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Green Marketing Communication as a Strategy for Sustainable Brand Image Formation at Maida Coffee

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Abstract: This study examines the implementation of green marketing at Maida Coffee Shop, a local micro-business in Kupang, Indonesia, that has built a reputation for environmental concern despite its operational scale. The research addresses how the coffee shop integrates sustainability principles into its marketing and operational practices. Using a descriptive qualitative method, data were collected through in depth interviews with the owner and direct observation. The findings reveal that Maida Coffee actively constructs a green brand identity through strategic environmental communication, notably its "Saving Forests Through Coffee" ("Menjaga Hutan Lewat Kopi") campaign, and robust collaborations with environmental communities. These efforts are central to its brand narrative. However, a gap exists between this communicated environmental awareness and its operational practices. Limitations in waste management, energy efficiency, and the adoption of biodegradable packaging were identified, primarily constrained by cost, technology, and local consumer purchasing power. The study concludes that while Maida Coffee effectively uses narrative and communication to build a sustainable brand image, it is in a transitional phase toward more comprehensive green business practices. Recommendations focus on strengthening operational consistency, inclusive pricing strategies, and enhanced consumer education to align its green identity with tangible actions

Keyword: Green Marketing, Sustainability, MSME, Coffeeshop, Brand Identity, Enviromental Communication.

INTRODUCTION

The number of coffee shops in Kupang City has been steadily increasing, coinciding with the growing interest of young residents in socializing within open spaces and trendy venues. Although the exact number of coffee shops in Kupang is not definitively documented, according to the Central Statistics Agency of East Nusa Tenggara Province (NTT, 2024), between 2021 and 2023, the city hosted a total of 1,178 eateries and restaurants. Based on the author's observation via Google Maps using the keyword "coffee shop in Kupang City," several establishments were identified, including Sombra Coffee, My Kopi O, Ja'o Coffee Bar, Maida Coffee, Kedai Kopi Petir, TETRA Coffee & Eatery, MUCA Café, Kedai Kopi Kulo, Lagoom Coffee & Eatery, Kopi Saa, Borneo Bakery, and Kopi Aksi.

Maida Coffee is one of the coffee shops in Kupang City, holding a 5-star rating on Google. Based on the author's observations across various media sources, this coffee shop aspires to "bring NTT coffee to everyone," a vision aimed at facilitating public access to high-quality coffee in East Nusa Tenggara. The owner of Maida Coffee is Gilbert Dwi Sandy, a young entrepreneur from NTT. Notably, Maida Coffee became the first coffee shop to collaborate with Rumah BUMN Mandiri, Kupang branch. Rumah BUMN serves as a development platform for micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), enhancing their capacity and capabilities to thrive within the digital economic ecosystem.

In addition to selling coffee, Maida Coffee actively engages in community development initiatives aimed at promoting coffee cultivation in Oelbiteno, Fatuleu, and Kupang Regency, in collaboration with the Bandung Institute of Technology. Observations of their official Instagram account (@maidacoffee) reveal various activities focused on environmental and social empowerment, such as the Timor Coffee Trip, Bercocok Paham, and content related to environmental and community conservation. Maida Coffee thus serves not only as a venue for coffee enthusiasts but also as a platform for cross-disciplinary discussions. These social media activities reflect a tangible implementation of green marketing strategies. The owner of Maida Coffee Shop, Gilbert Sandy, has developed a personal brand that highlights his commitment to environmental sustainability and the development of Nusa Tenggara Timur (NTT) coffee, which is reflected through his activities on his personal Instagram account (@gilsandyy). Gilbert is actively collaborating with various stakeholders through the sustainability programs run by Maida Coffee Shop, including organizing the Pesta Raya Flobamoratas event, featuring local musicians, community-made films, the preservation of local culture and food, and various environmental actions.

