

Unveiling Zero Waste Fashion: A Creative Communication Journey

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ABSTRACT

Fashion is very closely related to communication. Many fashion brands use social media as a communication medium to reach customers. As the fashion industry has long been known as the ultimate source of waste for landfills, continuous communication to encourage environmental awareness is needed. A lot of designers and fashion enthusiasts tried to introduce slower fashion to promote sustainability. Among many approaches, zero-waste fashion (ZWF) has been known as the keyword that captures the attention of many. ZWF is an effort to minimise fabric waste. This research focuses on designing ZWF patterns and the effort put into publishing them on social platforms, such as Instagram. The contents aim to highlight the creation process behind ZWF, showcasing the ingenious design techniques, materials, and innovative production processes that minimise waste. A sustainable fashion brand called "Masa" was created as the identity of the ZWF products that had been created in this project. This research uses a design thinking method with an experimental approach. The initial steps of design thinking by focusing on product creation, and the last step being efforts to make creative publications on Instagram (@masawear_id) and review the account reached and rise of awareness from this platform. The results of this research show that Instagram can be the right medium for spreading awareness about ZWF.

Keywords: *fashion waste; zero waste fashion; creative communication; Instagram*

INTRODUCTION

Based on data obtained from The Roundup (2023) more than 100 billion new garments are produced annually. However, 87% of the garment becomes waste that ends up in landfills. The total amount of textile waste generated worldwide is 92 million metric tons. This textile waste is caused by fast fashion. Fast fashion is clothing that is mass-produced in a short time and sold at low prices (Black, S. 2010). The waste generated by fast fashion has a negative impact on environmental sustainability. To deal with the problems caused by fast fashion, a movement called sustainable fashion has emerged. Sustainable fashion prioritises long-lasting production and strives to preserve the environment. One of the sustainable fashion methods is the Zero Waste Fashion (ZWF). ZWF aims to produce less than 15% to 0% pre-consumer waste in the entire production process (Rissanen & McQuillan, 2016).

In Indonesia, sustainable fashion is starting to attract an increasing number of enthusiasts. Judging from the emergence of many local brands that carry the concept of sustainable fashion, such as Sejauh Mata Memandang, Sukkha Citta, Pijak Bumi, and many more (Endrawati, 2022). These three brands use Instagram as a platform to establish its brand presence and implement effective product marketing strategies. In addition to selling their products, these three brands actively engage in promoting sustainable fashion through their Instagram posts. To make a difference with any sustainable fashion brand that has been mentioned earlier, this research specifically focuses on the creation of Zero Waste Fashion (ZWF) products using the Zero Waste Pattern method, with the aim of exploring innovative approaches to minimise fabric waste. The products are given the brand identity of 'Masa' to make them easily recognizable. To spread brand awareness and information about ZWF, an Instagram account @masawear_id has been created.

The primary aim for most businesses is to enhance sales and revenue. The goal is to attract new customers to your products while also motivating them to make repeat purchases. Brand awareness pertains to the degree to which both current and potential customers are familiar with your company and its offerings. Within just one week after its introduction, surveys revealed that over 90% of U.S. consumers had been exposed to information about the iPhone through advertisements and news stories – showcasing an impressively high level of

brand awareness. Ultimately, achieving successful brand awareness entails having your brand widely recognized and easily distinguishable. This level of recognition is essential in setting your product apart from others in the same category and from your competitors (Gustafson, T & Chabot, B., 2007).

Formulating a strategy for brand awareness that remains adaptable as brand evolves is a prudent approach. To initiate this process, initial research can be conducted to gauge the existing consumer awareness of the brand before any modifications are made. Subsequently, potential courses of action to enhance recognition and public familiarity can be identified, drawing from your own insights and external recommendations. Crafting a comprehensive plan detailing the methodology to be employed is the subsequent step. This plan could emphasise aspects like the brand name, associated colours, or even the methods used for product promotion and sales. Finally, selecting the means to implement these changes and amplify brand awareness becomes crucial. The anticipated outcome is a discernible shift in how consumers perceive the brand and its level of familiarity. For instance, an expanded consumer base might encompass neighbouring towns or attract a distinct core demographic (Gustafson, T & Chabot, B., 2007).

