dominant positioning.

In contrast, Kana Goods emphasizes the use of natural materials, local production, simplicity, and a more sustainable approach to fashion. These elements form an important part of the brand's identity and establish an association between locally produced fashion and sustainability values. The communication emphasizes the relationship between product characteristics, local production practices, and more responsible consumption.

Overall, the observations indicate that the four brands employ a combination of product information, sustainability

narratives, brand identity, visual symbols, and digital communication practices to communicate environmental values to their audiences. However, the intensity and positioning of sustainability messages vary across brands. This variation demonstrates that green marketing communication is not implemented through a single standardized approach but is constructed according to each brand's identity, values, products, and communication strategy.

b. Representation of Sustainability Messages in Digital Media

The findings indicate that *green marketing communication* among local fashion brands is constructed through various forms of messages disseminated through digital media, particularly Instagram and TikTok. Sustainability communication is not presented solely through explicit statements concerning environmental concerns but also through information about product materials, production processes, product quality and durability, local production, social responsibility, and narratives promoting more responsible consumption patterns. Observations of the four brands examined in this study, Cottonink, Buttonscarves, and Kana Goods reveal differences in how each brand represents sustainability values in accordance with its brand identity and positioning.

For sustainability messages appear to be strongly integrated into the brand's communication identity. The messages communicated emphasize environmental concerns, the use of more responsible materials, the preservation of local culture, and efforts to reduce the negative impacts of the fashion industry. Sustainability is not presented merely as supplementary product information but constitutes part of the broader narrative through which the brand communicates its values and identity. This pattern indicates that environmental issues are positioned as an important element of the brand's communication with its audience.

For Cottonink, the findings show that brand communication places greater emphasis on product quality and durability. Sustainability-related aspects are communicated through messages

concerning more responsible business practices and the long-term use of products. These messages indicate that sustainability is not necessarily communicated through explicit environmental terminology but can also be represented through product characteristics and consumption patterns promoted to consumers. In this context, product durability becomes a communicative element associated with more responsible consumption.

Meanwhile, Buttonscarves primarily constructs its communication around product quality, design innovation, and a premium brand identity. Nevertheless, the findings also identify messages related to social responsibility, collaborations, and appreciation of product quality and long-term use. Sustainability representation in Buttonscarves therefore tends to be integrated with messages concerning product quality and social responsibility rather than being communicated primarily through direct environmental claims.

In the case of Kana Goods, sustainability messages are represented through the use of natural materials, local production, simplicity, and product values associated with more responsible fashion practices. Narratives concerning materials and local production form an important part of the brand's communication by establishing connections among products, local identity, and environmental concerns. This pattern indicates that sustainability is communicated simultaneously as a value and as a distinctive characteristic of the brand.

These differences demonstrate that the four brands do not employ a uniform approach to sustainability communication. more strongly positions environmental and sustainability issues as components of its brand identity, whereas Cottonink associates sustainability with product quality and durability. Buttonscarves integrates sustainability-related messages with product quality, design, and social responsibility, while Kana Goods connects sustainability with natural materials and local production. Thus, sustainability messages are not constructed through a standardized communication model but are

shaped according to the context, identity, values, and positioning of each brand.

c. The Use of Symbols and Visuals in Sustainability Communication

The findings indicate that sustainability is represented not only through textual messages but also through visual elements embedded in social media content. The observation focused on content design, photographs, videos, visual symbols, colors, captions, slogans, and hashtags used by the brands to communicate messages to their audiences. These elements constitute an integral part of the overall digital communication process through which sustainability messages are visually represented and associated with brand identity.

The use of visual elements enables brands to communicate sustainability-related messages in a concise and easily recognizable manner. Information concerning materials, production processes, local products, and environmental initiatives can be combined with product visuals and broader elements of brand identity. Consequently, sustainability messages do not appear as isolated forms of communication but are embedded within the broader context of the brand's communication.

The findings also demonstrate that verbal and visual messages complement one another. Captions provide information and explanations regarding the intended message, while visual elements provide representations that reinforce the identity and meaning of the communication. The combination of these elements enables brands to communicate product-related information while simultaneously establishing particular associations between products and sustainability values.