Personal branding is fundamentally the process of building a brand for oneself according to one's characteristics, distinguishing oneself by identifying and articulating unique personal and professional values, and leveraging all available platforms with consistent messages and images to achieve specific goals (Schawbel in (Papakonstantinidis, 2019)). Another perspective defines personal branding as the process of shaping public perception of various aspects of an individual, such as personality, skills, or values, thereby creating positive perceptions that can be used as a marketing tool (McNally & Speak, 2002; Szántó & Radácsi, 2023). Furthermore, there are three main components of personal branding: values conveyed to others and retained in their minds, an individual's skills in performing certain activities, and behaviors in building a personal brand, with additional aspects of authenticity, uniqueness, and appearance (Scheidt et al., 2020; Tumewu & Parengkuan, 2014). Gilbert Sandy's personal branding strategy not only strengthens his image but also enhances Maida Coffee Shop's reputation as a business committed to environmental sustainability and the preservation of local culture.

In social marketing, green marketing is defined as the marketing and development of products designed to minimize negative impacts on the physical environment. Another definition, according to (Dahlstrom, 2011) and (Kiyak & Grigoliene, 2023), frames green marketing as the study of efforts to produce, distribute, promote, package, consume, and reclaim products that are responsive to ecological issues and involve multiple stakeholders. Green marketing is also described as activities that encourage change to achieve a balance between organizational objectives and individual goals in the pursuit of environmental preservation, protection, and conservation (Mintu & Lozada in (Baiturrahmah et al., 2021)). According to Ramakrishnan (2023), in the context of modern business, green marketing serves as a means to integrate corporate practices with sustainable development objectives, while also strengthening relationships with market segments that exhibit high ecological awareness (Gheorghe et al., 2023).

Efforts in green marketing constitute a key approach to achieving sustainability. Within the sustainability framework, three primary components, commonly referred to as the triple bottom line, are recognized: economic performance, social performance, and environmental

performance (Carter & Rogers, 2008). According to Dewi & Rahyuda in (Rosyada & Dwijayanti, 2023) and (Rahbar & Abdul Wahid, 2011), there are three main components supporting green marketing in a product: (1) the application of eco-labels on products as evidence of environmental friendliness, (2) eco-branding, which refers to the name, symbol, or design of a product that is environmentally safe, and (3) environmental-themed advertising, utilizing electronic and print media as a strategy to introduce products to environmentally conscious consumers.

Based on an initial interview conducted via WhatsApp with Gilbert Sandy, the owner of Maida Coffee, the coffee shop has not yet positioned its brand as one implementing green marketing. Maida Coffee does not currently offer products with environmental certifications due to budget constraints as a micro scale MSME. Despite these limitations, Maida Coffee continues to conduct campaigns and climate action initiatives as a form of youth participation in promoting environmental sustainability. The coffee shop adheres to a principle of avoiding greenwashing. According to Garfield (1991) in (Szabo & Webster, 2021), greenwashing refers to exaggerated corporate actions intended to claim environmental friendliness, while in reality, the company does not accurately implement environmentally responsible practices, thereby constructing a false image.

Maida Coffee has also developed its brand character through campaigns focused on forest conservation, representing a tangible commitment to environmental preservation. However, in the processes of product distribution, processing, and packaging, the business still relies on fossil energy. Gilbert Sandy emphasizes the need for Maida Coffee to gain a deeper understanding of eco-branding. He expresses concern that adopting a fully green brand may be considered a luxury, as not all consumers in Kupang can afford items such as tumblers or cups made from cassava-based materials. Consequently, Maida Coffee feels that it cannot yet fully be categorized as a green enterprise, as the business seeks to avoid overextending definitions of sustainability. Furthermore, Gilbert notes that implementing eco-branding could affect product pricing, potentially limiting access to the existing consumer market in Kupang, where purchasing power is constrained by various socioeconomic factors.

Although Maida Coffee Shop builds its brand character through campaigns for forest conservation, its sustainability commitment experiences dissonance at the operational level, ranging from distribution and processing to packaging, which still rely on fossil energy. Gilbert Sandy's concern that eco-branding is a "luxury things" in Kupang, as it could potentially raise product prices amid limited consumer purchasing power, is supported by the findings of (Junejo et al., 2025). The study confirms that the implementation of green practices in MSME's in developing countries is often hindered by financial and infrastructural constraints, while also emphasizing that green innovation is frequently perceived as costly, thus creating a paradox between environmental idealism and economic realities at the business level.

