

# Understanding Consumer Perspectives on Brand Sustainability Through Online Digital Advertising

Yasmein Avijero<sup>1</sup>; Henderson Macarilay<sup>2</sup>; Jaypee Fernan Ramirez<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2,3</sup>College of Business, University of La Salette, Inc., Santiago City, Philippines

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**Abstract:** This research explored consumer perspectives on brand sustainability within the context of online digital advertising. As sustainability becomes increasingly vital to brand positioning, understanding how consumers perceive and respond to sustainability claims is critical. The study adopted a qualitative methodology, using thematic analysis of consumer responses to uncover attitudes, motivations, and potential skepticism toward brand sustainability efforts. Key findings revealed that while consumers express support for sustainable brands, they are also wary on transparency and authenticity. Online digital advertising serves as a double-edged sword capable of informing and engaging, yet also raising doubts about credibility. The study contributed to marketing and sustainability literature by highlighting the importance of trust, clarity, and value alignment in communicating sustainability through digital platforms.

**Keywords:** Sustainable Branding, Consumer Perception, Online Digital Advertising, Transparency, Brand Trust, Marketing Communication.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Developing a strong brand is critical for long-term success in today's competitive business market, Muchenje et al. (2023). Thus, strategies involving maintaining a successful brand, defining brand identity, comprehending the target audience, and developing a consistent brand message is also important in harnessing online digital advertising as a tool to cultivate brand sustainability.

Also, it is vital to continuously develop a strong brand in the midst of the fierce competition in today's generation where technology and innovation especially in the market is rampant. Hence, companies are required to not only survive, but also develop sustainably. But, in the face of digital transformation, companies are still having difficulty in connecting with their consumers (Vărzaru & Bocean, 2024).

The change in marketing paradigm from conventional to digital has created a major shift in the way companies interact with consumers. However, amidst the variety of digital strategy options, many companies still struggle to find the optimal approach.

In the digital age, online advertising has paved the growing importance of sustainability to organizations. The emergence of new interactive media presented marketers with new avenues for business and advertising. As consumers become more aware with prioritizing sustainability practices, brands face the growing challenge of aligning their

advertising practices with these values. The digital media has become a very important mode of communication in marketing and advertising for building brand sustainability which empowered marketers to encourage and disperse products to consumers. With the growing new interactive media, business opportunities and advertising horizons for marketers were also developing.

According to Ahmed et al. (2019) the cost for advertising and enhancement of many folds through browsing can stimulate purchase behavior through different practices and measure multiple modes. Brands are utilizing online channels to integrate different channels of online digital media to interact with the consumers at a real-time and get feedback regarding their products and services. The use of this new media has become an imperative and important part of companies and marketers to understand the importance of this media as a strategic tool for building brand sustainability. However, different customer views may affect the efficacy and impact of these digital advertising activities on the sustainability of brands.

In order for brands to better align their advertising efforts with sustainability goals, it is important to understand how consumers perceive their impact. Consumers may perceive the value of brand sustainability as a positive effort which may lead to increased loyalty, trust, and engagement with the brand. However, there is an issue about the effectiveness and impact of these digital campaigns into the

consumer's perception regarding the sustainability practices of the brand that drives their purchasing behavior.

Thus, this research paves the way for an in-depth investigation of how online digital advertising influences consumer attitudes toward brand sustainability, highlighting the advantages and disadvantages of digital marketing strategies in the context of rising environmental and social consciousness.

Since digital media channels has emerged as a result of consumers' increased knowledge thanks to the information readily available in digital media; nevertheless, very few research studies have evaluated the most successful approaches for buying goods that take into account every facet of digital media.

A few studies that impact a product's brand sustainability through online digital advertising also highlight the importance of perceived value of consumers, trust, and word-of-mouth. This merely demonstrates how different the actual application and consequences of the mediating variables' efficacy can be when it comes to the contribution of both positive and negative customer attitudes toward brand sustainability based on digital advertising.

Hence, this study delves into the perceived impact of digital advertising on brand sustainability, exploring how consumers perceive the social and environmental implications of the sustainability development goals and how perceptions influence the consumer's brand attitudes and purchase intention.

With this, we can understand how the shifting consumer values influence the purchasing decisions in a brand's perceived sustainability. By doing this, companies can tailor their advertising and business practices to appeal to this growing segment especially in understanding consumer perceptions that can help brands to develop a more credible and trustworthy messaging. This also serve as a drive for brands to push the industry towards greater transparency and more sustainable solutions. This research aims to fill the gap in providing clear and detailed guidance for practitioners and researchers in understanding and implementing appropriate digital marketing strategies.

#### ➤ *Background of the Study*

The transition from traditional media to digital media has considerably become an important mode not only for communication but also for brand sustainability. Digital media has paved the way in providing data and publicizing efforts to buyers utilizing advanced development and building brand supportability.

This shift from traditional to digital media has provided powerful tools that can potentially strengthen the brand reputation and improve customer perceptions, and alignment of sustainability goals in the eyes of stakeholders (Sipos, 2024). This rise in conscious consumption is driven by the heightened awareness of pressing global challenges like climate change, social inequality, and resource depletion.

Consumers are increasingly holding brands more accountable with their complicit practices that harms the vision of growth on sustainability. Because of this, brands become more welcoming to the business imperative of integrating ethical sourcing and environmental responsibility into the matter of their operations and messaging.

While there is a debate regarding the relevance of branding to the new face of a rapid technological market, others disagree with the argument because brands still have a significant impact not only on markets but also on society today. Brand sustainability maintains growth in market presence while at the same time providing ethical sourcing, eco-friendly practices, and social equity. Additionally, the need to consider sustainability-related brand management from the perspective of consumers can offer new insights and potential innovative tools to create ways and support more sustainable brand and consumption practices.

The integration of consumer culture and an effective marketing system can play a pivotal role in the broader environment of long-term brand loyalty and sustainability. The role of brands and branding in sustainability has a definite case of proving that brand values are becoming more diverse and can be a stimulus to achieve initiation for social mechanisms.

The support of analysis on perception influence to sustainability formation shows favorable brand attitudes and purchase intention to consumers. More specifically, they show that brand impressions and attitudes are complementary mediators, which means that consumers' beliefs about a company's sustainability activities also directly affect the consumers' behavioral intentions. Beyond environmental concerns, the social impact of online advertising is also a subject of debate.

Despite the growing importance of sustainability in the digital age, the research underscores the burgeoning significance of sustainable branding within contemporary marketing paradigms, propelled by the escalating consumer interest in sustainability and ethical consumption.

As consumers become more informed by the increasing information provided in digital media, the conscientious about sustainability issues also rises. This evolving consumer mindset necessitates the need of business organizations to level up their marketing strategies when it comes to providing promotions that have to deal with efforts through digital channels. While using online platforms to publicly endorse companies, some brands expose practices they deem as unsustainable, leading to a critical insight into reputation management related to corporate social responsibility that confines brand sustainability.

Despite the growing importance of sustainability in a branding management context, this study needs to be raised because there are more explorations of challenges and opportunities that brands have to cater to current sustainability issues. As well as the limited body of information that must be addressed to combat market

conditions while examining the relationship of consumer perspective on brand sustainability through online digital advertisement. Moreover, focusing on sustainability efforts can help us to come up with marketing ways that can demonstrate one way of sharing sustainability information and communication to portray an appeal to the harmony of the brand and the natural environment.

#### ➤ *Research Questions*

- How the respondents view their understanding on the consumer perspective towards sustainability of brands through online digital advertising?
- What are the thoughts of the respondents on how brand sustainability described the online digital advertising?
- How does online digital advertising affect the consumer choice when they buy products or services?
- What are the problems encountered by the consumers in understanding the message of the online digital advertising?

In the world we live today, customers are more inclined to back brands that share their values and are committed to actions. People's views of sustainability in marketing can guide businesses in crafting messages that connect with these shifting priorities. As digital advertising plays a role in engaging consumers exploring consumer attitudes could shed light on how well brands convey their efforts, towards sustainability and how consumers react to various strategies.

Adoptee of sustainability is more than an obligation. It also offers a valuable chance for business growth and long-term viability of success. Studying consumer viewpoints can assist businesses in areas needing enhancement and creation of goods and services that meets sustainability expectations while achieving a competitive edge, in the market.