The consistency of visual elements and messages also emerged as an important finding. When sustainability themes are repeatedly presented across different forms of content, they gradually become part of the brand's broader communication pattern. Such consistency can be observed through the interconnectedness of narratives, visual representations, product information, and digital communication activities presented

to the public. Therefore, the construction of sustainability meaning is not dependent on a single post or campaign but develops through the repeated and consistent use of interconnected verbal and visual elements across the brand's digital communication.

d. Formation of Green Brand Image

The findings indicate that *green brand image* among local fashion brands is constructed through a series of communication practices that connect brand identity with sustainability values. The perception of a brand as environmentally responsible does not emerge solely from the use of terms such as *sustainable* or *eco-friendly*, or from explicit environmental messages. Rather, it is also shaped by the consistency with which brands communicate information about materials, production processes, product quality, local production, social responsibility, and more responsible consumption patterns. Thus, the formation of *green brand image* occurs through the accumulation of messages received by audiences across various brand communication activities.

For Sejauh Mata Memandang, the formation of *green brand image* is reflected in the strong connection between the brand's identity and environmental and sustainability issues. Messages concerning the use of more responsible materials, environmental preservation, and the relationship between fashion and local culture constitute important elements of the brand's communication. Sustainability is not positioned merely as an additional message but as an integral component of the identity that is continuously communicated to audiences. This finding indicates that the environmentally responsible image is constructed through the alignment between communicated values and brand identity.

For Cottonink, the formation of a green image is more closely associated with communication concerning product quality and durability. Sustainability values are represented through the idea of long-term product use and more responsible business practices. This pattern demonstrates that an environmentally responsible image can be constructed through messages that do not necessarily employ explicit environmental

symbols or terminology but instead emphasize product characteristics that support more responsible consumption. Product durability therefore becomes part of the communication through which sustainability is indirectly represented.

Meanwhile, Buttonscarves establishes its brand identity through product quality, design innovation, and a premium image, which are complemented by communication concerning social responsibility and collaborations. The formation of *green brand image* in this brand is reflected in the integration of responsibility-oriented values into its broader brand identity. Sustainability-related perceptions therefore do not exist independently but become part of the overall brand image communicated to audiences.

For Kana Goods, the formation of *green brand image* is more evident through communication concerning the use of natural materials, local production, simplicity, and sustainability values embedded in its products. The relationship among materials, production processes, and local identity constitutes an important element in the brand's efforts to develop perceptions of environmental responsibility. This communication also creates a distinctive form of differentiation because sustainability values are connected to the local characteristics that constitute part of the brand's identity.

The findings further indicate that message consistency is an important element in the formation of *green brand image*. The repeated use of sustainability narratives and symbols across digital media can strengthen the association between the brand and environmental values. This consistency can be observed in the interconnectedness of sustainability messages, visual identity, product information, and communication activities presented through digital platforms. The findings suggest that consistent use of sustainability-related symbols and narratives contributes to the formation of perceptions concerning a brand's commitment to more responsible business practices.

In addition to consistency, message credibility constitutes an important

dimension in the formation of brand image. Sustainability messages have the potential to generate positive perceptions when there is alignment between what the brand communicates and its actual activities and product characteristics. Conversely, inconsistencies between communication and practice may generate doubts regarding the credibility of the green image being constructed. Therefore, the formation of *green brand image* cannot rely solely on environmental symbols or ecological narratives but requires communication that is relevant and consistent with the brand's identity, products, and actual practices.

Taken together, the findings indicate that the formation of *green brand image* among local fashion brands can be understood as a process involving sustainability values, digital communication, symbolic representation, message consistency, and audience reception. Sustainability values held by a brand are constructed through messages and symbols communicated through digital media and subsequently become part of the brand identity that is received and interpreted by audiences. The conceptual model developed in this study further demonstrates the relationship among corporate sustainability values, digital marketing communication, symbolic representation, consumer interpretation, and the formation of *green brand image*.

Thus, the findings demonstrate that *green brand image* among local fashion brands is not an image formed instantaneously through a single campaign but rather the outcome of a continuous and consistent communication process. The differences in communication practices among Sejauh Mata Memandang, Cottonink, Buttonscarves, and Kana Goods demonstrate that each brand has its own approach to integrating sustainability values into its brand identity. These findings provide a basis for further discussion of how meaning construction, symbolic representation, and audience interpretation contribute to the formation of an environmentally responsible brand image.

Discussion

The discussion interprets the findings concerning *green marketing communication*

among local fashion brands by relating them to the concepts of green marketing communication, brand identity construction, symbolic communication, *green brand image*, as well as issues of message credibility and *greenwashing*. The findings indicate that sustainability communication functions not only as a means of conveying product-related information but also as a process of constructing meaning and brand identity within digital spaces.