This study aims to examine how Maida Coffee Shop implements green marketing while building its reputation as a coffee shop that pays attention to environmental sustainability. Although Maida Coffee Shop has not fully adopted the green marketing concept, the researcher is highly curious and seeks to explore in depth the actual implementation of green marketing activities carried out by Maida Coffee Shop, which pursues a noble goal: preserving NTT coffee and maintaining the sustainability of the natural environment. In the future, Indonesia must not only focus on high economic growth but also balance it with attention to sustainable economics. Sustainable economic development aims to improve the quality of life. To assess long-term economic growth that considers environmental aspects, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) figures should be adjusted to include the depletion of natural resources and environmental damage, thereby providing a more comprehensive picture of sustainable economic development (Firdaus & Fahmi, 2021).

The Green Marketing approach is not only a proactive, future-oriented strategy to create competitive advantage (Simão & Lisboa, 2017), but also a responsibility of all business actors,

including SMEs, to produce safe and environmentally friendly products. Conceptually, green marketing places environmental concern as a core value, which encompasses not only eco-friendly products but also corporate awareness of operational impacts (Grant, 2024), and requires a balanced synergy between economic profit, human activities, and environmental sustainability (Nygaard, 2024). The green marketing mix, an adaptation and extension of Kotler's traditional marketing mix (Kotler & Armstrong, 2020), operationalizes this concept in SMEs through: (1) Green Product, products that minimize energy use, ecological impact, and waste (Dangelico, 2016); (2) Green Price, pricing that incorporates environmental considerations (Hashem in (Kristiana, 2018)); (3) Green Place, which covers physical characteristics affecting the environment, strategic location, and distribution channels that support eco-friendly practices ((Bugis et al., 2023); Yan & Yazdanifard (2014) in (Anjani & Surya Perdhana, 2021)), with a holistic commitment integrated from production to distribution (Özgün-Ayar & Selvi, 2025); and (4) Green Promotion, communication linking products to environmental values, healthy lifestyles, and corporate responsibility image (Kristiana, 2018). Empirically, this environmentally friendly business strategy has been proven to positively impact company performance and image, manifested through recycled packaging, pollution prevention, and energy efficiency as competitive advantages (Mukonza & Swarts, 2020).

Environmentally friendly products are durable, non-toxic, and made from recycled materials, with key criteria including safety for humans, animals, and the environment, eco-friendly packaging, and transparency regarding raw materials (Kasali in (Rosyada & Dwijayanti, 2023)). Green products require consumers who are aware of the importance of sustainability, stemming from the global consumerism movement emphasizing the right to safe, high-quality, and environmentally friendly goods (Kusmatuti in (Bugis et al., 2023)). From the company's perspective, although there is an intention to support green consumers, knowledge of practical implementation is often limited (Lemke & Luzio, 2014). Focusing on environmentally friendly products has been shown to enhance profitability, employee motivation, and customer engagement (H'Mida et al., 2008; Li & Cai, 2008 in (Waskito & Harsono, 2012)). Companies can effectively reach green consumers by providing clear, transparent, and credible product information, while engaging them in understanding the use of specific materials and their potential environmental impacts.

METHOD

This study adopts a descriptive method with a qualitative approach. Descriptive qualitative research aims to describe, understand, and analyze social phenomena by exploring the deeper meanings derived from the collected data. The study focuses on understanding an event from the perspective of the participants (Sugiyono, 2020). Data collection was carried out through interviews and direct observation, beginning in January 2025. The interviews were conducted with the owner of Maida Coffee, while the researcher performed direct observations to examine the implementation of green marketing activities at Maida Coffee.

Interviews and observations enabled the researcher to gain a holistic and in-depth understanding of the phenomenon through direct interaction with the research subjects and immersion in the natural environment of Maida Coffee. The interview process served as a method of data collection involving direct interaction between the researcher and the respondent to obtain detailed, in-depth, and subjective insights into the respondent's experiences and perspectives regarding a particular phenomenon. Meanwhile, observation provided a more open and flexible approach, allowing the researcher to capture meanings and contextual nuances that could not be obtained solely through interviews (Sugiyono, 2020).

