

## Sustainable Fashion: A Content Analysis of Indonesian Sustainable Lifestyle Instagram Influencer (Case Study: @dkwardhani)

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**Abstract.** There has been an increasing call for slow or sustainable fashion, a type of fashion that prioritizes durability and long-lasting clothes instead of one-offs that are thrown away easily. This rise may be related to a boom in slow fashion social media influencers worldwide, as they have the capability of impacting their followers through their uploads, especially if learnt through the lens of influencers who specialize in sustainability. Unfortunately, slow fashion is still a niche concept in Indonesia as such this research aims to compile a portfolio and analyze the contents of an Influencer's Instagram account, one who specializes in sustainable lifestyle, based in Indonesia who have dabbled in sustainable fashion to find one of the many possible methods of spreading awareness and information regarding sustainable fashion through Instagram.

**Keywords:** *content analysis; sustainable lifestyle; sustainable fashion; instagram influencer; post structure*

### 1 Introduction

The concept and act of sustainability has recently been presented in every nook and cranny of the world, be it in the form of paper straws and cups replacing plastic ones, the invention of the solar panel, the 1980s anti-fur and various other movements in the fashion industry. Unfortunately, despite the growing trend of sustainable fashion, the fashion industry still continues to be one of the leading contributors of pollution. Nikita Shukla from EARTH.ORG, an organization focusing on the spread of sustainability awareness via online newsletters, reported the increase of textile production due high consumer demand. As a result, fast fashion brands produce two times the amount of clothes it did compared to the year of 2000 [1]. This can be attributed to how affordable fast fashion is, the boom of social media with influencers setting quickly changing trends and the negative perception that encompasses sustainable or slow fashion which discourages people from picking it up. However, social media, influencers especially, may also be able to aid in the spread of awareness and proper knowledge of sustainability by changing the perception people have of

sustainable fashion. As a platform that enables a person to build their own brand, social media can help with the spread of awareness and knowledge of sustainability by showcasing how it is possible to adopt a sustainable lifestyle in a day-to-day basis and connecting with people of similar interest thus allowing a community to be made which will, in turn, endear more people to the concept of sustainable fashion. A single person is usually the focus or 'lead' of the community and is called an influencer.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the ways Instagram influencers, specifically one who specializes in sustainable lifestyle, have spread the concept of sustainable fashion in a visual-based social media platform such as Instagram through content analysis. Instagram is chosen as the social media platform because it is one of the most used social media platforms in the world and in Indonesia. As reported by Andi Dwi Riyanto (2021) in Andi.link, Instagram is the third most used platform used by 86.6% from the total population with a split of 52,4% and 47,6% between women and men respectively. It is a visually inclined platform which makes it easier for people to take a photo and share said photo [2]. New mass communication technologies, such as Instagram, present a hereby unparalleled channel for the distribution of fashion information, providing sector and a rapid diffusion of fashion [4]. The higher in active engagement will lead to a more effective spread of awareness and it will help endear people in regards to a concept as niche as sustainable fashion.

Opinion leaders, first coined by Katz and Lazarsfield, are individuals in social networks on all levels of society who often hold some form of influence over one or several topics [2]. A social media influencer is someone who has built a reputation for their knowledge and expertise on a specific topic and usually has a following in a distinct niche, with whom they actively engage with [3]. Influencers can be categorized by different aspects: by their following size, by the type of content they engage in and by level of influence. Influencers are the opinion leaders in this newly established fashion communication [4]. Generally, it is easy to recognize and follow influencers with relevant fashion content but local citizen influencers, who are subjected to the same real-life environmental and cultural cues in a certain community, exert greater influence on local fashion [4]. It is for this reason that a local, Indonesian influencer will be analyzed to discern how sustainable fashion information may be spread from influencers with a background in sustainability.