The goal of the study is to uncover the elements influencing how consumers view brand sustainability in advertisement and delve into how this impacts academia and real-world applications related to advertising and consumer perception of brands sustainability efforts.

## II. THEORETICAL AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Authenticity-Driven Engagement Theory by Rachmad (2024), emphasizes that genuine, sincere interaction rooted in honesty, openness, and integrity are essential for effective communication and relationship-building. This approach involves being fully present, developing self-awareness, and engaging without hidden agendas. By fostering authentic engagement, individuals and organizations can build trust and facilitate meaningful connections (Boolkah, 2023).

Align with the role of a brand to become more genuine on the consumers in providing real content to promote brand sustainability, the Authenticity-Driven Engagement Theory

provides another key role of communicating the transparency and goal of a brand towards sustainability practices. Nowadays, the term “splurge and dupe” are commonly used by influencers or content-creators that provides honest reviews on products that shows good quality items and ethical processes on the dynamic marketing roles of brands to be relevant in the scope of consumers who are not just passive recipients. Since the digital age has provided consumers a dynamic resource on information, they become more active on sharing, creating, and digesting consume content that influences their purchasing decisions and shape their brand perceptions.

One great example of the model that recently become the attention of brands that supports their environmental goal towards sustainability is the Circular Economy which uses alternative systems of production, consumption, and disposal by using resources that minimizes waste and emissions of products and materials. This model of production is currently used by brands like Google.

By integrating these theoretical frameworks, the relationship between the interplay of digital advertising, brand sustainability, and consumer perceptions can communicatively provide the sustainability efforts and understanding of shape consumer intention to refine the empirical research validity of this study.

The intensifying use of digital media has influenced the marketing practices of businesses and customer engagement. Digital media has led to immense prospects for brands to collaborate and develop effective networks with their audiences. With the use of online media, businesses have the ability to convert prospective consumers into buyers through their marketing campaigns (Dwivedi et al., 2021).

In addition, the companies can also understand consumer expectations and needs through the online communities that provide valuable information for firms and build brand loyalty. As a result, since the firms value consumer opinion and involvement, it helps them in building the brand image. Due to the services and products offered, the brands can build a unique value and perception amongst their consumers through digital media (Jamil et al., 2022). Social media platforms have altered how companies engage with the audience.

Today's consumers expect brands to behave in ways that are consistent with a commitment to sustainability. Increasingly, they favor and tend to choose brands that they perceive as being committed to sustainable practices. The brands that we studied for this project advertise their sustainability efforts in an effective manner. They do this primarily through the use of digital platforms. These platforms allow brands to do a couple of important things. One is engaging with consumers in a way that creates a digital community around the brand's sustainability initiatives. The other is getting, and keeping, the consumer's attention long enough for the brand to convey a substantial digital message.

In addition, online advertising has an essential function for creating awareness. In the study of Perera, et al. (2022), investigate how social media marketing efforts and perceived brand credibility influence brand equity. It highlights the broader relationship between digital marketing efforts, brand credibility, and consumer perceptions. Trust forms the basis of this landscape; consumers will be more willing to engage with brands they consider to be real and trustworthy.

Some of the platform's brands that use clear statements about sustainable branding initiatives in paid social advertisement tend to benefit from improved perceptions. Highlighting social responsibility in advertising can further enhance a brand's image (Kim & Lee 2019; Habib et al., 2019). Brands that actively participate in corporate social responsibility (CSR) and effectively share their initiatives on digital platforms tend to create a positive impression among consumers.

Literature evidence indicates that consumers are increasingly purchasing products bearing in mind thought with global issues such as environment as well as social issues affecting their decisions, it also applies with regard to the uptake of sustainable selfhood of people to promote sustainability in the complex understanding of sustainability engagement (Ahmed et al., 2019).

This can also apply to the collective potential of exploring the significance of engagement through online advertisement on the significance, strategies and potential creation of positive improvements that lead the breeds and industries towards making the long-term positive change for sustainable action. (Karunasingha & Abeysekera, 2022).

This engagement with consumers on the online platform can also influenced how brands can frame their message or simply focusing on the benefits of the effectiveness of sustainability practices than balance resonating with negative framing (Vipin & Faizel, 2021). The content type also of online advertisement productions has been shown to be more impactful in conveying sustainable messages which shows how engaging in digital formats in advertising can affect the effective strategies used in promotion of brands with the application of rightful content to be used (Ahmed et al., 2019).

With the concepts of brands and industries and marketers, trust and credibility comes into the critical role of shaping consumer perceptions that brands can communicate with their practices that can gain higher trust levels and credibility on the consumer's perspective (Tan et al., 2022; Sander et al., 2021). It can also increase consumer engagement that can help in perceiving brands as an authentic sustainability effort to establish the foundation of an increase trust levels from the consumers. This route of a trust can boosts relationship of customer and purchasing intention.

Gong (2020), significantly influences perceptions of brand sustainability on user-generated content and trust peer recommendation that influence consumers to buy products from a brand credible and influencer suggested marketing

that effectively influence consumer in enhancing brand visibility to target audiences. Purchase intentions are more likely developed with the positive relationship of perceived brand sustainability and consumer behavioral outcomes that supports their values, fostering a sense of emotional connection to an increased loyalty and advocacy among consumers (Zhang & Zhang, 2023).

This is also significant to the strategies produced by advertising practices of brands that is prevalent on falsely claim sustainable efforts which can erode consumer trust and impact of effective digital advertising. Thus, further research is needed to long-term effects of digital advertising on consumer behavior regarding sustainability emergence on technologies especially to consumer engagement and purchasing intention impact. (Dumitriu et al., 2019). With this consumer awareness, particularly concerning their consumptions, and the manner in which brands provide information on sustainability initiatives through web media has become more significant. According to Azhar (2024) people are more likely to choose use and sustainably minded brands, if firms effectively communicate their sustainable actions on media channels. Iglesias & Ind (2020), imply that there is potential when it comes to creating a positive message that will reduce consumer skepticism and increase brand loyalty and trust belonging to environmentally conscious consumers.

In this regard, Chopra & Gupta (2020), continued exploring a related concept namely, "The Impact of Social Media on Consumer Behavior", claims getting their studies confirm that not only do the advertisements increase interaction but there is also a long-term connection with those brands. This therefore shows that brands grappling with enhancing their reputation could adopt such consumer values as advertising in their tactical paradigms.

In a survey study of Arora et al. (2020), findings revealed that the most important socio-demographic aspect that centered on the use of social media and helped consumers to perceive sustainable brands is what they discovered, that word of mouth and user reviews are critical in enhancing the believability of a brands claims to sustainability. This underlines a call for brands to deploy digital advertising annunciations for the purpose besides promotions or publicity than to present real-life sustainable initiatives (Widayat et al., 2021).

Al-Azzam & Al-Mizeed (2021), look more specifically at the influence that various formats of online digital advertising can have on encouraging more sustainable consumer behaviors. They found out that games, videos, and quizzes increase consumer engagement and interest in sustainability, reminding a brand that it is an ethics-focused company. This might also mean that any sustainability initiative that a brand develops requires innovation, especially with the advertising methods used in the digital platform. (Muñoz-Céspedes et al., 2021).

When consumers are increasingly concerned with sustainability, brands are asking how to express those values



through iconography in advertisements. Studies also suggested that web media are not only marketing tools but strategic channels for communicating commitment to sustainability.

Ziyadin et al. (2019), established that while navigating the internet, if consumers are able to understand the particular brand's sustainability communication, they are likely to respond positively, thus strengthening the brands' image. This shows the need to be clear and honest in the communication of various sustainability endeavors.

On this basis, Martinez-Ruiz et al. (2019), examined the effect of personally tailored web and social media advertisements on consumer evaluation of sustainability. In their study, they found that increased effectiveness of advertisement is due to the fact that they appeal to a consumer's interests and emotional states.

This connection is necessary because consumers want to do business with brands that support the environmental sustainability of the communities they operate. Consumer attitudes toward sustainable brands by the role played by social media were examined by Karunasingha & Abeysekera (2022), which show that endorsement and word of mouth improve the believability of the sustainability assertion. This is why brands need to establish meaningful relationships with their consumers, especially using social media not only to spread messages about sustainability practices but also to use those to create trust and belongingness (Lee & Park, 2024) and build the strong emotional connection with the consumers.