The findings further demonstrate that the communication of sustainability values is constructed through the interaction of verbal messages, visual representations, brand narratives, product information, and audience engagement. Therefore, *green marketing communication* can be understood as a strategic communication process through which local fashion brands negotiate and construct meanings concerning environmental responsibility, sustainability, and brand identity.

a. Green Marketing Communication as Brand Identity Construction

The findings indicate that *green marketing communication* among local fashion brands functions not only as an instrument for conveying product-related information but also as an integral part of the process of brand identity construction. Messages concerning sustainability, material selection, production processes, local production, product quality, and social responsibility are communicated through digital media to construct particular characteristics that brands seek to present to the public. Green communication, therefore, becomes part of how brands define themselves while simultaneously differentiating themselves from competitors within the fashion industry.

The differences observed among Sejauh Mata Memandang, Cottonink, Buttonsscarves, and Kana Goods demonstrate that green identity is not constructed through a uniform pattern. Sejauh Mata Memandang tends to position sustainability and environmental concerns as prominent components of its brand identity, whereas Cottonink associates these values more closely with product quality and durability. Buttonsscarves integrates social responsibility with product

identity and its premium brand positioning, while Kana Goods connects sustainability with natural materials and local production. These differences demonstrate that *green marketing communication* is constructed according to the distinctive characteristics, values, and positioning of each brand.

From a constructivist perspective, brand identity is not understood as something fixed or naturally inherent within a company. Rather, identity is constructed through processes of communication and social interaction. Brands produce particular messages about themselves, disseminate those messages through various communication channels, and generate meaning when the messages are received and interpreted by audiences. In the context of this study, the identity of a brand as environmentally responsible is constructed through the repeated communication of sustainability-related messages across various forms of digital communication.

Social media plays an important role in this process because it enables brands to continuously construct and negotiate their identities. Instagram and TikTok provide spaces in which brands can combine text, photographs, videos, captions, visual symbols, and audience interactions. Sustainability messages therefore do not exist in isolation but become part of a broader brand storytelling process. Consistency across these messages enables audiences to connect the various forms of content they encounter with the values and characteristics associated with the brand.

This finding demonstrates that *green marketing communication* has a broader function than merely serving as persuasive communication intended to encourage purchase. Green communication also functions as a mechanism of identity construction, through which brands communicate who they are, what values they represent, and how they position themselves in relation to environmental issues. When these values are communicated consistently and supported by the company's actual activities, a green identity can become an integral component of brand identity, thereby distinguishing the brand within an increasingly competitive fashion market.

Accordingly, sustainability communication can serve as a source of brand differentiation for local fashion brands. Such differentiation is achieved not only through product design or price but also through the values associated with the brand. This becomes increasingly relevant as consumers consider not only the functional benefits of products but also the social and environmental values represented by brands. In this context, green marketing communication enables sustainability to function as a symbolic and strategic resource through which local fashion brands construct distinctive identities and establish meaningful relationships with their audiences.

b. Symbols and Narratives in the Formation of Green Brand Image

The formation of *green brand image* in this study is closely associated with the use of symbols and narratives in digital communication. Sustainability messages are constructed through various forms of signs, including product visuals, materials, colors, design elements, nature-related symbols, captions, slogans, hashtags, and narratives concerning production processes. These elements work collectively to establish particular associations between the brand and sustainability values.

Symbols play an important role because they enable complex messages concerning sustainability to be communicated in a relatively simple and recognizable form. When particular symbols are used repeatedly in brand communication, they can acquire stronger meanings within the context of brand identity. Similarly, narratives concerning natural materials, local production, waste reduction, or long-term product use do not merely provide information but also encourage audiences to associate products with particular values and meanings.

In this study, symbols and narratives cannot be separated from the respective identities of the brands. Sejauh Mata Memandang, for example, connects sustainability with environmental concerns and local culture, whereas Kana Goods associates sustainability with natural materials and local production. Cottonink more strongly connects sustainability with

product quality and durability, while Buttons & Carves integrates sustainability-related values with quality, design, and social responsibility. Thus, the meanings attributed to the symbols used by each brand are constructed within the specific context of its communication strategy, identity, and positioning.

This process demonstrates that *green brand image* is not simply the result of corporate claims portraying a brand as environmentally responsible. Rather, brand image develops through the accumulation of messages received and interpreted by audiences. When consumers repeatedly encounter sustainability-related messages and perceive consistency between these messages and the characteristics of the products or brand activities, particular associations with the brand may be established. Conversely, when sustainability messages appear only sporadically or lack a meaningful connection with the brand's actual activities, the resulting associations are likely to be weaker.