Duc Le M (2013) conducted a study concerning the appropriate media for content marketing. In his research, Duc Le M conducted interviews with three companies to ascertain their preferred platforms for disseminating their content marketing materials. All three companies employed multiple channels for content distribution. These channels encompass three main categories: 1. Owned Media, 2. Social Media, and 3. Paid Media. Among these categories, social media emerged as the most utilised, with Facebook being a prominent choice. Following closely, the companies utilised their owned media, which included email, websites, and blogs. Additionally, one of the three companies incorporated paid media strategies, such as television, billboards, banner ads, magazines, and online newspapers. Focusing on social media, the most heavily favoured medium among the three companies, each organisation selected distinct social media platforms that aligned with their products and target audience.

Based on data from Similar Web (2023) Instagram occupies the second position of

social media most used by Indonesians after Facebook. Instagram is a hugely popular photo- and video-sharing social media platform with 2 billion monthly users worldwide (Kuligowski, 2023). Nowadays, many companies use Instagram for their marketing strategy. Instagram is a great social media platform that gives a company an easy and cheap way to grow if the platform is managed well. Even if the company is quite small, Instagram is a good tool for marketing the brand. With little resources the company can employ different tools of Instagram marketing and make the brand visible to a large number of people (Worfel, 2019). Moreover, according to the 2023 Instagram Trend Report, fashion stands out as one of the most popular content categories on the platform. This observation provides evidence that the spread of ZWF through Instagram is highly possible.

Instagram offers many features that can reach a wide audience. There are the usual types of feed posts in the form of photos and reels in the form of videos that appear on the main page. To enhance visibility, these features allow users to incorporate locations, music, and captions. Moreover, captions offer the opportunity to include hashtags, enabling posts to be grouped by relevant keywords. This makes it effortless for Instagram users to discover specific posts when they search for these hashtag categories (Kuligowski, 2023). Another feature is Instagram's Stories. Story feature displays photos and videos in a 16:9 ratio in a dedicated section. While the story lasts for 24 hours, users can highlight them on their profile for extended visibility. The last type of feature is Instagram Live. This feature enables users to broadcast live events, allowing viewers to tune in simultaneously and be part of the experience in real-time (Kuligowski, 2023).

Other features from Instagram are comment and direct message, enabling companies with marketing goals to receive direct feedback from their audience. This two-way communication fosters engagement between companies and their followers. Another valuable feature is Instagram Insights, which provides users with detailed information about their followers and the performance of their content. Insights will provide key social media metrics and information about your followers' ages, locations, time spent on the app and more (Kuligowski, 2023). The type of content also needs to be considered because the right content can attract a wider audience. To communicate a fashion brand, strategic content is needed,

including sneak peek content that can give a mysterious impression, trend-following content to give an exciting impression, as well as other creative content that can increase audience interest (Faria, et.al, 2019).

The research titled "The Use of Viral Marketing through Instagram to Increase Brand Awareness" conducted by Yanuar, D. et al. (2021) investigates strategies to boost brand awareness, focusing on Harvies Coffee, a coffee shop in Banda Aceh. The study explores how Harvies Coffee used viral content methods, including Instagram Stories, collaboration with Net TV's Weekend List, influencer partnerships, and content inspired by the popular K-drama "Start Up." Among these, the K-Drama "Start Up" campaign stood out as the most effective approach in engaging the target audience successfully. The Start Up campaign resulted in a significant sales boost for Harvies products over a span of two weeks. Furthermore, engagement on Harvies' Instagram account saw a remarkable increase. For instance, regular posts featuring Harvies Coffee ambiance photographs typically received 300-400 views. Yet, when Harvies shared content related to the Start Up drama, their Instagram story viewership skyrocketed to 1,800 (Yanuar, D. et al., 2021).