In addition, Hussain et al (2020), analyzed how various online advertising execution modes can enhance consumers' sustainability-related interactions. They found that formats which engage the audience—quizzes or videos for example—do not only grab the attention, but help people learn more and develop a stronger interest in sustainability.

These changes cue the need for brands to not only advertise their products, but also be able to partake actively in the debate on sustainability in their online digital advertisement campaigns. In general, available literature points to the significance of online digital advertising as a tool that determines consumers' perception of brand sustainability. This is why brands must learn to develop better advertising persuasions that will ensure their adverts are in tune with an audience that can make marketing more precise and give consumers the strongest digital shopping experience while also emphasizing strategies that brands can use to attain sustainable branding.

### III. METHODOLOGY

In this study, qualitative research was used to understand how consumers perceive online digital advertising and its impact on brand sustainability. The phenomenological study delved into how consumers personally experience and interpret brand sustainability in online digital advertising. Through in-depth interview guide,

this helped in uncovering the emotions and thoughts that influence how people connect with sustainability messages in the digital advertisements they encounter online.

The data collection process ensured partiality and accuracy. Through face-to-face conversations using structured questionnaires, the study gathered insights that truly represent participants' views. These discussions were analyzed using thematic coding, helping to uncover valuable themes and patterns that emerge from their responses.

The researchers provided adopted questions that are simple and relatable, encouraging participants to share their thoughts freely. By balancing and straightforward questions with opportunities for deeper responses, the study aimed to keep participants engaged and ensure to get the rich, detailed insights needed to fully understand their perceptions and preferences. Ultimately, this research design was key to the study, as it helped in revealing the complex relationship between online digital advertising and brand sustainability through the eyes of consumers.

#### ➤ *Study Site and Participants*

The study took place in Santiago City, Isabela, known for its bustling markets and diverse community. It is a place where tradition meets modernity. With a rich mix of industries both retail and technology. The city is increasingly embracing digital platforms. This shift makes it an ideal location to explore how online digital advertising impacts consumer perceptions of brand sustainability. By focusing on this vibrant urban landscape, this can help in capturing the voices and experiences of residents as they navigate the digital marketplace.

The participants were the educators of a sectarian private learning institutions who are teaching senior high school in the City of Santiago. The study aimed to include teachers coming from various learning institutions that reflects different ages, backgrounds, and teaching principles to understand how a wide range of people perceive online digital advertising and sustainability. Recruitment was done through local social media, community groups, and word of mouth, ensuring that it reach individuals from all walks of life. By gathering their insights, it highlighted not just trends in consumer behavior, but also the personal stories and beliefs that shape their views on sustainable brands. This human touch enriched the findings and emphasized the real-world impact of digital advertising on consumer choices and brand sustainability of organizations, as well into the ideas highlighting the role of online digital advertisement to consumers.

#### ➤ *Population, Sampling Size, and Sampling Technique*

The participants involved in this research were educators of a sectarian private educational institution in Santiago City who are teaching senior high school were specifically selected for their insights and viewpoints regarding the sustainability of brands in advertising online digital platforms. The selection process focused on individuals who frequently come across online digital advertisements in their day-to-day activities.

By talking to a diverse group of senior high-school teachers from various learning institution within Santiago City, the research uncovered how these advertisements shape their opinions and feelings about a brand's commitment to sustainable branding. The goal was to gain insight into the everyday experiences and perspectives of people in this community and how advertising influences their understanding of brand sustainability.

For people who took part in this research, they were employed in a sectarian private educational institution as teachers in Santiago City and 18 years old. Exclusion of participants working in advertising or marketing sectors that often shape and distort perceptions of "genuine" consumer behaviors and motives aims to ensure that the research captures untainted local opinions. Recruited participants have educational backgrounds and job roles, handling Senior High School students for an even richer gathering of information. With a targeted 15 participants and a qualitative approach, the research yielded some good conversations and insights.

#### ➤ *Instrument*

To gather meaningful insights into how consumers perceive brand sustainability through online digital advertising, this study used a semi-structured interview guide. The guide was crafted to explore several key themes, including participants' general understanding of brand sustainability, how they interpret sustainability messages in digital ads, and the extent to which these messages influence their attitudes and purchasing decisions. Questions were designed to encourage open and honest discussion while staying aligned with the study's objectives. Before the main interviews, the guide was pilot-tested with a small group of 10 to 15 individuals to ensure the questions were clear, relevant, and engaging. Based on their feedback, a few adjustments were made to improve the overall flow and clarity. Additional input was also gathered from experts in marketing and sustainability to help validate the content and ensure it reflected current trends and consumer language. The interviews were later analyzed thematically to identify patterns and recurring ideas in participants' responses.

#### ➤ *Data Gathering Procedure*

The process of gathering data to investigate the impact of advertising on consumer views of brand sustainability was carefully planned to be comprehensive and considerate of the participants involved. It started with establishing research objectives and creating a questionnaire that were be fine-tuned through trial runs to guarantee clarity. Next, participants encountered an explanation of the research intent and their rights in a consent form, which aims to make them feel comfortable and assured about taking part in the study. The interview took 5 – 10 minutes to complete, this made it simple for participants to express their opinions.

Researchers reviewed the feedback gathered to gain an understanding of how consumers perceive things and compiled their discoveries into a report afterward.

Crucially focused on confidentiality throughout the process no personal information was collected and all

responses were combined to safeguard identities. This method not only ensures the security of data but also builds trust by encouraging participants to share their authentic opinions, on how digital advertising impacts brand sustainability.

#### ➤ *Data Analysis*

The analysis of qualitative data as regards to online digital advertising and how this impacted the perception of consumers regarding the brands drew lessons from responses to clearly indicate the meaning. This means that the approach started with organizing the data so that everything appears complete and ready for analysis. Thematic analysis was done, it is a close reading of answers to identify recurring themes and patterns. This phase involved systematic coding of data wherein akin concepts get categorized and the underlying significances associated with the expressed views on brand sustainability by participants were revealed.

For this research it was manually analyzed to achieve a rich and nuanced view of how consumers perceive brand sustainability and the role of online digital advertising on the internet plays within it. As such, it informed brands to know better how to use their advertising to better communicate with consumers.

#### ➤ *Ethical Considerations*

Ethical considerations played a highly important role when examining the perceived influence of online digital advertising on brand sustainability. Participants benefited from the opportunity to share their opinions, further enriching understanding of consumer attitudes and challenging brands to do more to support sustainability practices. However, there were risks attached, among these were privacy issues or the emotional response in discussing personal experiences around sustainability. Participants experienced unease when their perspectives conflict with their established consumer behaviors or brand allegiances.

As a way to mitigate the risks highlighted above, informed consent was obtained to ensure all participants know their rights and whether they have an option not to participate. Privacy issues were addressed by avoiding collection of identifiable data. Moreover, providing sustainability information to the participants helped in addressing emotional disturbances that caused by the discussion. The benefits of offering insightful understanding to the brands and the opportunity to bring about positive changes in advertisement techniques were likely to outweigh the corresponding risks to foster a constructive debate about sustainability in consumer behavior.

## IV. RESULTS

The researchers presented the gathered data in a thematic presentation, using verbatim and analyzing it according to the different themes in pertains to the understanding of consumer perspectives on brand sustainability through online digital advertising.

**A. Research Question 1: What comes to Mind when you see a Brand Claiming to be Sustainable in Digital Advertisements?**

Informants 5, 7, and 8 doubted the authenticity of brands when it comes to sustainable branding, labelling it as a marketing exploitation to show as a façade rather than truly making a long-term impact.

➤ **Skepticism**

Informants 5, 9 and 15 showed the prevalent skepticism in terms of brand sustainability claims wherein other supporting details were sought to back up their claims in terms of their sustainable branding efforts. Many consumers remain skeptic by various digital advertisements due to a large body of people rely on vague claims rather than concrete evidences.

➤ **Trust**

Meanwhile, statements from informants 1, 4 and 15 stated data driven claims and long-term consistency builds trust towards customers and emphasized that consistency in online advertising equals credibility which is essential for trust.

