SUSTAINABLE FASHION VALUES AS A PERSONAL BRANDING STRATEGY ON @SASHFIR'S TIKTOK ACCOUNT

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ABSTRACT

This research examines the rising demand for sustainability in the fashion industry and how social media platforms, particularly TikTok, provide a space for content creators to embed sustainable values into their personal branding. The research addresses a gap in academic discourse on the strategic application of sustainability principles to shape digital identity. The central question explored is: how does the TikTok account @sashfir integrate sustainable fashion values into its personal branding strategies? Using a qualitative instrumental case study approach, this research applies Montoya and Vandehey's personal branding theory. Data are collected through content observation on TikTok, focusing on visual identity, product selection, and consistency in presenting sustainability practices. The findings reveal that @sashfir consistently constructs a self-image centered on sustainable fashion, as evidenced by eco-conscious product choices and authentic communication. The branding strategy prioritizes visual coherence and message consistency but lacks strong emotional engagement, which limits its depth of influence. The originality of this research lies in its focus on integrating sustainability into personal branding on creative platforms such as TikTok, a topic that remains underexplored in the academic literature. This research suggests that sustainability can be strategically implemented to build authentic, meaningful personal branding, particularly for creators seeking to align with environmental consciousness. However, as this research focuses on a single case, further research involving multiple creators and audience analysis is recommended to enrich the findings and strengthen the generalizability of the conclusions.

Keywords: personal branding, sustainable fashion, TikTok, digital identity

INTRODUCTION

The global fashion industry undergoes profound transformations over the past two decades, reshaping not only the way clothing is produced and marketed but also how fashion consumption intersects with cultural identity and social interaction (Liubana et al., 2023). Rather than elaborating excessively on the fast-fashion phenomenon, this research situates it briefly as a business model that prioritizes speed, affordability, and trend replication, but also produces severe social and environmental costs such as textile waste, water overuse, and CO_2 emissions (Camargo et al., 2020). This concise contextualization highlights the urgent need to examine sustainable alternatives and frames

sustainability as a critical response to ongoing structural challenges in the industry.

The concept of sustainable fashion emerges as a response, emphasizing eco-friendly materials, ethical production, and circular economy practices (Rahaman et al., 2024). However, sustainable fashion is not only a matter of production but also of communication, particularly how values of responsibility and environmental awareness are disseminated to audiences in the digital era. This perspective underscores the importance of examining media practices and narratives that shape public understanding of sustainability.

As attention to the environmental impact of the fashion industry increases, it becomes important to

understand how the development of communication in the digital age also influences the transition to sustainable fashion. In this context, social media plays a central role. Platforms such as TikTok transform how fashion trends circulate and how influencers shape perceptions of sustainability. Research shows that influencers can promote sustainable practices, but gaps remain in empirical case studies that analyze how these narratives are constructed and performed in specific digital contexts. Several relevant studies to this research include the first, entitled "Beyond The Borders" (Nair & Kumar, 2024). This research shows that social media changes the landscape of the fashion industry through direct interaction between brands and consumers. Influencers play an important role in shaping trends, promoting sustainable fashion, and creating a more inclusive community.

However, this research does not include empirical data, in-depth case studies, or critical consumer perspectives. There is also no long-term analysis of the negative impact of influencers on audience perceptions and consumption behavior. To fill this gap, this research uses the personal branding theory proposed by Montoya et al. (2002) to examine how influencers build their self-image through sustainable fashion content on social media, with particular attention to values, consistency, and visual representation.

The second relevant research, entitled *Islamic personal branding strategy in the 2024 local election in Central Aceh* (Mustafa, 2024), explores how political actors construct religious-based personal branding. This research finds that politicians in the Central Aceh Regional Election build a personal branding of sharia through rhetoric, Islamic symbolism, the involvement of religious figures, and the strategic use of media to form a religious image in the eyes of Muslim voters. However, this research does not include quantitative analysis, longitudinal approaches, cross-regional comparisons, or examinations of social media metrics, voter segmentation, or the ethical dimensions of using religious symbols. To address this gap, the present research applies Montoya et al.'s personal branding theory to analyze self-image strategies in a different context, namely through sustainable fashion content on social media.