In another study titled "Analysis of Branding Strategy Thorough Instagram with Storytelling in Creating Brand Image of Proud Project" conducted by Martinus, H. & Chaniago, F. (2017), the research explores how storytelling on Instagram is used by Proud Project to shape its brand image. The study emphasises how Proud effectively employs storytelling to enhance clarity, interaction, informative and engaging content, strategic positioning, and positive comment sentiment. Fundamentally, the content on Instagram @proud.project is designed to foster interaction with the audience, aiming to enhance engagement and collect feedback for evaluation purposes. This interaction is established through the creation of storytelling-type content. Storytelling within the company provides a distinctive and emotionally resonant product experience. Moreover, it functions as a branding tool, setting the company apart from its competitors in a unique manner (Martinus, H. & Chaniago, F. 2017). This study also concludes that Instagram is an effective medium for constructing brand images and establishing connections with both customers and target audiences.

The two prior studies have expounded upon Instagram as the preferred medium for establishing brand awareness. These studies undertook the branding of two different entities: products in the form of coffee beverages and services in the context of a social movement. In this study, we will conduct distinct research to determine whether Instagram has the potential to foster brand awareness regarding Zero Waste Fashion (ZWF), a movement that also takes the form of finished goods. Based on the background of study, the following research questions have been formulated. (1) Is the use of social media Instagram effective in spreading about ZWF? (2) What kind of content makes them understand about ZWF? In accordance with the problems formulation, the research objectives are (1) To know the effectiveness of Instagram in spreading about ZWF (2) To determine the most effective content that can help the audience gain an understanding of ZWF. The results of this study are expected to be beneficial in the following ways (1) For academics, this study aims to enhance the concept of creative communication within the environmental section of the fashion industry. (2) For practical benefits as a valuable resource for evaluating and developing more innovative content to effectively spread awareness about ZWF. (3) For general public by offering valuable information and references about Instagram as a useful medium for raising awareness.

METHOD

Design Thinking Method will be applied in this research, which is a creative and innovative thinking approach to problem-solving. In understand to point of view stage will be achieved by conducting interviews to uncover the essence of the problem and studying relevant literature as a basis for our design process. In the initial ideation to prototype stage of Design Thinking, experimental methods will be used to develop research ideas for creating Zero Waste Fashion products. Multiple trials will be conducted for zero waste pattern making. After the product is finished, proceed to the test stage. In the final stage of Design Thinking, the research will employ a quantitative methodology for testing, utilising data collected from Instagram Insights. Insight data from Instagram will be measured to assess audience awareness of the brand. In addition, the interview method will be conducted with nine followers to find out whether they get an understanding of ZWF from the Instagram account @masawear_id. Following are the six steps of the Design Thinking method:

