

The Dynamics of Consumer Trust in Sustainable Marketing Practices within the Local Fashion Industry

Noor Aziz^{1*}, Heribertus Yudho Warsono², Widayat³, Dharma Widada⁴

¹Fakultas Ekonomi dan Bisnis, Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang

²STIE Mahardhika

³Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang

⁴Universitas Mulawarman

Corresponding Author: Noor Aziz nooraziz.ngalam@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

The development of the increasingly competitive local fashion industry encourages business actors to adopt sustainable marketing practices as a differentiation strategy in building consumer trust. However, the effectiveness of these practices in shaping consumer trust still shows diverse dynamics and has not been fully understood empirically in the context of sustainable marketing management, especially in emerging markets. This study aims to analyze the influence of sustainable marketing practices on consumer trust and identify the most dominant practice dimensions in building trust in the local fashion industry. The research uses a quantitative approach with an explanatory design. Primary data was collected through a structured questionnaire survey of 100 local fashion consumers in East Java Province, Indonesia, who were selected using purposive sampling techniques. Sustainable marketing practices are operationalized into the dimensions of eco-friendly practices, ethical production, information transparency, and green promotion, while consumer trust is measured through the perception of brand credibility, honesty, and reliability. Data analysis was carried out using multiple linear regression

INTRODUCTION

The global fashion industry is currently under increasing pressure to respond to environmental and social issues due to high carbon emissions, labor exploitation, and excessive resource consumption. This condition encourages companies to integrate sustainability principles into their marketing strategies as an effort to build long-term consumer legitimacy and trust (Niinimäki et al., 2020). In the context of modern marketing, sustainability is no longer seen as a purely philanthropic activity, but rather as a strategic element that influences consumers' perception and evaluation of brands. This shift makes sustainable marketing practices a central issue in the study of contemporary marketing management, especially in the fashion industry which relies heavily on image and trust.

Consumer trust has long been recognized as the foundation of the long-term relationship between companies and customers, especially in an industry loaded with value and symbolic claims like fashion. Recent research shows that consumers are increasingly critical of sustainability claims and tend to evaluate consistency between marketing messages and actual corporate actions (Parguel et al., 2021). Discrepancies between claims and actual practices have the potential to generate skepticism, ultimately undermining consumer confidence. Therefore, understanding how sustainable marketing practices shape consumer trust is an urgent scientific need in the development of sustainable marketing theory.

A number of previous studies have examined the impact of sustainable marketing on various consumer responses, such as attitudes, purchase intentions, and brand loyalty. However, most of these studies still place trust as an intermediate variable or secondary consequence, rather than as a primary construct that is analyzed in depth (Delgado-Ballester & Fernández-Sabiote, 2022). In addition, many studies are conducted in the context of global brands or developed markets, so the empirical findings are not necessarily relevant to the local fashion industry in developing countries. These limitations show that there is a research gap related to understanding the dynamics of consumer trust in the context of sustainable marketing that is more contextual and specific.

In the context of developing countries, including Indonesia, the local fashion industry faces additional challenges in the form of limited resources, low supply chain transparency, and diverse levels of consumer sustainability literacy. Empirical studies show that consumers in emerging markets have different expectations of sustainability practices and tend to be more sensitive to ethical and honesty aspects than symbolic promotional messages (Rahman et al., 2023). However, research that specifically examines the dimensions of sustainable marketing practices and their impact on consumer confidence in the context of local fashion is still relatively limited. This condition confirms the need for empirical research that is able to explain the dynamics of these relationships more comprehensively.

Further, the sustainable marketing literature shows that green practices, ethical production, information transparency, and green promotion do not always have a uniform influence on consumer perception. Some studies have found that transparency and production ethics tend to have a stronger impact

than persuasive green marketing communications (de Freitas Netto et al., 2020). However, these findings have not been consistently tested in a single integrated empirical model, particularly in the local fashion industry. This gap opens up space for research that examines the simultaneous and partial influence of various dimensions of sustainable marketing on consumer trust.

Based on this description, this study aims to analyze the influence of sustainable marketing practices on consumer confidence in the local fashion industry. Specifically, this study identifies the most dominant dimensions of sustainable marketing practices in building consumer trust, including eco-friendly practices, ethical production, information transparency, and green promotion. This research was conducted on local fashion consumers in East Java Province as one of the growth centers of the creative industry in Indonesia. Thus, this research is expected to be able to provide an empirical understanding that is contextually relevant.