## **2 Method**

The study will use a qualitative approach in which an influencer with a sustainable background will be analyzed. First a portfolio consisting of the influencer's endeavors in sustainability and sustainable fashion, be it related or

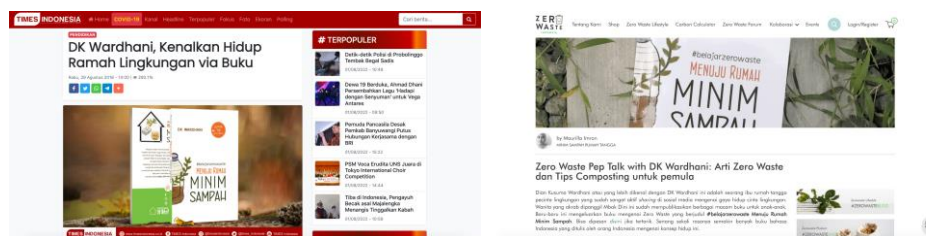
unrelated to Instagram, will be compiled. Afterwards the influencer's feed will be checked through and posts that pertain to sustainable fashion. The parameter of sustainable fashion posts are posts that contain mentions of activities related to sustainable fashion such as thrifting, eco-friendly textiles, recycling and upcycling used clothing. Keywords taken into account are sustainable, sustainable fashion, upcycle, eco-friendly with the understanding that these keywords are used in relation to sustainable fashion.

The structures and components contained, such as the photo, caption and hashtags, in these posts will then be analyzed. Lastly, content pertaining to sustainable fashion will be analyzed to reach a theoretical conclusion of how exactly an Instagram influencer with a background of sustainable lifestyle may have done to spread the still niche concept of sustainable fashion in Indonesia. Overall respond from visitors of the analyzed sustainable fashion post will be taken and averaged from all sustainable fashion post found in the account.

### 3 Results and Discussion

This section will contain the full findings of this research. Starting with a compiled portfolio of the subject of this research, focusing on the start of their backgrounds in the influencer's topic of interest any reported contribution to sustainable fashion along with a brief summarization of the contents of their Instagram accounts as of the 27<sup>th</sup> of July 2022, the date the research was conducted.

#### 3.1 Influencer Portofolio

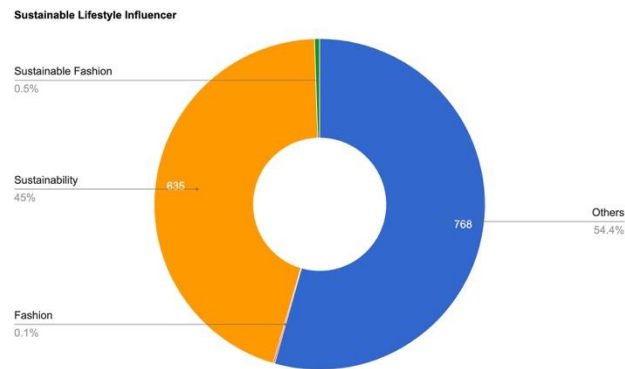


**Figure 1** DK Wardhani's contributions to Sustainability

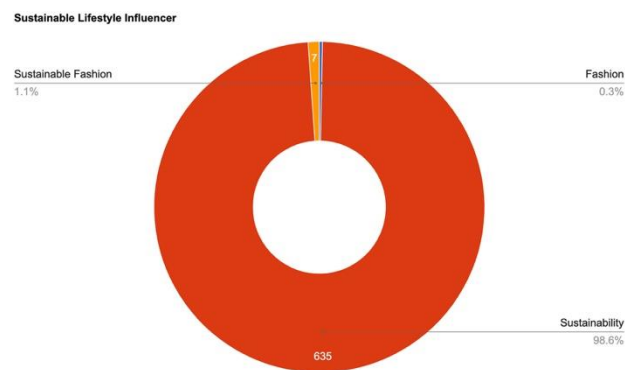
DK Wardhani (@dkwardhani) is an influencer focused on the topic of sustainability and sustainable lifestyle. DK Wardhani primarily studies and explores the concept of sustainability and sustainable lifestyle, sharing what she has learnt in her Instagram account. Several books regarding sustainable lifestyle have also been published by DK Wardhani. Some of her published books can be found in the Gramedia website as seen in **Figure 2** Besides being a published



fashion is still a fairly niche concept in Indonesia and the focus of influencer DK Wardhani's account is not to fashion but to sustainable lifestyle that can be implemented to everyday life.