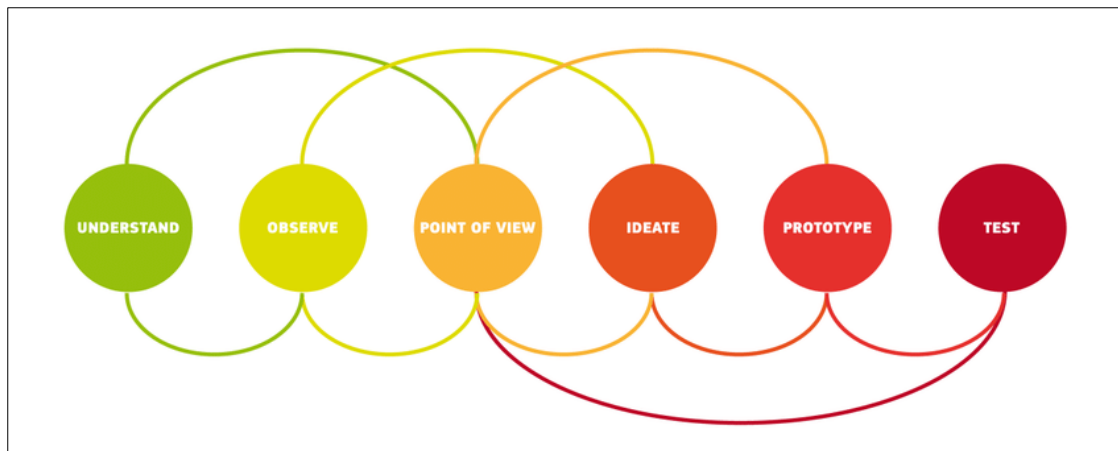


Figure 1. Design Thinking Method

Source : processed by researchers

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Masa is a fashion brand that focuses on sustainable fashion, particularly Zero Waste Fashion (ZWF). This brand was created as a ZWF product label. Masa has an Instagram account, @masawear_id, which allows it to reach a wide audience. As far as this paper is being made, the purpose of Instagram @masawear_id is to showcase work and spread understanding about ZWF to the audience so that it is not yet the goal to sell products. However, marketing efforts on the Instagram account have followed a strategy aimed at selling products. This strategy was developed by studying the Instagram accounts of local fashion brands such as Sejauh Mata Memandang, Sukkha Citta, and Pijak Bumi. These brands create content that promotes product features through conceptual photos, detailed product images, and showcasing influencers and customers using their products. Additionally, they use Instagram to campaign for sustainable fashion and provide behind-the-scenes glimpses into the product-making process.

1. The effectiveness of using Instagram in spreading awareness about ZWF.

Masa utilises various features on Instagram to raise awareness about their products and ZWF. These features include Instagram posts, Instagram reels, and Instagram Stories, accompanied by well-written captions, relevant hashtags, and music.

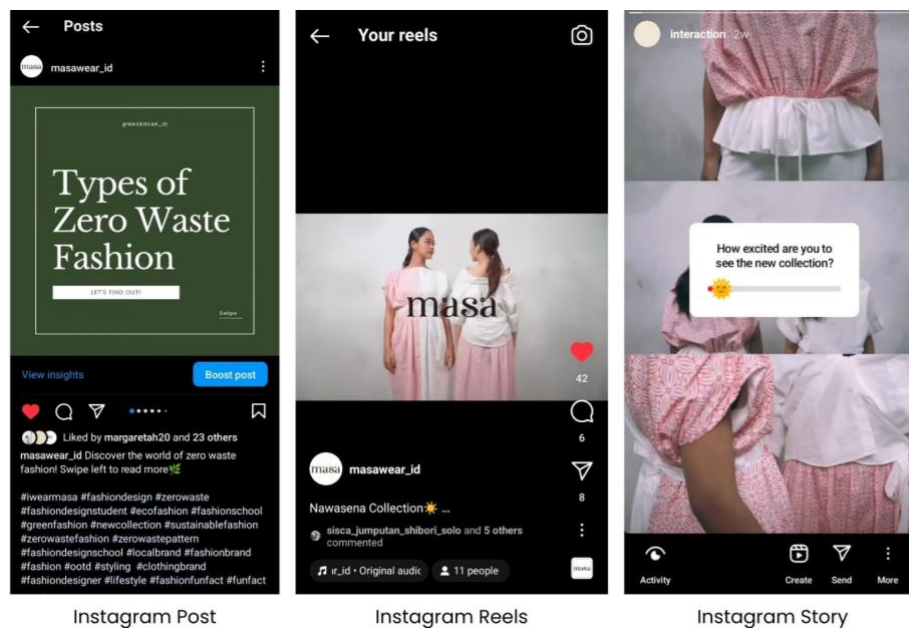


Figure 2. Instagram's Feature

Source : Instagram

Masa creates various types of content to populate Instagram. Including behind-the-scenes glimpses of the product-making process, showcasing both photos and videos of the finished products. Additionally, explanations about ZWF are made in the form of infographics and are listed in the caption. To make Masa's Instagram even more engaging, content with the theme #temanmasa was created. #temanmasa features several nano influencers wearing Masa products and posting about them on their personal accounts. The @masawear_id account then re-posts their content. A nano influencer is defined as an individual who possesses a follower count ranging from 1000 to 10,000 per platform. The explanation about nano influencer, brands leverage nano and micro influencers to take advantage of the commercialization of relationships in the realm of the culture industry. This industry encompasses pursuits embraced by various societal segments, with my attention directed towards the cultural preferences of the working-class majority, specifically in the domains of lifestyle, fashion, and beauty. Given their limited audience size, nano influencers typically possess a subculture-oriented following, united by shared and specialized niche interests (Alle, L. 2022). In addition, content following trends, such as the Wes Anderson theme, was also created.