The data analysis process in this study was conducted in two main stages. The first stage involved pre-field analysis, focusing on an initial review of preliminary studies and various relevant secondary data sources. The second stage was carried out during fieldwork, where the researcher applied the Miles and Huberman qualitative analysis model, which encompasses data

reduction, data display, and the drawing of conclusions in a simultaneous and continuous manner (Sugiyono in (Sukmawati et al., 2020)).

The researcher also conducted data validation using the data triangulation technique. In general, triangulation is understood as a process of verifying data by utilizing multiple sources of information, various data collection techniques, and different periods of data acquisition, thereby ensuring that the research findings are more robust and reliable (Murti and Sugiyono in (Mekarisce, 2020)). In this study, the author implemented data triangulation by collecting photographic documentation and written materials to provide supporting evidence for the research process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The interview conducted with Gilbert, the owner of Maida Coffee, yielded the following findings.

Table 1. Analysis of Qualitative Interview Data

Initial Code	Theme	Original Quote	Translated Quote & Elaboration
Campaign "Saving Forests Through Coffee"	Environmental Commitment as Brand Identity	"Pesan yang kami sampaikan bukan hanya untuk menarik pelanggan, tetapi untuk mengajak mereka bergabung dalam gerakan ini. Dengan menikmati kopi, Anda sudah menjadi bagian dari upaya kami untuk menjaga hutan di NTT."	The message conveyed is not merely to attract customers, but to invite them to join the movement. By enjoying the coffee, consumers directly participate in the collective effort to conserve forests in Nusa Tenggara Timur.
Collaboration with Koalisi Kopi, Hutan Itu Indonesia, ITB, Roemah Inspirit	Collaboration & Community Network	"Maida senantiasa berperan sebagai penghubung antar komunitas (simpul komunitas), hasilnya tercipta konten yang mengangkat isu lingkungan, perubahan iklim, dan kelestarian hutan."	Maida consistently acts as a connector between communities (a community node), resulting in the creation of content that highlights environmental issues, climate change, and forest conservation.
Educating customers to bring tumblers	Environmental Commitment as Brand Identity	"Ya, Maida secara aktif mengajak konsumen, misalnya menganjurkan konsumen membawa tumbler."	Yes, Maida actively encourages consumers, for instance, by advising them to bring their own tumblers.
Organic products	Eco-Friendly Practices in Products	"Ya, hasil kopi yang kami ambil adalah dari hasil perkebunan organik yang sudah terverifikasi."	Yes, the coffee beans sourced are from verified organic plantations.
No harmful materials, BPOM & Halal certification	Eco-Friendly Practices in Products	"Maida menjamin bahwa produk yang ditawarkan sama sekali tidak mengandung bahan berbahaya, karena seperti gula aren dan simple syrup diproduksi sendiri."	Maida guarantees that the products offered contain no harmful substances, as components such as palm sugar and simple syrup are produced in-house.
No biodegradable packaging yet (cost & stock constraints)	Limitations in Green Business Implementation	"Belum ada, karena produk ramah lingkungan kurang sustainable secara stok dan harganya lebih mahal."	Not yet implemented, as environmentally friendly packaging options are less sustainable in terms of stock availability and are more expensive.