➤ **Awareness**

Informants 3, 10 and 12 instigated that brand awareness and longevity play a key role in how consumers perceive sustainability. Well-known brands such as Coca-Cola enjoy high recognition, facilitating consumer recall and trust in their sustainability assertions with minimal extra effort. Regular exposure and sustained presence boost significance and consumer trust

➤ **Proof**

Informant 4 stated that it frequently seeks for proof if a brand is sustainable from primary and third-party resources such as different certifications and licenses strengthening their claims which was informant 10 similarly stated.

Furthermore, proofs hinder the growth of skepticism towards the mindset of the consumers and buyers. Data also shown that consumers are more likely to follow through on sustainability messaging with verifiable claims such as if they are consistent with their brand messaging and also if the brands know how to play the role of their digital advertising in shaping brand positioning and they pursuit relevance even upon staying for a long-time as an organization or business. On top of that, skepticism was still a relevant matter in this part of the study where the uncertainty was a major factor being considered by the informants thus more information was needed beyond the contents of the digital advertisements. In addition, the importance of proofs and validating information were crucial for consumers to identify if the product is sustainable or not since it is where the brand could grow trust among their consumers.

Most consumers double think to whether rely on such online digital advertisements since it is company-generated advertisements therefore skepticism is a predominant aspect in this matter and might affect how the consumers can view if a certain company is just doing it for the purpose of

benefitting and throwing of such a good reputation to make them genuine on their sustainability claims to their consumers. Consumers are becoming more aware of the environmental benefits, health, and safety issues of purchasing green products. Consequently, they are more skeptical about companies' motives, leading to negative product judgments and lower purchase intentions from greenwashing companies (Nguyen et al., 2019). Across informants' statement, the most consistent reaction was doubt, questioning and suspicion- people want proof, question and claims authenticity and were cautious about being misled. From the informant's perspective on what comes to their mind when brand claims to be sustainable or not. The best answer was skepticism. This theme captured all aspects of uncertainties or building trust through more information.

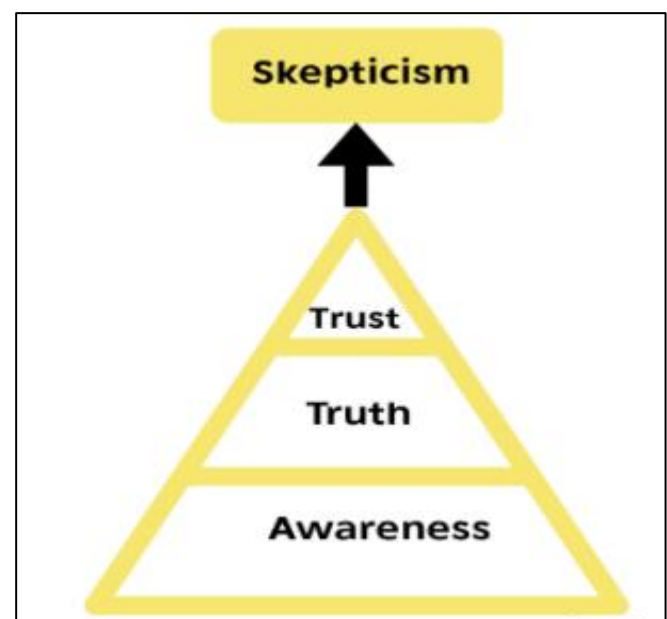


Fig 1 Consumer Perception Towards Digital Advertising

**B. Research Question 2: How do you Assess if a Brand is Sustainable or Genuine when they Market their Product or Brand?**

➤ **Brand Consistency and Identity**

Informants 1, 3, 4 and 12 emphasized that brand longevity and consistency are pivotal elements of sustainable branding. They highlighted that long term presence of a brand within the market reflects as a sign of sustainability and consistent identity. Furthermore, as informant 3 stated that consistent brand promotion reflects genuine sustainability efforts, while informant 4 stated that those who builds their brand with recurrent display of objective with consistent action appears more authentic. In addition, informant 12 stated that continues delivery of quality and relevant information strengthens brand credibility in the eyes of the consumers.

As mentioned above, the statements derived from the informants focused on the long-term presence of a brand within the circulation of the market was a clear justification if its brand sustainability.

### ➤ Digital Advertising and Perception

As informants 2 and 8 mentioned that, “I think most people get a bit skeptical...efficient ‘page palagi siyang nakikita sa social media” and “Brand sustainability comes out naturally kumbaga innate na sa ads yan...because of their advertisements.” Frequent exposure to online feeds can increase brand presence and relevance hence boosting increasing the odds of purchase or acquisition.

### ➤ Sustainable in Branding

Most informants instigated that the skepticism was still relevant in their perception towards their assessment whether if a brand is sustainable or not. For instance, informants 2,4,5 and 15 stated “ I think most people get a bit skeptical. Some question if it's just a buzzword or just part lang ng marketing gimmick ng companies.” “I immediately think about their proofs to know if the brand is genuinely sustainable or just using it as a marketing tactic.” “This one is on a 50/50 basis. We still do not know if it is truly sustainable or if they are just using the term to advertise the brand. Yung ibang brands kase, baka sinasabi lang na sustainable sila para lang makahakot ng mas maraming customers and reach wider market.” “Personally, I become skeptical with their claims, I tend to look for evidences that back up them on their claim. If they can prove their claim that they are sustainable, or their brand kasi with this mas masosolidify nila yung claims nila.” Consumers and concerned that brands might be using the word “sustainability” as a mere marketing tactic rather than demonstrating genuine commitment.

### ➤ Consumer Trust and Credibility

Informants 4 and 10 indicated that third party validating information was highly regarded in building brand credibility, with such information. Brands are able to increase consumer trust. In addition, informant 7 stated that brands who back-ups their claims largely inflict brand credibility. Lastly, informant 9 mentioned consumer trust are mostly built from user generated reviews or firsthand experience is more reliable.

In terms of informant’s assessment if a brand is sustainable or not, the consistency of brand in their marketing or advertising tactic is important in establishing their identity as a brand within the market. Inclined with this, their credibility as a brand is strengthened in their consistent branding and themes. Theocariss (2025), stated that, “Brands that fail to address sustainability concerns risk losing consumer trust, particularly among younger generations who demand greater accountability and transparency from the companies they support.” Sustainable branding in itself is a reaction of the consumers towards the relevance of the product or services in their daily lives.

From the consumer’s perspective, the most frequent word was sustainability. This encapsulated a significant concern in the context of digital advertising, as many informants mentioned brands claims about being eco-friendly, ethical or promoting sustainability, while also pointed out a lack of transparency or clarity in how these claims were communicated. It reflects both a central topic of

the discussion and a crucial issue consumer are focusing on in relation to advertising today.



Fig 3 Quadrant Model of Brand Authenticity in Marketing Efforts.

C. Research Question 3: Can you Recall a Digital Advertisement that Effectively Portrayed Brand Sustainability? What made it Convincing?

### ➤ Sustainability

Informants 1, 4 and 5 stated that in strengthening the sustainability claims data driven information has to be presented. It also stated that incorporating other sources of information were crucial in providing more substantial information to the general public.

### ➤ Brand

Informant 1 instigated that brands provide credibility on what they promote. They should present statistical data that can quantify the results of what they offer, they should provide credibility on what they promote in that essence many people will be assured that they have done trials and experimentations that can justify that what they offer is safe to the mass.

### ➤ Advertising

Informant 5 stated that brands should be focus on the reliability and factual basis of advertisements. To better communicate sustainability, digital advertising should explore different aspects of sustainability not just focus on surface-level claims. The advertisements should be reliable and based on factual information. “Dapat iwasan nila yung paglalagay ng misleading information that could jeopardize yung kanilang integrity sa masses.”

### ➤ Trust

Informant 7 highlighted the importance of transparency to gain consumer trust. On the other hand, informant 11 instigated that providing third party verifications such as certifications and licenses can help prove the authenticity.



#### ➤ Claims

Informants 1, 7 and 11 emphasized the importance of backing up claims with authenticated certifications. Providing measurable data is crucial in backing up with sustainability claims.



Fig 4 Model of Digital Advertising's Capability of Customer Persuasion

The response of the informants suggested that effective online digital advertisements that portrayed brand sustainability were those that leverage consistency and longevity to build trust, back-up claims with proof, data, and visible actions. To the consumers, they sought for a brand that effectively conveyed a combination of an online digital advertisement that shows meaningful impact, has emotional connection, and beyond mere marketing approaches that also shows factual transparency and a brand that creates something worthy to be recognized.