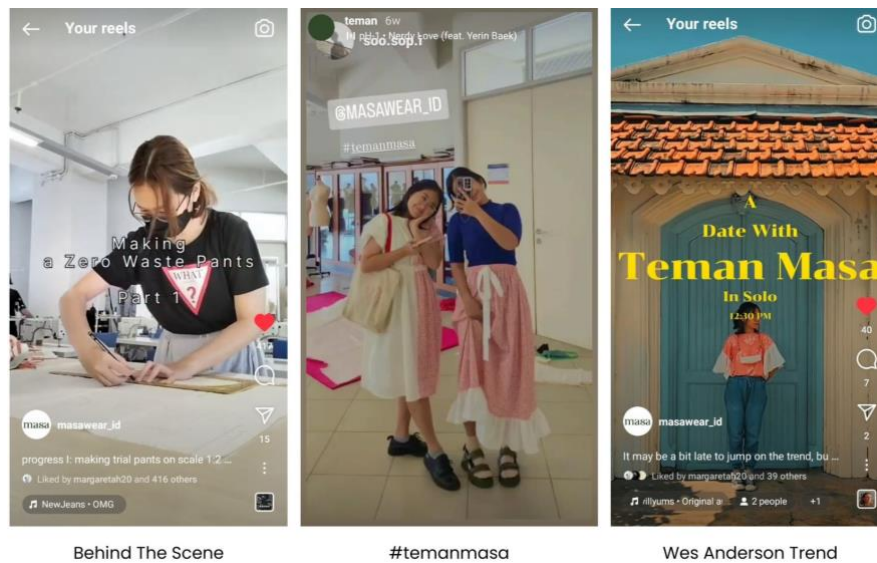


Figure 3. Instagram content at @masawear_id

Source : Instagram @masawear_id

To find out the optimization of Instagram @masawear_id, Instagram Insights is analyzed. During the period from March 22, 2023, to June 19, 2023, the account successfully reached 7,504 accounts. The content type that garnered the highest number of viewers was reels. The top country for the account was Indonesia, with Surabaya being the top city. The majority of viewers fell within the 18-24 age demographic, with 83.3% identifying as female and 16.6% as male.

2. The types of content that attract the most audience about ZWF

Based on Insight data, the posts that reached the highest number of accounts were video reels showcasing the step-by-step process of making zero waste pants. These specific posts successfully reached 2,734 accounts. Upon analyzing the factors contributing to their higher viewership compared to other posts, it was found that the content's educational nature and ability to inspire played a significant role. Additionally, the effective use of relevant hashtags and the selection of popular audio music from Instagram, which was trending at that time, probably contributed to their success.