Consistency is therefore an important aspect of the image-formation process. The findings indicate that consistent use of sustainability-related symbols and narratives can strengthen perceptions of a brand's commitment to more responsible business practices. Consistency does not necessarily require brands to explicitly communicate environmental messages in every piece of content. Rather, it refers to the coherence among the various communication elements that collectively construct the brand's identity. The alignment between visual representations, narratives, product information, and brand practices contributes to the development of a more coherent sustainability image.

From the perspective of symbolic communication, the meaning of sustainability is not determined entirely by the brand. Audiences also play an active role in interpreting the symbols and narratives communicated by the brand. A symbol intended by a brand to represent environmental responsibility may be interpreted differently by audiences depending on their experiences, knowledge, expectations, and access to information. Therefore, *green brand image* emerges

through an interaction between the messages constructed by the brand and the interpretive processes of audiences.

Digital media further intensifies this process because consumers can compare and evaluate information about brands from multiple sources. Consumers do not rely solely on content published by companies but can also access comments, reviews, *user-generated content*, online discussions, and other information related to the brand. This condition makes brand image formation a more open and participatory process that is not entirely controlled by the company.

Consequently, the findings suggest that symbols and narratives function as important meaning-making resources in the construction of *green brand image*. Their effectiveness depends not simply on their presence but on their consistency, contextual relevance, and alignment with the brand's identity and practices. In the digital environment, the resulting brand image is therefore shaped through an ongoing interaction between brand communication, symbolic representation, audience interpretation, and broader digital discourse.

c. Credibility of Green Communication and Greenwashing

Credibility is a critical issue in green marketing communication because sustainability-related messages have direct implications for audience trust. Communication that presents a brand as environmentally responsible needs to be supported by information and practices that can be substantiated. When sustainability claims are not supported by relevant evidence and actual practices, the risk of *greenwashing* increases.

In this study, *greenwashing* should be understood not merely as a matter of whether a particular claim is true or false, but also as a communication issue. A discrepancy between communicated messages and actual business practices can create a gap in audience perceptions. A brand may attempt to construct an image of environmental responsibility, but audiences may question that image when they encounter information that contradicts or

does not adequately support the company's claims.

Therefore, the credibility of *green marketing communication* depends substantially on the alignment among messages, practices, and evidence. Sustainability messages are more communicatively persuasive when they are supported by clear and accessible information concerning products, materials, production processes, and corporate activities. Conversely, the use of terms such as *sustainable* or *eco-friendly* without sufficient explanation or supporting evidence may cause communication to appear merely symbolic and potentially generate consumer skepticism.

The findings indicate that consistency is one of the elements that can strengthen communication credibility. When sustainability messages are communicated consistently across different forms of communication and are meaningfully connected to the brand's identity and activities, audiences are more likely to perceive them as part of the company's genuine commitment. The conceptual model developed in this study likewise positions communication that is consistent, credible, and relevant as an important factor in the effectiveness of *green marketing communication*.

The issue of *greenwashing* becomes increasingly relevant in the digital media environment because consumers have broader and faster access to information. Corporate claims can be readily compared with information from other online sources. Consumers can also share their experiences, evaluations, and criticisms through social media. Consequently, inconsistent or unsupported sustainability communication can generate negative audience responses and potentially affect brand reputation.

Within this context, credible green communication should extend beyond the use of environmental symbols or sustainability-related terminology. Brands need to demonstrate a clear relationship between the sustainability values they communicate and their actual business practices. Transparency concerning products, materials, sourcing, and

production processes is therefore important for reducing information asymmetry between brands and consumers. Through greater transparency, sustainability communication can contribute to building consumer trust while simultaneously strengthening *green brand image*.

The findings further indicate that *greenwashing* can affect more than consumers' perceptions of an individual message or campaign; it may also influence the broader identity and reputation of a brand. When audiences perceive green communication as inauthentic, the credibility of the brand identity that has been constructed over time may be weakened. Conversely, transparent, consistent, and evidence-based communication can strengthen a brand's reputation as an organization genuinely committed to sustainability.

Thus, the credibility of green communication can be understood as a relational process between what a brand communicates, what it actually does, and how audiences interpret the relationship between the two. In the context of local fashion brands, the strength of *green brand image* therefore depends not simply on the intensity of sustainability messaging but on the extent to which such messaging is coherent, transparent, credible, and supported by substantive practices.

d. Green Marketing Communication Model in the Formation of Green Brand Image

Based on the overall findings of the study, *green marketing communication* can be understood as a communication process that connects a brand's sustainability values with the formation of its *green brand image*. This process does not occur directly but develops through several interconnected stages, namely the brand's sustainability values, message construction through digital media, symbolic and narrative representation, audience interpretation, and the formation of *green brand image*.