The best word to use for the question was trust. According to Husain (2020), "gaining trust is a crucial criterion for advertisers to build and enhance trusting relationships with customers in which green claims are not something that both parties can compromise." This encapsulates the idea of effective portrayal of sustainable branding, by building trust to the customers, the higher the chances of probability that a digital advertisement would be effective in their perspective.

*D. Research Question 4: Have you Encountered a Digital Advertisement that Failed to Communicate Brand Sustainability Effectively? What's Missing or Unclear in your Part as a Consumer?*

Individual's perspective regarding digital advertisements that fails to communicate their message effectively have similarities but varying delivery of interpretation. The key themes that emerged from the responses were as follows:

#### ➤ Disconnected

Informants 1 and 15 stated that there is a wide gap of information or knowledge. There is a lacking for information due to various reason such as the absence of visiting such platforms.

#### ➤ Misinformation

The prevalence of misinformation in online spaces erodes consumer trust in all forms of advertising, including those related to sustainability. Consumers are aware that information can be manipulated or biased, making them wary of accepting brand claims at face value. This highlighted the need for brands to combat misinformation by providing accurate, verifiable information, and building credibility.

#### ➤ Transparency

Many consumers feel that brands were not transparent enough about their sustainability practices. They want to know details about sourcing, production processes, and environmental impact. When brands fail to provide this information, it creates suspicion and makes it difficult for consumers to assess their genuineness. Transparency is crucial for building trust and demonstrating a genuine commitment to sustainability.

#### ➤ Data Driven Evidences

Consumers were increasingly demanding data-driven evidence to support sustainability claims. They are not satisfied with vague statements; they want to see concrete data on environmental impact reduction, resource conservation, and other sustainability metrics. When brands fail to provide this evidence, it suggests a lack of accountability and makes it harder for consumers to evaluate their performance.

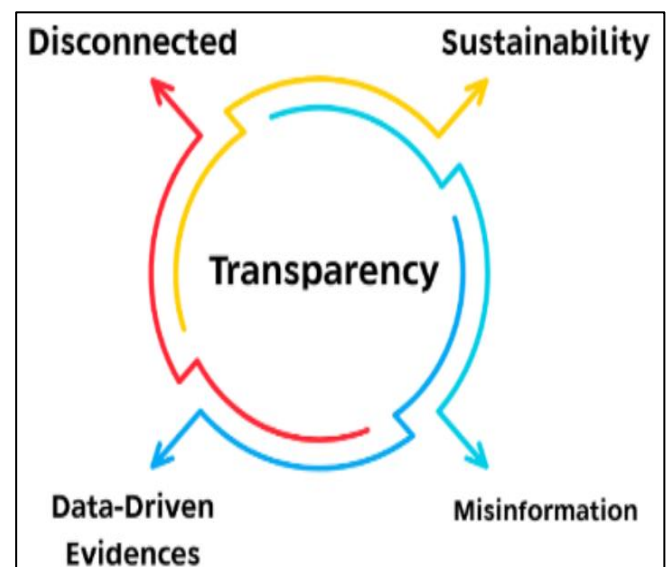


Fig 5 Thematic Diagram of Digital Advertising Attributes for Enhancing Product Clarity

Overall, misinformation was the main concern among the statements of the informants and the best word to summarize the interpretation was transparency as it was the main factor of why consumers may perceive digital

advertising seems to fail in properly communicating their message. The lack of inadequacy of transparency can be the main concern. This highlighted the critical need for brands to prioritize honesty and evidence-based communication in their online digital advertising. To effectively convey their sustainability efforts, brands must address consumer skepticism, avoid misleading practices, and provide clear, verifiable information that resonates with consumers' concerns and values. As per the statement of Cambier (2020), "Signaling brand transparency is effective in advertising to drive brand integrity." Meanwhile, Ali (2025), instigated that "Transparency builds trust, an invaluable asset in digital marketing."

*E. Research Question 5: How Important is Transparency in Digital Advertisement when it comes to Sustainability Claims?*

Data revealed that consumers see transparency as essential when it comes to sustainability marketing and that brands which provides clear, verifiable information are highly-recognized by consumers because of their build credibility and long-term trust. On the other side, misleading claims, and lack of proof made it difficult for consumers to believe whether the brand truly provides their audience a real brand sustainability effort which might involve their reputation and the perception of consumers in indicating that transparency plays a role in how consumers connect with a brand. Additionally, the recurring themes of honesty, transparency, trust, and reputation, all of which were key factors that informants believe were essential for effective communication of sustainability claims in digital advertisements.

➤ *Honesty*

In this theme, it talks about the deeper understanding of consumers about how advertising works amidst of wide utilization of influencers and sponsored reviews, informants 1 and 10 stated that skepticism was a prevalent matter to consider in this regard. Consumers nowadays are mostly aware of digital advertising tactics wherein they can easily distinguish if the content of advertisements are biased or not. Honesty in brand and context is crucial for transparent partnership.

➤ *Transparency*

Transparency entails how transparent brand are to their consumers, thus building consumer trust which helps in making informed choices. According to informant 2 and 4, clear and truthful advertising largely influenced the decision-making process of consumers. Additionally, informant 5 and 9 instigated that transparency affects decision making of consumers and indicated that brand transparency was not an add-on but a baseline requirement for brands because if there is an absence of such, there would be a lacking in sustainability message credibility.

➤ *Trust*

Trust was the most commonly emphasized concept in the responses, as many informants highlighted that transparency in digital advertisements was essential for building and maintaining trust between consumers and

brands, especially when it comes to sustainability claims. Without trust, consumers are skeptical, and brand's credibility suffers.

➤ *Reputation*

This theme refers on how product perception is influenced due to brand transparency. Informants 11 and 13 stated that brand integrity and values were closely related to brand transparency. Transparency shapes the brand's credibility and the ones who shows both the strength and limitations of the product which signifies honesty, trustworthy and values driven brand.

Transparency as based from the tabular informants deemed it as very important, even more than just important, because it serves as the foundation for building trust and enabling informed consumer choices to ensure the authenticity of sustainability claims and countering of skepticism which can help in protecting brand reputation and upholding brand integrity.

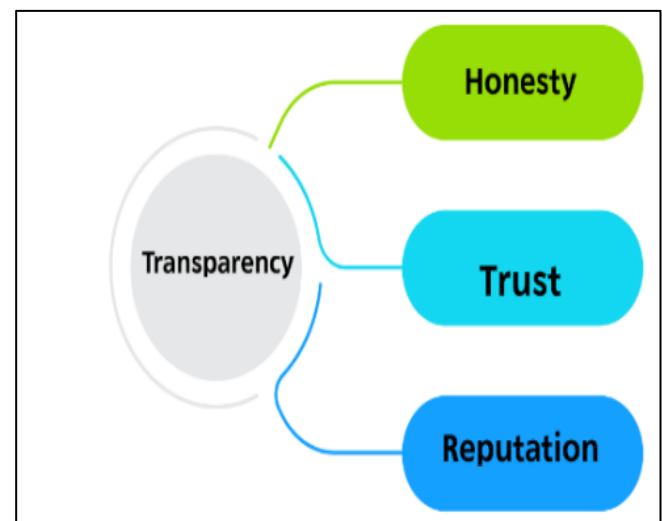


Fig 6 Concept Map Depicting the Importance of Transparency Through Digital Advertising.

Transparency was consistently highlighted by informants as crucial, often described as very important. Honesty and authenticity were also seen as key factors in building consumer trust. Furthermore, transparency in sustainability claims emerged as a central theme, resonating strongly across all responses. It was clear that being transparent is not just valued, but essential for establishing and maintaining the core message of trust. This trust, in turn, shapes how a brand's reputation supports positive branding efforts targeted at consumers.

*F. Research Question 6: What Role does Digital Advertising Play in your Decision-Making Process when Choosing Between a Sustainable or a Non-Sustainable Brand?*

Informants 6, 9, 11, 12, 13, and 14 concluded that online digital advertising plays a crucial role in their perception on brand awareness and interest but they do not solely rely on that factor. Their ability to become critical when cross-checking information and relying on real reviews that provides consistency in sustainability messaging helps them

to integrate who they should choose or brands that integrate authentic and long-term sustainability narratives into their digital advertisements are more likely to influence their consumer choices.