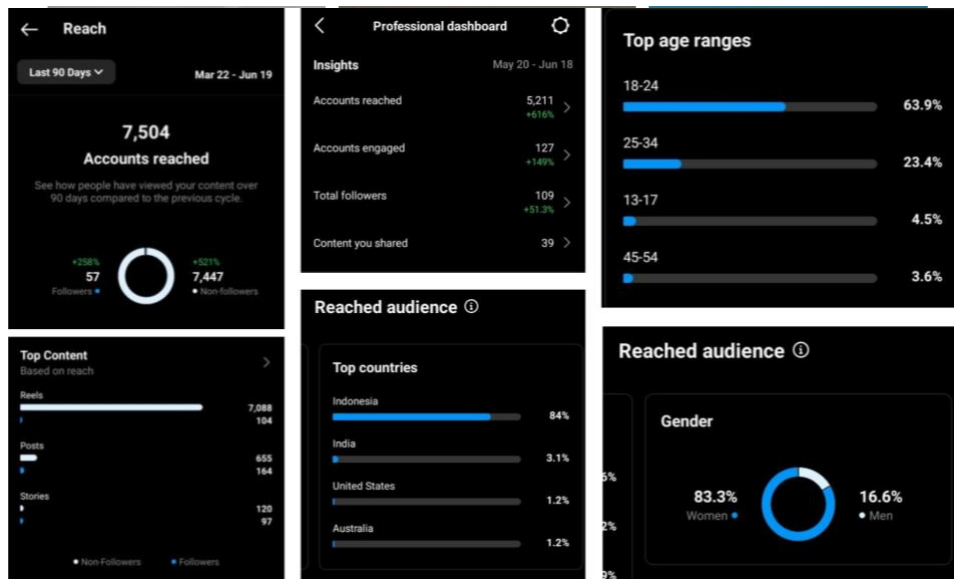


Figure 4. Instagram Insight

Source : Instagram @masawear_id

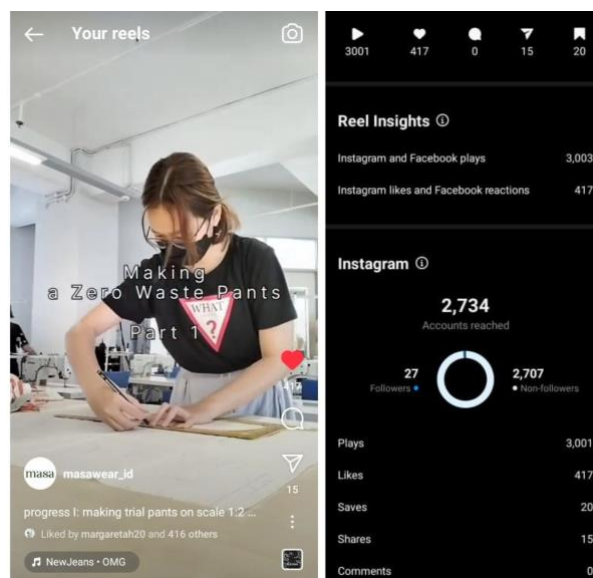


Figure 5. Most Popular Content

Source : Instagram @masawear_id

Apart from analyzing Instagram Insights, interviews with followers were also conducted. Interviews were conducted with nine people who were randomly selected to find

out how far the audience had an understanding of ZWF. Based on interviews with the nine informants, they captured information about ZWF. Four informants who were introduced to ZWF through Instagram @masawear_id, now understand it as an effort to create clothes that reduce waste. Additionally, five informants who were already familiar with ZWF gained a clearer understanding through the content they encountered. The ZWF design results posted on Instagram @masawear_id also provide an overview from the product side, that ZWF products are also diverse and trendy.

Most informants developed their understanding of ZWF from infographic-type posts. This statement is in line with the conclusions made by Vanichvasin, P. (2013) that said that infographics across the subject material has the potential to enhance the learning experience by exerting a positive influence. These infographics serve as valuable tools for visual communication and learning, effectively contributing to an improved quality of learning. Next, according to the sources, the behind-the-scenes content on product creation and the #temanmasa section were particularly engaging. According to the theory from Nguyen (2013) the best content for marketing should be engaging, informative, pertinent, and capable of addressing customer issues. If any of these three attributes are absent, potential leads may not transition into becoming actual buyers. This research is also in line with the research that has been conducted before As indicated by the research findings by Duc Le M (2013) visual content stands out as the most potent form of media for content marketing. This encompasses images, graphics like infographics, and videos. Moreover, there is a recommendation that content embedded with interactive elements proves highly adept at fostering engagement between publishers and their intended audience.

CONCLUSION

Instagram is the right medium to promote ZWF. With only free features, Instagram is able to reach a large audience and is able to carry out two-way communication with the audience. Through the Instagram account @masawear_id, ZWF's message can reach a large audience. While @masawear_id initially had no intention to sell products at the time the paper was written, it has successfully introduced ZWF products as viable clothing options. Marketing strategies need to be implemented even if they only aim to spread awareness. One of Masa's

marketing strategies is to carefully consider the type of content being shared. Infographic posts provide clear messages about ZWF that can be easily grasped by viewers. However, content that is able to engage a wider audience and is considered interesting is content that is entertaining. To be successful in spreading awareness it is important to strike a balance between informative content and entertaining posts that remain relevant to the subject matter.

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