Theoretically, this research contributes to the development of the sustainable marketing management literature by placing consumer trust as the main construct in the empirical relationship model. This research enriches the academic discourse on the dynamics of trust in the context of the local fashion industry in emerging markets. Practically, the findings of this study are expected to be the basis for local fashion industry players in designing marketing strategies that are more credible, transparent, and oriented towards long-term sustainability. As such, this research is not only academically relevant, but also has real implications for business practice.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Sustainable Marketing Practices in the Fashion Industry

Sustainable marketing practices are evolving as a strategic response to increasing environmental and social pressures, particularly in the fashion industry which is known to have a high ecological footprint. Sustainable marketing practices include not only the use of environmentally friendly materials, but also the integration of sustainability values in the production, distribution, and communication processes of brands to consumers (Lim et al. 2022). This approach emphasizes a balance between achieving economic goals and social and environmental responsibility. In the context of fashion, sustainable marketing practices play an important role in shaping consumer perceptions of brand integrity and commitment.

As consumer awareness of sustainability issues increases, inconsistent or symbolic marketing practices tend to cause skepticism. Research shows that consumers are increasingly able to distinguish between substantive sustainability efforts and manipulative marketing strategies (Gatti et al. 2021). Therefore, the effectiveness of sustainable marketing is largely determined by the extent to which the practice is manifested in business operations. This makes sustainable marketing practices a strategic element that must be managed holistically.

2. Concept and Dimensions of Consumer Trust

Consumer trust is a multidimensional construct that reflects consumer confidence in the credibility, honesty, and reliability of a brand. In the marketing literature, trust is understood as a major prerequisite for the formation of a long-term relationship between consumers and companies (Sirdeshmukh et al. 2020). Trust is not formed instantly, but rather through a consistent consumer experience of product quality, information transparency, and ethical behavior of the company. Therefore, trust is a strategic asset that is difficult for competitors to replicate.

In the fashion industry, consumer trust has a more complex role because fashion products are not only judged by function, but also symbolic value and social identity. Empirical studies show that fashion consumers tend to judge brand trust based on the alignment between the communicated values and the actual practices of the company (Molinillo et al. 2021). When consumers feel such inconsistencies, the level of trust can decrease significantly. This confirms the importance of trust as a key variable in sustainable marketing research.

3. Information Transparency as a Determinant of Trust

Information transparency is one of the main dimensions in sustainable marketing practices that has a direct impact on consumer trust. Transparency includes the company's openness in conveying information related to the production process, source of raw materials, and the social and environmental impact of its business activities (Augustine & Baker, 2020). Clear and easily accessible information allows consumers to conduct a more objective evaluation of the sustainability claims submitted by brands. Thus, transparency serves as a mechanism to reduce uncertainty in consumer decision-making.

Recent research shows that information transparency has a stronger influence than persuasive green promotional messages. Consumers tend to trust factual data and concrete evidence more than exaggerated marketing slogans or narratives (Newman et al. 2022). In the context of the local fashion industry, transparency is becoming increasingly important due to the limitations of formal regulation and oversight. Therefore, information transparency is seen as the main foundation in building sustainable consumer trust.

4. Ethical Production and Perception of Brand Integrity

Ethical production refers to business practices that uphold moral standards in the treatment of labor, the use of resources, and relationships with stakeholders. In the fashion industry, ethical production issues are often associated with working conditions, living wages, and labor safety (Boström et al. 2021). Modern consumers are increasingly considering ethical aspects as part of brand evaluation, especially in emerging markets that are vulnerable to exploitative practices. Therefore, ethical production is an important indicator in building the perception of brand integrity.

Empirical studies show that ethical production has a significant influence on consumer trust because it reflects a company's moral commitment that goes beyond short-term economic interests (Hwang & Kim, 2023). Consumers who believe that a brand is implementing fair production practices tend to show

higher levels of trust and loyalty. These findings confirm that ethical production is not only a moral obligation, but also an effective marketing strategy in building long-term relationships with consumers.

5. Green Promotion and the Risk of Consumer Skepticism

Green promotion is part of marketing communication that aims to convey the company's sustainability commitment to consumers. However, the effectiveness of green promotion is highly dependent on the credibility of the message conveyed and consistency with the company's actual practices (Chen & Chang, 2021). When green promotion is not supported by real action, consumers tend to perceive it as a form of manipulation or greenwashing. This condition can significantly damage consumer confidence.