#### ➤ *Brand and Digital Presence*

According to informants 1 and 11, frequency and recurrent appearance of advertisement enhances brand legitimacy, by repetitive exposure to such advertisements, consumers are most likely to make a purchase. Frequency and visibility of a brand's digital advertisement also contribute to the perceived legitimacy and presence of a brand that can increase the trustworthy and familiarity to consumers. Also, informant 12 stated that digital exposure to such ads signifies brand activity and relevance. Digital advertising reinforces brand presence and with long term and consistent content and brand values, it would be interpreted by the consumers as trustworthy as long as there is a recurrent appearance of their digital footprints.

#### ➤ *Genuine*

Genuine sustainability values such as authentic advertising influences ethical driven decisions. Informants 7 and 10 stated that, when online digital advertisement's content aligns with the values that they uphold as an individual, they are most likely to be influenced by them. Furthermore, as informant 6 indicated that transparency and alignment of one's personal value result to persuasion in making a purchase of the advertised product. Authentic sustainability messages become a driving element for consumer to make such ads as a basis or influencing variable in making purchases.

#### ➤ *Cross-Verification*

In this theme, online digital advertisements seem to help or becomes a variable in the decision-making-process of individuals through presentation of comparative information. Informants 4 and 13 stated that consumers combine digital advertisement and product reviews for validation whether the advertising claims aligns with the consumer generated reviews which are also available mostly within the internet. On the contrary, informant 5 and 14 said that although online digital advertisements were major influence in their decision making, it is not the sole variable in making choices since there were other sources of information such as word-of-mouth and online reviews more reliant than digital advertisements.

Overall, online digital advertisement provides visibility and connection from the brand to the consumers and buyers but the user generated reviews play a much high role in the decision-making of buyers and consumers since they are user generated feedbacks. From the data collected, a clear pattern emerged highlighting the important role of online digital advertising in creating brand awareness and sparking initial customer interest. This was supported by responses from informants 1, 9, and 10, who noted that the more frequently a brand appears online, the more likely consumers are to consider purchasing its products. However, this initial interest often leads to increased scrutiny. Consumers begin to question the claims made in these advertisements, prompting

them to seek validation through online reviews, proof of credibility, and consistency in the brand's authenticity. This process ultimately builds reliability.

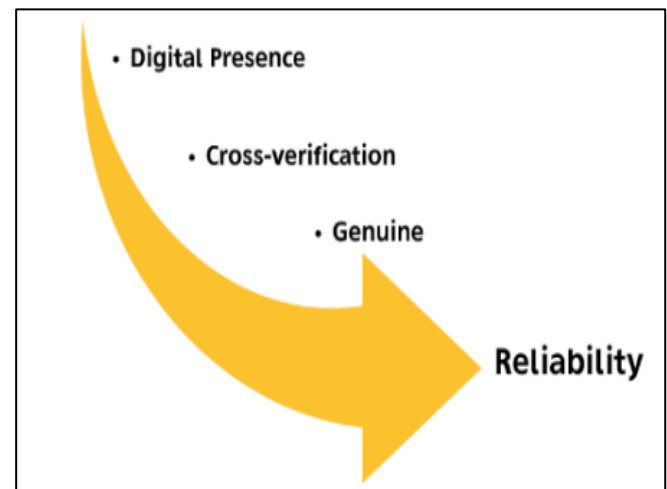


Fig 7 Diagram Showing the Key Aspects of Customers Decision Making.

Therefore, while online digital advertising serves as the initial touchpoint for awareness and engagement, it is trust built through authenticity and verification that influences consumers' informed decisions or responses that they consistently see as genuine and results to build reliability.

#### G. *Research Question 7: How do you Compare the Influence of Digital Ads with Other Sources of Information (e.g., Word of Mouth, Product Reviews, Social Media, etc.) in Shaping your Choices?*

Six respondents acknowledged the accessibility of online digital advertisement and its ability to quickly provide information unlike print or traditional media, meanwhile upon the convenient trait of digital advertisement to provide information is the role of cross-checking to still be necessary because some might be a path to enter misleading claims.

#### ➤ *Accessibility*

Informants 3 and 16 indicated that the ease of access of information increases the exposure and visibility of products thus resulting to increased awareness. Due to its accessibility, consumers are being more aware of what is within the brand or its product compared to other medias like print and audios which nowadays have a much less reach in spreading information. Additionally, informant 12 indicated that digital ads create a strong impression since it is quick, easy to access, and its high frequency exposure abilities makes stronger brands recall most especially for digital consumers.

#### ➤ *Vague Claims*

According to informants 2, 14 and 10 highlighted the concern of biases and misinformation in digital ads. There are instances that consumers question the credibility of online digital advertisements due to biases since it is brand generated information. Furthermore, informant 15 indicated that skepticism arises from vague claims of digital ads, the lack of transparency could weaken the claims of brands therefore strengthening clear and truthful digital ad content is crucial.



### ➤ Reviews

Based on informants 4,5 and 11, online product reviews and word of mouth were deemed to be the most trustworthy source of information since these sources are generated by consumer and buyers. It is not prone to any biases compared to online product reviews which are relatively created to boost sales since they are brand generated source of information. Although digital ads are generally for brand awareness and exposure, consumers are more inclined to be acknowledge peer reviews and experiential insights as a variable in their decision-making process.

Also, respondents suggested that the role of online digital advertisement to the consumer is to introduce brands, and create initial interest. It is not the most trusted source of information, thus, consumers rely more on word of mouth, trusted influencer opinions, and sales data to make informed choices particularly when sustainability claims are involved before making a purchasing decision.

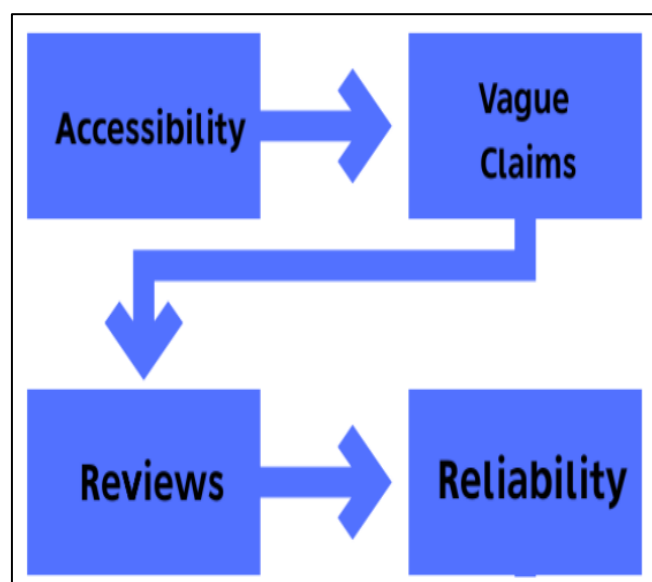


Fig 8 Flow of Digital Advertising to Other Sources of Information.

The pattern suggested that while online digital advertising offers convenient access to information and plays a key role in initiating consumer interest, its influence on final decision-making is limited by consumer skepticism. Many consumers seek validation from other sources such as product reviews, word of mouth, and user-generated content as these are perceived as more trustworthy than brand-generated claims. These external sources provide concrete, relatable insights that significantly shape consumer choices.

This highlighted that although digital advertising is an important first step in the consumer journey, the ultimate decision to support a sustainable brand is more heavily influenced by validation from external, user-driven content. Consumers place greater trust in credible, unbiased information whether it comes from peer reviews, testimonials, or sales data which underscores the importance of authenticity in building lasting reliability to brands.

### H. Research Question 8: What Improvements would you Suggest for Digital Advertising to Better Communicate Sustainability Messages to Consumers?

Informants 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, and 14 highlighted more transparent, clear, and authentic sustainability messaging. Their answers expected brands to simplify communication while at the same time aligning it with ethical advertising standards. Instead, of focusing on marketing appeal, these brands must also showcase their impact, and long-term efforts to attract customers in building trust and credibility through various ways such as highlighting certifications which justifies their claims to their target audiences.