**Figure 3** Types of posts separated into four categories

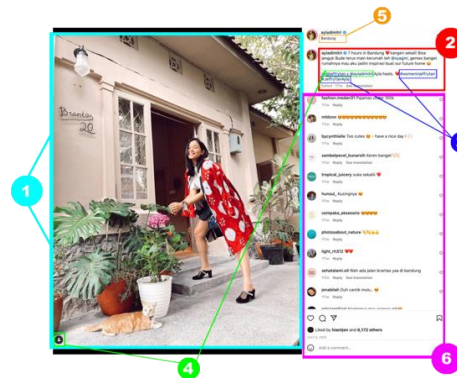


**Figure 4** Types of post separated into three categories disregarding unrelated posts

### 3.3 Components of an Instagram Post

Instagram is a photo social application with functions of photo shooting, photo beautifying and sharing [6]. It can be seen as a new type of social media based on picture interaction because of its functions to assist people in building social networking based on pictures [7] and is also an important platform for bloggers to work [6]. Unlike other social medias Instagram puts as much focus on simple but effective strategy of picture production. It only retains basic functions such as capture, photo makeover, photo sharing and commenting [6].

As of today, key components of an Instagram post consist of can be seen broken down in **Figure 5**. 1) Photos, the main component, it may be personal or professionally taken depending on the owner of the account, which attracts other fellow Instagram users to explore the rest of the account. Several photos can be compiled into a series in a single post. 2) Captions, an explanation or story to accompany the Photo, written below or to the side depending on whether the post is being viewed on mobile or PC. 3) Hashtags, a feature that enables the post to be accessed through Instagram's Search function and is always prefixed by the symbol #. The function of hashtags can be classified into two types, to bookmark the contents of captions and to communicate within a community focusing on the same topic [7]. 4) Mentions, a method of including other Instagram users into the post by 'mentioning' or 'tagging them, it is usually prefixed with the symbol @. 5) Geotag, or more commonly known as Location, is a feature to include the location of the photo taken that, if clicked, will be directly linked to a map and an assortment of other photos that were taken in the same location. 6) Hearts/Likes and Comments, this is where user engagement can be seen and gauged by quantifying how much likes a post has received and the general tone of comments from users who have interacted with the post, the feature is similar to that of other social medias such as Twitter.



**Figure 5.** Instagram post components breakdown (picture taken from @ayladimitri)

### 3.4 Analysis of Sustainable Fashion Posts

As of the 27<sup>th</sup> of July, 2022, there are about 7 posts relating to sustainable fashion found in the influencer's Instagram feed. Posts with direct relation to sustainable clothing, promotion, manufacture or otherwise, will be separated and analyzed. Each post will be broken down into the components listed in sub-chapter **4 Components of an Instagram Post**. The research will refrain from theorizing any text not in English or Indonesian due to the possibility of misinterpretation. Post that will be analyzed can be seen in the following page in **Table 1. Posts**

**Pertaining to Sustainable Fashion.** The lowest and highest amount of accompanying secondary photos have been recorded to be one and nine pictures respectively. Only the first and second photo will be shown to prevent overflow but all photos were all taken into account during analyzing process.

Post 1



Figure 6 First photo of Post 1



Figure 7 Second photo of Post 1

Post 2



Figure 8 First photo of Post 2



Figure 9 Second photo of Post 2

Post 3



Figure 10 First photo of Post 3

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Post 4



Figure 11 First photo of Post 4



Figure 12 Second photo of Post 4



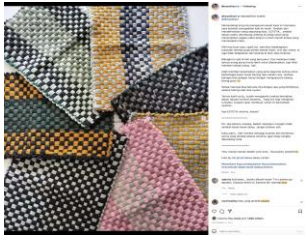




Post 5		
	Figure 13 First photo of Post 5	Figure 14 Second photo of Post 5
Post 6		---
	Figure 15 First photo of Post 6	
Post 7		
	Figure 16 First photo of Post 7 Primary Photo	Figure 17 Second photo of Post 7 Photo Series

Table 1. Posts pertaining to Sustainable Fashion

From the table it is observed that the types of sustainable fashion products focused on by the sustainable lifestyle influencer can be divided into three categories: one in the form of clothing as can be seen in post 1 and post 2, one the form of alternative materials which can then be turned into clothing as seen in post 3 and post 4 and lastly one in the form of home-life products made from used clothing as can be seen in post 5, post 6 and post 7.