Initial Code	Theme	Original Quote	Translated Quote & Elaboration
No waste management system	Limitations in Green Business Implementation	“Apa saja langkah-langkah dalam penanganan limbah sisa produksi? Belum ada.”	"What steps are taken in handling production waste? None yet."
No energy efficiency measures	Limitations in Green Business Implementation	“Sepengetahuan saya belum ada mesin kopi hemat energy. Efisiensi energi hanya pernah dilakukan saat Earth Hour.”	To the best of my knowledge, there are no energy-efficient coffee machines... energy efficiency measures have only been implemented during Earth Hour.
Discount for customers with their own containers (offline)	Business & Environmental Strategy	“Pernah, biasanya kami memberitahukan langsung kepada konsumen waktu di toko saja.”	This has been done... typically, we inform consumers directly when they are at the store.
Allocating operational costs for climate actions (non-routine)	Business & Environmental Strategy	“Maida secara berkala menyisihkan sebagian biaya operasional untuk mendukung aksi iklim bersama komunitas.”	Maida periodically allocates a portion of its operational costs to support climate actions in collaboration with communities.
Location chosen for strategic value & public transport accessibility	Location & Accessibility	“Dalam pemilihan lokasi, Maida tidak mempertimbangkan konsep green place. fokus pada harga dan lokasi strategis, mudah dijangkau transportasi umum.”	In selecting its location, Maida did not consider the concept of a green place. The focus was on cost and securing a strategic location that is easily accessible by public transportation.

Source: Research Data (2025)

Based on the interview analysis with Gilbert, the owner of Maida Coffee, the company is actively positioning itself as a local coffee brand with a strong environmental commitment. This is exemplified by their flagship campaign, *"Menjaga Hutan Lewat Kopi"*, which seeks to engage consumers and encourage their participation in forest conservation initiatives in East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) through the *"Bercocok Paham"* campaign. The campaign has since expanded beyond forest preservation to encompass marine conservation efforts. From a communication studies perspective, it represents a form of strategic environmental communication, utilizing messaging and narratives to embed ecological values into the brand identity (Bertolini et al., 2023; Nadanyiova et al., 2020; Nygaard, 2024). Through this campaign, Maida Coffee reinforces its objective of promoting the potential of local coffee to support farmers in NTT while simultaneously contributing to environmental sustainability.



Source: Instagram, 2025

Figure 1. Bercocok Paham Campaign

Moreover, Maida Coffee has actively collaborated with various community groups and organizations, such as Koalisi Kopi, ITB, Roemah Inspirit, and Hutan Itu Indonesia. These collaborations have produced content emphasizing sustainability, environmental issues, and climate change. From a communication perspective, these activities can be understood as collaborative communication practices that form social networks to reinforce green messaging (Bombaci & Nespoli, 2025; Khubrani & Aldairy, 2025). Consequently, Maida functions as a community hub, uniting diverse groups to advocate for environmental issues and positioning coffee consumption as a participatory action toward sustainability.

Regarding products, Maida Coffee asserts that all ingredients are sourced from certified organic plantations, free from harmful substances, and comply with Halal and BPOM certifications. These claims are part of their ethical communication and transparency efforts, aimed at affirming their commitment to quality and consumer health. However, findings indicate that sustainability practices in operations remain limited. For instance, waste management has not been implemented, energy efficiency measures are only adopted during Earth Hour campaigns, and the use of environmentally friendly packaging has not been realized due to high costs and limited availability. This situation reflects a discrepancy between the communicated brand image and actual practices, referred to in organizational communication literature as the image-reality gap (Kanwal & Van Hoye, 2020).



Source: Instagram, 2025.

Figure 2. Maida Coffe Product Packaging For Coffee & Another Drinks Menu

The provision of operational cost allowances and discounts for customers who bring their own tumblers exemplifies a business strategy that considers sustainability. However, this approach has not been implemented systematically as part of a long-term plan and remains largely incidental. Meanwhile, rather than incorporating the concept of a green place, business location decisions prioritize strategic considerations and consumer accessibility (Adebayo et al., 2022; Shaikh et al., 2021). This also indicates that environmental communication considerations have not been fully integrated into managerial decision-making.

Overall, the findings of this study suggest a gap between high green awareness at the communication, campaign, and collaboration levels, and the limited green practices at the operational level. This condition indicates that Maida Coffee is still in a transitional phase toward more comprehensive sustainable business practices, with primary challenges related to costs, material availability, and technological limitations. From a communication perspective, this highlights that green branding processes are shaped not only by tangible actions but also by the power of narratives and symbols conveyed to the public.