Research shows that excessive green promotion without concrete evidence actually increases consumer skepticism, especially in the fashion industry that has a negative track record related to environmental impacts (Spielmann & Broderick, 2020). Therefore, green promotion needs to be carefully designed and based on transparency and accountability. In the context of sustainable marketing, green promotion should serve as an educational tool, not just a persuasive tool.

METHODOLOGY

1. Types and Approaches to Research

This study uses a quantitative approach with explanatory design, which aims to elucidate the causal relationship between sustainable marketing practices and consumer trust in the local fashion industry. The quantitative approach was chosen because it allows for objective hypothesis testing through numerical data-driven inferential statistical analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2021). Explanatory design is used to identify the simultaneous and partial influence of each dimension of sustainable marketing practices on consumer confidence. This approach is considered appropriate to answer the research objectives that focus on empirically testing intervariable relationships.

2. Conceptual Models and Hypothesis Formulation

Based on theoretical studies and previous empirical findings, this study develops a conceptual model that positions sustainable marketing practices as independent variables and consumer confidence as dependent variables. Sustainable marketing practices are operationalized into four main dimensions, namely environmentally friendly practices, ethical production, information transparency, and green promotion. Consumer trust is measured through the perception of brand credibility, honesty, and reliability (Hair et al. 2022). Based on this model, the research hypothesis is formulated as follows:

- H1: Eco-friendly practices have a positive effect on consumer confidence.
- H2: Ethical production has a positive effect on consumer trust.
- H3: Information transparency has a positive effect on consumer trust.
- H4: Green promotion has a positive effect on consumer confidence.

- H5: Simultaneous sustainable marketing practices have a significant effect on consumer trust.

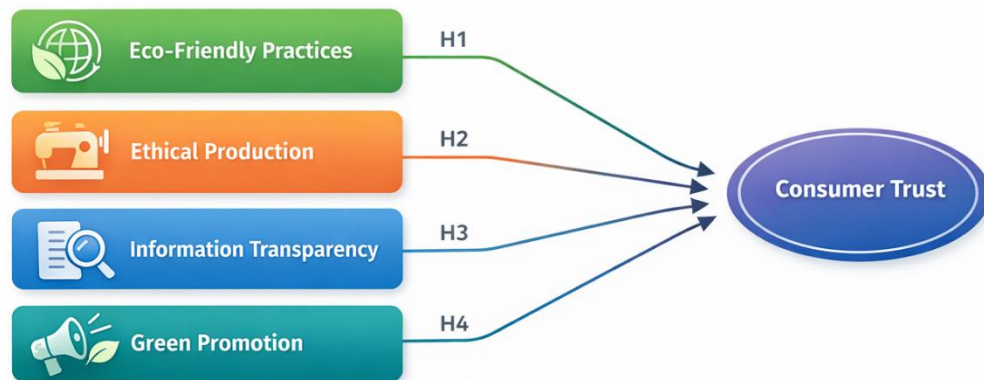


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study

3. Population, Samples, and Sampling Techniques

The population in this study is all consumers of local fashion products in East Java Province, Indonesia. This province was chosen because it is one of the growth centers of the local creative and fashion industry with a relatively high level of consumption. The sampling technique used is non-probability sampling with the purposive sampling method, which is the selection of respondents based on certain criteria that are relevant to the research objectives (Etikan et al. 2021). Respondents' criteria include consumers who have purchased local fashion products in the past six months and have basic knowledge about sustainability issues. The number of samples was set as 100 respondents, which were considered adequate for multiple linear regression analysis and met the minimum sample size limit in quantitative marketing research.

4. Data Collection Techniques and Instruments

The research data was collected using a structured questionnaire that was distributed directly and online to the respondents. The research instrument was compiled using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The measurement item of continuous marketing practices is adapted from instruments that have been validated in continuous marketing research, while the item of consumer trust is adjusted from a scale of brand trust that has been widely used in the international literature (Kumar et al. 2023). The process of adapting the instrument is carried out through adjusting the context of the local fashion industry without changing the substance of the measured construct.

5. Instrument Validity and Reliability Test

Before the main analysis is performed, the research instrument is tested for validity and reliability to ensure the quality of the data. The validity test was carried out using item-total correlation analysis, with the criterion that the correlation coefficient value is greater than the specified critical value. The reliability of the instrument was tested using Cronbach's Alpha, with a minimum value of .,70 as an indicator of acceptable internal consistency (Taber, 2021). This test aims to ensure that each construct is measured consistently and accurately. Instruments that meet the criteria of validity and reliability are then used in advanced data analysis.