### ➤ Integrity

Based on informants 1 and 4, there was a need for evidence based and factual claims on the information and context of brand's online digital advertisements in support the information for brands with third party validation. On the other hand, informant 5 highlighted the importance of avoiding misleading or vague advertisements to enhance brand credibility. Consumers wants to see brand integrity and not just branding rhetoric.

### ➤ Authenticity

Informants 9 and 10 told the importance of authentic brand story telling which also is a way for long terms brand consistency. Like informants 12 and 14 showed that consistency in long term sustainability commitment reflects the values and purpose of what the brands are upholding.

### ➤ Comprehension

Informant 15 highlighted the importance of simplifying technical words to improve visual and informatory clarity. Avoidance of using unfamiliar words could result to poor communication channel, thus, hindering the amount of understanding of consumers to their brand. Also, informants 3 and 13 said that advertisements have to be tailored and curated to the specified audience for them to be more connected with the online digital advertisement. Lastly, informant 8 instigated the importance of incorporating experiential and user-generated contents to the advertisements in helping to establish the brands credibility.

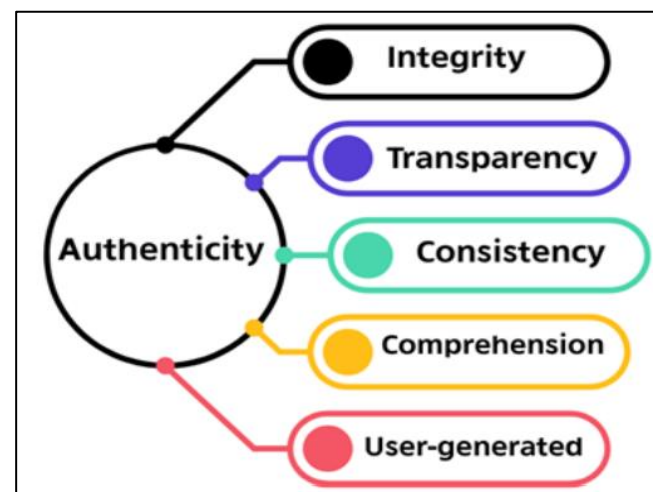


Fig 9 Thematic Map of Improvement Areas for Sustainability Messaging



The pattern suggested that while online digital advertising offers convenient access to information and plays a key role in initiating consumer interest, its influence on final decision-making is limited by consumer skepticism. Many consumers seek validation from other sources such as product reviews, word of mouth, and user-generated content as these are perceived as more trustworthy than brand-generated claims. These external sources provide concrete, relatable insights that significantly shape consumer choices.

This highlighted that although digital advertising is an important first step in the consumer journey, the ultimate decision to support a sustainable brand is more heavily influenced by validation from external, user-driven content and consistency. Consumers place greater trust in credible, unbiased information whether it comes from peer reviews, testimonials, or sales data underscoring the importance of authenticity in building lasting brand.

## V. DISCUSSION

This section presents a detailed examination and interpretation of the findings derived from the interviews the researchers have conducted. The presented analysis highlights the consumers' perceptions, attitudes, and expectations regarding sustainability claims of brands in online digital advertising.

Inclined with this, the following were the interpretation of answered questions of the respondents. The study's findings revealed that understanding of sustainable branding through digital advertisement is consumers varies across individuals, yet a unifying statement lies within the authenticity of the brand in their digital advertisement.

People tend to be skeptic when asked what comes to their mind when brand claims to be sustainable in a sense of brand awareness. Although there is information being given in digital advertisements, there is an insufficiency of information to such advertisements thus doubt and skepticism arises. Authenticity of sustainability claims as mentioned by Rachmad (2024), it should be the cornerstone of all marketing and engagement strategies which then supported the idea of the researchers that revealed that consumers tend to frequently questioned whether brands do genuinely implement these sustainable practices or just a form of a marketing tactic since consumers also double thinks to whether rely on such online digital advertisement since it is company-generated advertisements or a skepticism due to the brands obvious vague claims or lack of proof when it comes to consistency in messaging their sustainability efforts to the consumers. These usually develops brands to go beyond just merely doing marketing, and to ensure that sustainability claims are backed by data, certifications, and transparency they have to build the trust of the consumers to integrate connection whilst also upholding to their moral ground of authenticity and real marketing.

The second theme focused on perceived aspect pertaining to brand sustainability described on the online digital advertising. It stated that one factor that consumers

consider in deciding whether the digital advertising is genuine or not is their consistency in releasing advertisements with the same or similar theme. With such, it helps in establishing consumer trust and brand credibility. Neilsen (2021) stated "rebuilding advertising credibility has become essential in today's marketplace, especially as consumers grapple with ad over-saturation and fatigue." Respondents generally doubted the genuineness of sustainability claims in online digital advertising, demanding proof, transparency, and consistency. While digital ads are powerful tools, their effectiveness is undermined when sustainability messaging is vague or unverifiable. These findings are well-supported by broader academic literature that highlights trust, clarity, and evidence as key factors in successful sustainable branding.

The third theme centered on effective portrayal of sustainable branding through digital advertising and majority leverages in consistency and longevity in building trust. The longevity of brand's existence reflects their relevance within the market. Trust is a major aspect in determining the effectiveness of online digital advertising therefore transparency plays a major role considering the effectiveness of digital advertising. Martinez (2019), mentioned that "Trust is a crucial element influencing the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies, particularly in the context of promoting sustainability, as it underpins consumer engagement and loyalty." Digital advertising influences consumer choice by enhancing brand visibility, triggering interest through repetition, and providing access to peer-based validation.

On the fourth theme, it focused on the challenges that consumers encounter in understanding the message of online digital advertising. Transparency is a major aspect in establishing the brand credibility. Moreover, the overuse of biased sources of information often without clear disclosures adds to the confusion. Brands should be aware and transparent in all their digital advertisement for better feedbacks and responses from the consumers. Consumers are left unsure whether endorsements reflect genuine support or are purely paid promotions.

Transparency is also valued in establishing the core of having consumer trust but what emerged on the fifth theme was how honesty is deemed important as giving trust thus resulting to reliability of the consumers to the brand's reputation and integrity. Informants 11 and 13 answered to research question number 5 also stated how brands integrity and values are closely tied to brand transparency which then believes that this is essential for effective communication of sustainability claims. It is also clear that transparency and honesty is not just a buzzword but a foundation upon which successful businesses incorporate as a policy that helps them grow over time (Kelly, 2023).

Furthermore, with these built factors of transparency, honesty, and trust results to a brand reputation in the eyes of consumers. With the increasing demand for authenticity, it is also only crucial how reputation plays a big part to the consumer's decision whenever they respond to sustainability claims as well as into relying the sense of what to choose based on the protrude claims of the brands in the market.

In the sixth and seventh theme, laid the influence of reliability. While digital presence serves as the initial stage of the customer journey, it is important to familiarize how consumers can be attracted with the brand itself. Adamik-Borowska (2024) as stated by informants 4 and 13 under research question number 6, cross-verification or seeking for proof or evidences that can validate the claims of the brands will influence how the consumers can believe the brand's genuine or authentic online digital advertising. Additionally, with more claims surrounding the brand, it is more effective to the part of the brand resulting the consumers to put their trust on this sustainability claims they are trying to propagate and results to reliability which affects the consumer's informed decisions that they consistently see as genuine and credible.

This was also supported by the emerged thematic code in research question 7 stating how reliability is essential to the perspective of the consumers especially if the brands are trying to produce claims that are not user-generated or coming from the consumers itself, because online digital advertisements as back-up by informants 1, 4, 5, 6, and 14 wherein online digital advertisements creates initial interest but it is the user-generated or third party verifications who makes them believe on the claims of the brand. Also, giving reviews that solidifies the genuine impact of the products or services offered by the brands, consumers tend to believe what they can have through word of mouth, peer influence, and many more that are not prone to biases.

Authenticity as the eight underlying thematic code also suggested that the power of online digital advertisement is a key play that provides a decision whether the consumer will hook their interest, the consumers place greater value in testimonials. Validation from external and user-driven content that underscores the importance of building lasting brand on the part of the consumer's perspective.

Generally, while online digital advertising makes it more convenient for every consumer to cross-check information, it is still better to seek for external validation before fully trusting claims that we can see from influencers, content creators, and product reviews across the internet. Thus, in considering influencing consumer decisions, respondents remarked the direct reflection of the consistent sentiment shared by numerous informants throughout the results section regarding their reliance on external validation to trust sustainability claims in digital advertising and make purchasing decisions.