The model can be formulated and illustrated in the following figure:

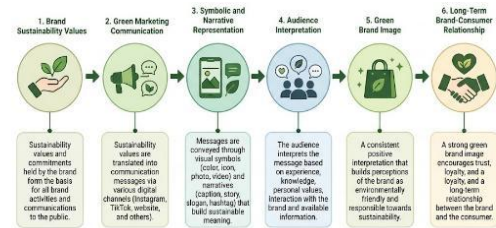


Figure X. Researcher's Own Elaboration, 2026.

The first stage begins with the sustainability values possessed or claimed by the brand. These values are then translated into forms of communication through digital media. In the subsequent stage, the messages are represented through symbols, visual elements, narratives, captions, slogans, product information, and various other forms of content. This representational process is important because abstract sustainability values need to be translated into forms of communication that can be understood by audiences.

The next stage involves audience interpretation. Messages produced by brands do not automatically generate the same meaning among all consumers. Audiences construct meaning based on the information they receive, their experiences with the products, their knowledge of environmental issues, and their interactions with brands and other users. At this stage, brand communication may result in the acceptance, reinforcement, negotiation, or rejection of the green image that the brand seeks to construct.

These interpretations subsequently contribute to the formation of the *green brand image*. When messages are perceived as consistent, relevant, and credible, positive associations between the brand and sustainability may become stronger. Conversely, when there is a discrepancy between sustainability claims and actual practices, the green image may be weakened and may even generate perceptions of *greenwashing*. The model demonstrates that *green brand image* is not a direct output of green promotional activities. Rather, it is the result of an ongoing communication process. Therefore, the effectiveness of green marketing communication depends substantially on a brand's ability to maintain coherence among its values, communicated

messages, symbolic representations, actual practices, and audience experiences.

Accordingly, the contribution of this study lies in understanding *green marketing communication* among local fashion brands as a process of identity and meaning construction, rather than merely as a marketing strategy. The resulting model demonstrates that sustainability communication becomes effective when sustainability values are translated into consistent messages, represented through relevant symbols and narratives, and subsequently received and interpreted by audiences in ways that contribute to the formation of a *green brand image*. These findings strengthen the position of *green marketing communication* as an integral component of strategies for developing brand identity, reputation, and long-term brand-consumer relationships among local fashion brands.

D. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that *green marketing communication* among local fashion brands functions not only as a marketing strategy but also as a communication process for constructing brand identity and *green brand image*. Sustainability values are constructed through messages concerning environmental responsibility, materials, production processes, local production, product quality, and social responsibility, which are communicated through digital media, particularly Instagram and TikTok.

The findings from Sejauh Mata Memandang, Cottonink, Buttonsarves, and Kana Goods demonstrate that each brand employs a distinctive approach to sustainability communication. Sejauh Mata Memandang more strongly integrates sustainability into its brand identity; Cottonink associates sustainability with product quality and durability; Buttonsarves connects sustainability with product quality and social responsibility; while Kana Goods emphasizes natural materials and local production. These differences demonstrate that green marketing communication is constructed according to the characteristics, values, and positioning of each brand.

The formation of *green brand image* occurs through the use of symbols, visual representations, narratives, and product information communicated consistently across digital platforms. Digital media provides an important space for this process because it enables brands to communicate sustainability messages repeatedly while facilitating interaction with audiences. Thus, *green brand image* is not formed through a single campaign but through the accumulation of messages, interactions, and communication experiences received and interpreted by audiences over time.

The study also demonstrates that credibility and consistency are critical factors in green marketing communication. Sustainability claims need to be aligned with actual practices and product characteristics to avoid generating perceptions of *greenwashing*. The stronger the consistency among sustainability values, communication messages, symbolic representations, brand practices, and audience experiences, the greater the potential for establishing a credible and environmentally responsible brand image.

1. Conceptually, this study proposes a process in which brand sustainability values are communicated through green marketing communication, represented through digital symbols and narratives, interpreted by audiences, and subsequently contribute to the formation of *green brand image*. A strong *green brand image* may then contribute to the development of long-term brand-consumer relationships. Therefore, *green marketing communication* should not be understood merely as a promotional strategy for environmentally friendly products but as a process of meaning, identity, and brand image construction within the context of the local fashion industry.

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