6. Research Implementation Procedure

The research is carried out through several systematic stages. The initial stage includes problem formulation, conceptual framework preparation, and development of research instruments based on literature review. The next stage is a limited trial of the questionnaire to ensure clarity and comprehensibility of the items. After the instrument is declared feasible, data collection is carried out on the respondents according to the criteria that have been set. The collected data is then selected, coded, and input into statistical software for analysis. The entire research process was carried out by paying attention to the ethical principles of the research, including the confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents (Saunders et al. 2023).

7. Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was carried out using multiple linear regression analysis to test the influence of each dimension of continuous marketing practices on consumer confidence, either partially or simultaneously. Before hypothesis testing, a classical assumption test was carried out which included normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity tests to ensure the feasibility of the regression model. The entire statistical analysis was carried out with the help of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. This analysis technique was chosen because it is in accordance with the research objectives that focus on testing causal relationships between variables in quantitative marketing research (Field, 2020).

RESEARCH RESULTS

1. *The Effect of Environmentally Friendly Practices on Consumer Trust*

The results of the regression analysis indicate that environmentally friendly practices have a positive and significant effect on consumer trust in the local fashion industry. These findings suggest that consumers tend to develop higher levels of trust toward local fashion brands that demonstrate efforts to reduce environmental impact through the use of eco-friendly materials, waste reduction, and environmentally responsible production processes. Such practices help create a positive brand image and signal corporate responsibility, which contributes to the formation of consumer trust.

Table 1. Regression Results for Environmentally Friendly Practices on Consumer Trust

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t-value
Environmentally Friendly Practices	0.218	0.087	0.231	2.512

Based on Table 1, the regression coefficient for environmentally friendly practices is 0.218 with a significance value of 0.014 (< 0.05), indicating a positive and significant influence on consumer trust. Therefore, H1 is accepted, confirming that environmentally friendly practices play an important role in strengthening consumer trust in local fashion brands.

2. *The Effect of Ethical Production on Consumer Trust*

Ethical production is proven to have a positive and significant effect on consumer trust. These findings indicate that consumers place considerable importance on fair labor practices, humane working conditions, and ethical treatment of workers in the production process. When local fashion brands consistently apply ethical production principles, consumers perceive the brand as more credible and trustworthy.

Table 2. Regression Results for Ethical Production on Consumer Trust

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t-value	Sig.
Ethical Production	0.319	0.083	0.342	3.846	0.000

Table 2 shows that ethical production has a regression coefficient of 0.319 with a significance value of 0.000. These results confirm a strong and significant influence of ethical production on consumer trust. Thus, **H2 is accepted**, indicating that ethical production practices are a key determinant in building consumer trust in the local fashion industry.

3. *The Effect of Information Transparency on Consumer Trust*

The analysis results show that information transparency has a positive and significant effect on consumer trust and represents the most dominant dimension among sustainable marketing practices. These findings indicate that consumers highly value openness regarding product materials, production processes, pricing, and sustainability commitments. Transparent information reduces consumer uncertainty and strengthens perceptions of honesty and reliability.

Table 3. Regression Results for Information Transparency on Consumer Trust

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t-value	Say.
Information Transparency	0.361	0.086	0.384	4.214	0.000

Based on Table 3, information transparency has the highest regression coefficient of 0.361 with a significance value of 0.000. The relatively large beta value indicates that transparency contributes the most to explaining variations in consumer trust. Therefore, H3 is accepted, **confirming** that information transparency is the most influential factor in building consumer trust in local fashion brands.

4. *The Effect of Green Promotion on Consumer Trust*

Green promotion is also found to have a positive and significant effect on consumer trust, although its influence is relatively weaker compared to other dimensions. These findings suggest that promotional messages emphasizing sustainability can support trust formation, but they are not sufficient on their own without being supported by real actions and transparent information.

Table 4. Regression Results for Green Promotion on Consumer Trust

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t-value	Say.
Green Promotion	0.131	0.065	0.148	2.008	0.047

Table 4 shows that green promotion has a regression coefficient of 0.131 with a significance value of 0.047. These results indicate a positive and significant effect on consumer trust. Thus, H4 is accepted, **although** the contribution of green promotion is more moderate compared to information transparency and ethical production.

5. The Simultaneous Effect of Sustainable Marketing Practices on Consumer Trust

The results of the simultaneous regression analysis demonstrate that sustainable marketing practices collectively have a significant effect on consumer trust. This finding indicates that consumer trust is formed through the combined implementation of environmentally friendly practices, ethical production, information transparency, and green promotion, rather than relying on a single dimension.