Breaking down into the components mentioned in **4.1 Components of an Instagram Post** the photos of the post itself is observed to be simple, non-professional types of photography and is speculated to be used as a visual guide



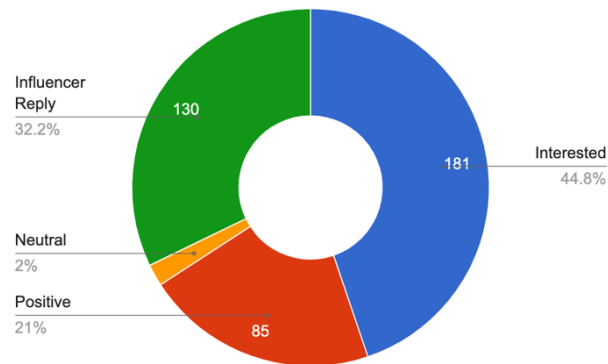
for the anecdotes written out in the caption. The caption is where a majority of the post's information is located. A central theme related to sustainable fashion is always introduced first, sometimes with an accompanying question which will then be answered in the following paragraph. One such example is observed in post 3 with the central theme being eco-print and the process of eco-printing with the influencer writing four questions, translated from Indonesian to English, such as "What is eco-print?" and "What is the process?" with follow-up answers in the caption. Anecdotes of the influencer's experience relating to the theme brought up is also written in the caption as observed in a majority of the post. One example is post 2 anecdotes explaining the influencer's experience talking to the owner of an eco-gamis, a type of long-sleeved dress-like clothing, business regarding waste produced from clothes manufacturing. The business itself implements zero waste pattern cutting into the product as much as possible. Another example is seen in post 5 regarding the influencer's thought and experience in relation to the definition of Aesthetics and the upcycling of used shirts into useable clothing mats. In the same post the influencer also prompts visitors of the post regarding their own version of what Aesthetic is. In some posts it is observed that the influencer may give out alternative solutions to one problem, notably seen in post 6 about beanbags that can be filled with no longer useable cut-up old clothing instead of regular beanbag filling. In regards to used clothing two alternative solution besides being used as beanbag filling are provided: 1) can be cut up into strips and made into mats, rugs, or cat beds and 2) stated specifically only for clothing made of natural fiber like bamboo, it can be composted with a method called vermicomposting. In regards to the beanbag filling, eco-bricks can be used post visitors who are interested.

Instagram accounts, both business and personal related to sustainable fashion are also observed to be recommended through the *mention* feature, particularly post 1, post 2, post 4 and post 7 along with local non-social-media based business as seen in post 5. Hashtags are observed to be used not only to introduce the post to Instagram's Explore Feed and as a bookmark for the influencer. Currently it is observed that post traffic primarily comes from the influencer's social media community that is already built around the interest of ways to live a sustainable lifestyle, although further research will be needed to conclude the full scope of effects that come from the usage of hashtags.

### **3.5 Overall Responds from Post Visitors**

Responds gathered from the seven sustainable fashion posts fall majorly in the Interested category at 44.8% (181), which consists of comments stating from post visitors stating that interest, willingness or participation and experience with the the topic of sustainable fashion in relation to the post. Replies from the influencer to comments posted by post visitors sit at 32.2% (130). Comments that consist of

positive support but does not state active interest in the topic of sustainable fashion relating to the theme of each respective post take up 21% (85) of total respond. Neutral responds consisting of unrelated or out of context comments in relation to the topics brought up in the posts take up a small number of 2% (8).



**Figure 18** Overall responds split into four categories

The overall responds from post visitors regarding sustainable lifestyle influencer DK Wardhani's sustainable fashion posts consists of those interested in participating with the topic, often trading experience with the influencer or with others in the community. Comments from small business trying to adopt the principles and methods of sustainable fashion are also seen in the posts' comment section, some asking for resources or advice in regards to problems related to sustainable fashion that may arise.

#### **4 Conclusion**

Although sustainable fashion is yet to be explored much by social media Influencers in Indonesia, this does not mean it is entirely unexplored. An influencer specializing in sustainable lifestyle may explore parts of sustainable fashion since the clothing is also a major part of daily life.

According to the case study in the research, a sustainable lifestyle influencer may focus on the sustainability aspect of sustainable fashion, using a practical and experienced approach in spreading awareness of the topic along with providing information in a concise and in-depth manner, always with a primary theme, explanation, answer and often citing prior experiences the influencer has gone through as a basis; photos are used as a visual guide to anecdotes laid out in the caption. Local business and resources in relation to sustainable fashion have also

been observed to have been recommended as an alternative source of information for post visitors interested in a specific branch of sustainable fashion such as eco-friendly textile or a way to sustainably deal with waste resulting from clothes manufacturing. The overall responds to the introduction of sustainable fashion from the influencer in this case study is positive and actively interested in learning or participating in sustainable fashion.

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