This study contributes to the literature on green marketing communication practices and sustainability branding among local MSME’s in Indonesia, particularly within the coffee shop sector. The findings indicate that a brand can cultivate a green identity through narrative driven campaigns and engagement or collaboration with communities, even when environmentally friendly practices are implemented on a limited scale (Kanchana P, 2024). This supports the theory that perceived environmental commitment is often established first through brand communication and narratives before being translated into operational actions (Fella & Bausa, 2024; Nyilasy et al., 2014). Accordingly, this study underscores the importance of viewing green marketing not only as a technical practice but also through symbolic and narrative dimensions to shape brand image and consumer loyalty.

In terms of practical implications, the recommendations for Maida Coffee to maintain consistency between environmental messaging and actual practices in building brand credibility are as follows.

Table 2. Practices Implication for Maida Coffee

Aspect to Consider	Strategy
Waste Management	Designing collaborative programs with waste banks or waste management communities to handle production residue.
Energy Efficiency	Utilizing energy-saving lamps, electrical timers for coffee machines, or exploring machines with power-saving features.
Eco-Friendly Packaging	Gradually seeking alternatives, such as recycled paper, or providing continuous incentives for customers who bring their own containers to reduce reliance on single-use plastics.
Sustainability Program	Formalizing discount initiatives, donations, or environmental fund allocations into a structured strategy so they are not merely incidental.
Communication Strategy	Enhancing transparency with consumers regarding what has and has not been implemented, ensuring environmental messaging remains credible and is not perceived merely as greenwashing.
Consumer Education	Employing storytelling marketing so that consumers develop an emotional connection, viewing the price not as a burden but as a form of participation in a socio-environmental movement.
Inclusive Pricing Strategy	Offering tiered pricing and providing loyalty programs for customers who make consistent purchases.
Collaboration with Local Communities and Institutions	Developing collaborative programs with universities, communities, or government institutions that can provide indirect subsidies. One example is a coffee package that integrates environmental education programs.
Promoting the "Buy Local to Help Farmers" Mindset	Emphasizing that purchasing Maida's products means supporting local farmers. To shift buyer behavior, they must transition from seeking low prices to considering the socio-economic impact of each purchase.
Differentiation Communication Strategy	Prioritizing green branding value as a way to differentiate from competitors. Customers with limited funds tend to choose based on emotional considerations when there is a significant value difference, not just price alone.

Source: Research Data (2025)

In terms of social implications, the findings indicate that Maida Coffee has the potential to serve as an agent of social change in East Nusa Tenggara Province through coffee. The narrative encapsulated in the slogan "Protecting Forests Through Coffee" (*"Menjaga Hutan Lewat Kopi"*) can inspire consumers to develop environmental awareness and encourage other

MSME's to adopt sustainable strategies. By engaging more communities, Maida Coffee can strengthen a collaborative ecosystem within the local economy based environmental conservation movement.

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that Maida Coffee is actively working to position itself as a local coffee brand with a clear sustainability orientation, primarily through its flagship campaign, "Protecting Forests Through Coffee" ("Menjaga Hutan Lewat Kopi"), and through collaborations with various environmental communities. These initiatives underscore the pivotal role of storytelling, narrative framing, and strategic communication in reinforcing brand identity, educating consumers, and fostering environmental awareness. Despite these efforts, a notable gap persists between the high level of green awareness manifested in communication campaigns and collaborative engagements, and the relatively limited implementation of environmentally sustainable practices at the operational level. Maida Coffee remains in a transitional phase toward comprehensive adoption of sustainable business practices, facing significant challenges related to operational costs, technological constraints, and the relatively low purchasing power of local consumers.

In this context, advancing sustainability requires a multi-faceted strategic approach. Future initiatives should prioritize enhancing market education to cultivate informed consumer demand, implementing inclusive pricing strategies to make sustainable options accessible, and systematically integrating environmentally friendly practices into daily operations. Ensuring alignment between the brand's sustainability narrative and operational realities is essential not only for maintaining credibility and consumer trust but also for establishing a replicable model of green marketing and sustainable business practice for other local MSME's in Indonesia.

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