Table 5. Simultaneous Regression Results of Sustainable Marketing Practices on Consumer Trust

Model	F-value	Sig.
Regression Model	25.143	0.000

Based on Table 5, the significance value of 0.000 indicates that the regression model is statistically significant. Therefore, H5 is accepted, **confirming** that sustainable marketing practices simultaneously influence consumer trust in the local fashion industry.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study show that sustainable marketing practices simultaneously have a significant effect on consumer confidence in the local fashion industry. These findings reinforce the view that sustainability has shifted from a mere normative value to a strategic determinant in the formation of long-term relationships between brands and consumers. In the perspective of signaling theory, sustainable marketing practices serve as credibility signals that help consumers assess brand commitment and integrity amidst market information asymmetry (Connelly et al., 2021). When such signals are consistent and verifiable, consumer confidence levels tend to increase. Thus, these findings expand the application of signaling theory in the context of sustainable marketing to the local fashion industry in emerging markets.

The dimension of information transparency emerged as the most dominant factor in shaping consumer trust, which shows that consumers emphasize openness more than promotional claims alone. Transparency allows consumers to access information about raw materials, production processes, and the social and environmental impact of fashion products. These findings are in line with a trust-based marketing perspective that emphasizes that trust is built through honesty and the reduction of uncertainty (Hult et al., 2020). In the context of the local fashion industry, transparency is an important mechanism to overcome consumer skepticism of greenwashing practices. Therefore, the results of this study confirm that transparency is not just a communication tool, but the main foundation for forming consumer trust.

Ethical production has also been shown to have a strong influence on consumer trust, reflecting increasing consumer sensitivity to social justice issues and labor treatment. Consumers not only judge the quality of the final product, but also the process behind production that reflects the moral values of the company. The stakeholder theory approach explains that companies that pay

attention to the interests of workers and local communities tend to gain higher social legitimacy (Freeman et al., 2021). In the local fashion industry, ethical production practices are concrete evidence of a substantive sustainability commitment. These findings enrich the literature by showing that the social dimension of sustainability has just as important weight as the environmental dimension in building consumer trust.

In contrast, green promotion practices show a more moderate influence on consumer confidence than other dimensions. This indicates that consumers tend to be more critical of promotional messages that highlight sustainability issues without any real evidence. Critical marketing literature highlights that symbolic sustainability communication has the potential to generate skepticism if it is not accompanied by concrete action (Nyilasy et al., 2022). In this context, green promotion serves as a supporting factor, not the main determinant of trust formation. These findings provide a logical explanation for why promotional messages alone are not enough to build consumer trust in a sustainable way.

The positive influence of eco-friendly practices on consumer trust shows that concern for the environment remains an important consideration in the evaluation of local fashion brands. However, its relatively smaller contribution than transparency and ethical production suggests that consumers demand consistency between environmental claims and real implementation. Ongoing consumer behavior studies confirm that consumers are increasingly adopting a holistic evaluative approach to assessing brands (White et al., 2023). Cultural factors and sustainability literacy levels in emerging markets also influence how consumers interpret environmentally friendly practices. Thus, these findings highlight the importance of integrating sustainability across dimensions in local fashion marketing strategies.

Although this research makes a significant empirical contribution, there are some limitations that need to be critically observed. The use of cross-sectional survey design limits the ability of research to capture the dynamics of consumer confidence longitudinally. In addition, the relatively limited sample size and regional focus in East Java limit the generalization of the findings to other geographical contexts. Further research is recommended to use longitudinal approaches or mixed methods to explore the dynamics of trust in more depth (Kumar et al., 2024). Taking these limitations into account, this research remains an important contribution to the development of sustainable marketing theories and practices in the local fashion industry.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study concludes that sustainable marketing practices have a strategic role in shaping and strengthening consumer trust in the local fashion industry in East Java. Empirically, all dimensions of sustainable marketing have been shown to have a significant effect on consumer trust, with information transparency and ethical production as the most dominant factors. These findings confirm that local fashion consumers value consistency of real actions, information disclosure, and integrity of the production process more than just persuasive green promotional messages. Thus, consumer trust is not only built through sustainability communication, but above all through the implementation of authentic and verifiable sustainable practices. This research makes an important contribution to the development of sustainable marketing management studies and becomes an empirical basis for local fashion industry players in designing credible, ethical, and market-oriented marketing strategies that are oriented towards building long-term consumer trust.

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