During interviews, consumers also noted that online digital advertisement should not only promoted because they want to market what they can offer from the market itself, rather they try to market along with its purpose and impact amongst customers. When they highlighted how they have observed some brands who uses emotional connection and brand storytelling, it becomes more convincing for them to trust and resonate with those brands who provides story-driven digital campaigns because in that way, they can effectively integrate sustainability messaging into their brand story and also connect it with their company values.

Another one is how user-generated reviews integration to online digital advertisement is being used to marketing strategies in this times because it brings more genuine and authenticity to the part of the consumers because they can correlate with the one who advertises the product instead of being manipulated by company-generated advertisements. It also helps in the aspect of solidifying vision rather than simply stating their sustainability claims that might appeal as something that lacks engagement and compelling narratives that align with their long-term mission and might be interpreted otherwise as a promotional gimmick. This also serves as an excellent social proof in which marketers can use to leverage and encourage customer loyalty (Butcher, 2024).

Another major factor that contributed to consumers skepticism is the lack of clarity or those unclear messages in online digital advertisement of brands which uses buzzwords without providing specific details. The respondents also criticized how being culturally insensitive or politically incorrect such as whitening product advertisements that promotes outdated beauty standards and company-generated advertisements which can be a form of propaganda can provide a misbehavior concept for consumers which might lead to ambiguous claims.

Additionally, whenever consumers scroll through online digital advertisement, respondents have stated that they trust brands if they show more of the long-term dedication to sustainability rather than suddenly adopting sustainability messaging because it is relevant to the market. Fernandes et al. (2024), also highlighted how conscientious purpose-driven branding can be effective in understanding the vision of brands to the customers while highlighting their long-term vision and commitment through online digital advertising.

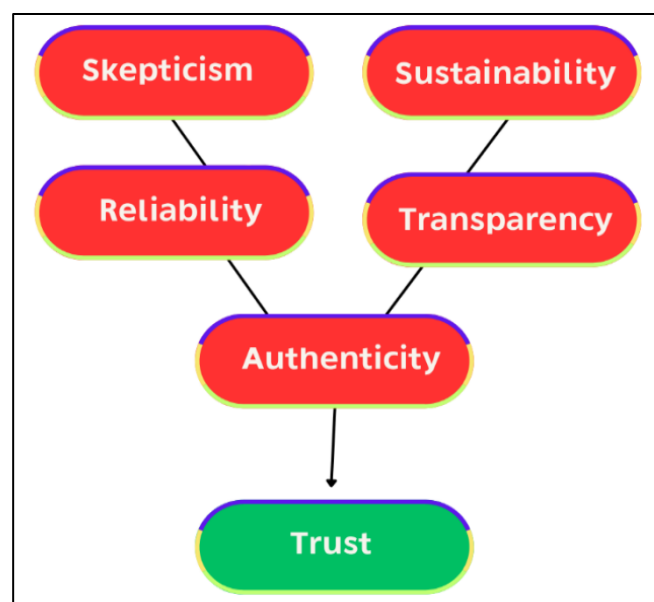


Fig 10 Hierarchal Thematic Diagram Leading to Consumer Trust in Sustainability Messaging

When these findings are viewed together, it's clear that the growing consumer awareness of sustainability and

demand for authenticity of brands in online digital advertising practically work together in forming consumer preference and consumer perspectives, as supported by Rachmad's (2024) Authenticity-Driven Engagement Theory where the main idea revolves with how brands should uphold integrity on their marketing engagement and strategies will help them to elevate their relationship with the consumers through build trust and loyalty.

Furthermore, it stated that emphasizing user-generated content and testimonials will help in leveraging the embodiment of authentic voices which can help in the brands' credibility and relatability and build of trust and loyalty. While digital advertisement helps consumers to a role of raising awareness, they do not sufficiently display all their reviews and transparency measures, thus, it is better to always cross-check information presented by these brands especially through online digital advertising and take note of those brands who demonstrate long-term commitment rather than temporary trend-based sustainability efforts.

## VI. CONCLUSION

In this study, consumers in Santiago City, are generally aware and critical about sustainability claims of brands even through online digital advertising. With the questions raised, the data have showed several key insights pointed consumer's respondents to the widespread skepticism toward brands that fail to provide concrete evidence of sustainable branding as well into their genuine commitment.

- When brands lack historical credibility or fail to showcase real impact, they rather perceive it as a marketing tactic and forces them to look for brands who have more interesting background of sustainability claims. Which results to the emergence of skepticism and doubt. They would opt to look for something that provides clear, concise, and culturally relevant that avoids misleading or vague claims that could damage their trust on brands.
- It can also be inferred that the preference and perception of the citizens are directly proportional which are mainly driven by the brand's emotional and value-driven storytelling that helps consumers to emerge in reinforcing sustainability messages. Brands that generally integrate sustainability into their core values, long-term branding, and mission-driven narratives which can gain more consumer loyalty and credibility.
- When brands consistently demonstrate an advertisement that do not only promote sustainability but rather consistently making a genuine impact then it can help in influencing consumer perspectives towards brands that effectively demonstrate sustainable branding. Therefore, brands can mostly build trust through authenticity and transparency as well as consistent branding which can create a lasting impact in the market. This then leads marketers to what benefits them as a sustainable brand through online digital advertisement.

- Online digital advertisements who fails to effectively convey brand sustainability through using unclear words and buzzwords without explaining the 'how and why' it lacks transparency. It makes consumers note that by simply stating claims is not enough instead they want to see details that resonates with the values, impact, and tailored messages that feels authentic with relevance to their main core.
- Reliability in digital advertising plays a crucial role in how consumers perceive brand sustainability. Consumers expect consistent, transparent, and verifiable claims such as third-party certifications or long-term sustainable practices to build trust. Without these, brands risk being seen as inauthentic or using sustainability as a marketing gimmick.
- Authenticity is vital in convincing consumers that a brand's sustainability efforts are genuine rather than performative. Consumers are more likely to trust and support brands that show consistent values, honest messaging, and real impact rather than exaggerated or vague claims. In the digital space, authenticity builds emotional connection, making brands more relatable and credible to their audience.

These points underscore that while online digital advertising is necessary tool for wider engagement and convey sustainable branding, that consumers are looking for something that will connect them with the brand's underlying commitment, transparency, and the ability to leverage authentic communication channels and specific verifiable information that influences consumer choices which aligns with the theoretical concept of authenticity-driven engagement by Rachmad that emphasizes honesty and transparency as the foundation for building meaningful connections.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

➤ *The Following Recommendation was Drawn from the Conclusion of the Study:*

- Eliminate vague or misleading sustainability claims that risk being perceived as a marketing tactic. Replace them with fact-checked, transparent, and easily understood statements that clearly communicate the brand's sustainable values and practices. This helps consumers make informed decisions and builds long-term brand loyalty.
- Maintain branding consistency across all promotional and marketing campaigns including websites, social media, and online digital advertisements from idealisms, value, and messaging. This reinforces consumers' perception of the brand's genuine commitment to sustainability that can enhance brand familiarity or awareness and built trust.
- Use data-driven and evidence-based content such as third-party certifications, and verified user-generated content to

build credibility. Supporting this with visual storytelling and social proof which can influence perceived authenticity and deeper consumer trust.

- Establish a robust feedback loop by collecting and analyzing consumer responses to sustainability branding campaigns through surveys, social listening, and online comments. This not only enables the brand to adjust its messaging based on real-time insights and emerging consumer concerns but also provides customers with an avenue to share their personal experiences with the brand. This validation also reinforces the perceived credibility and reliability of the brand as authentic customer feedback strengthens public trust and enhances the brand's overall reputation in the sustainable branding.

#### ➤ Recommendations for the Future Researchers

Future researchers may conduct a similar study in quantitative or qualitative study comparing studies across different regions or cultural context that could reveal how perceptions of sustainability may differ in various markets. Additionally, exploring the same concept of study but with a much broader population as well as increasing the number of participants like including non-teaching staff in the institution to gather more diverse perspective according to the matter.

Furthermore, the study cite can be extend beyond Santiago City like neighboring cities and municipalities. The gap of need to research in accordance to this study is plenty since there are limited studies supporting this research.

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