The third relevant research, entitled *Exploring the Influence of Social Media on Sustainable Fashion Consumption: A Systematic Review of the Literature and Future Research Agendas* (Vladimirova et al., 2024), investigates the broader relationship between social media and sustainable fashion consumption. The researchers find that while social media functions as a powerful tool for influencing sustainable fashion consumption, further research is needed on discussions unrelated to brands and on the role of activism in this field. Despite making important contributions, this research does not explore many non-brand influences, such as activists and communities, nor does it examine sustainable fashion discourses beyond commercial campaigns. The role of social media as a tool of

activism, a mechanism for consumer engagement, and a quantitative driver of consumption behavior also remains underexplored. From these three previous studies, it is evident that sustainability in the fashion industry and the use of social media as a strategic communication tool receive academic attention; however, most research still focuses on influencers in general (Nair & Kumar, 2024), branding dynamics in political and religious contexts (Mustafa, 2024), and theoretical literature on sustainable fashion consumption (Vladimirova et al., 2024).

This gap underlines the novelty of the present research. By examining the TikTok account @sashfir through the lens of personal branding theory proposed by Montoya et al. (2002), this research investigates how sustainability values are embedded in personal branding strategies. Unlike prior studies that focus either broadly on influencer impact or on non-fashion contexts, this research analyzes specific branding practices such as product selection, visual identity, and narrative consistency to show how sustainable values are communicated authentically on creative digital platforms such as TikTok.

Recognizing the importance of personal branding in shaping audience perceptions of content creators on social media, this research draws on the concept of personal branding from Montoya et al. (2002) as the primary basis for analyzing the communication strategies used by @sashfir's TikTok account. Personal branding is a systematic approach that involves developing and disseminating individual self-representations to achieve favorable recognition among designated demographics (Jacobson, 2020). Timeless fashion features styles and designs that transcend transient trends, maintaining relevance and allure over time (Kutesko, 2022). The objective of this research is therefore twofold: (1) to explore how sustainable fashion values are articulated in @sashfir's personal branding strategies, and (2) to assess how these practices contribute to broader discussions of authenticity and responsibility in digital influencer culture. In doing so, the research contributes to both the discourse on sustainable fashion and the growing body of literature on digital personal branding, while also highlighting the opportunities and limitations of TikTok as a platform for sustainability communication.

In building effective personal branding, Montoya et al. emphasize eight key principles that underpin this strategy: specialization, personality, visibility, leadership, distinctiveness, unity, perseverance, and goodwill. However, in this research, emphasis is placed on the four most prominent principles evident in @sashfir's TikTok content practices, namely specialization, personality, visibility, and leadership. The principle of specialization concerns the ability of individuals to focus their self-image on a single key force that distinguishes them from others. In the context of @sashfir, specialization is embodied in the consistency of a simple style of dress that still exudes a strong sense of luxury and a minimalist aesthetic. This sustained focus on style makes her

image easily recognizable to the audience and forms a strong association with the personality and taste she consistently displays.

Furthermore, the principle of personality emphasizes the importance of presenting an authentic character in building personal branding. @sashfir's image as an elegant, intelligent, graceful, yet down-to-earth woman reflects this principle in a consistent and recognizable manner. This authenticity becomes the main attraction that sets her apart from other content creators and, at the same time, creates a deeper emotional connection with her followers by fostering trust and relatability.

The next principle is visibility, which refers to individuals' ability to consistently be present in public spaces, particularly on social media. In a competitive digital world, visibility functions as a key factor for maintaining relevance and strengthening personal branding. In this case, @sashfir demonstrates consistency in upload frequency, harmonized visual aesthetics, and stable message delivery within the same value corridor. Finally, the principle of leadership emphasizes the individual's ability to become a reference or role model in a particular field. The TikTok account @sashfir not only showcases fashion styles but also implicitly conveys the message that dressing modestly can still reflect classy and sustainable values. This positioning makes her a figure who influences the audience's mindset, particularly in encouraging more conscious and responsible lifestyle and fashion consumption.

Meanwhile, Minor-Cooley and Parks-Yancy (2020) enrich the understanding of personal branding by emphasizing that this process represents a structured and sustainable communication strategy. The goal of this strategy is not only to build a strong reputation but also to differentiate oneself clearly and meaningfully from competitors. Within this framework, personal branding involves a long-term commitment to the values and messages it carries, as well as the ability to establish credible and enduring relationships with the public. This perspective suggests that personal branding is not merely about appearance or aesthetics, but also reflects the consistency of individual values and integrity in conveying social messages, including those related to sustainability.

Jacobson (2020), as cited in McNally and Speak, states that effective personal branding is formed from three fundamental components: clarity, relevance, and consistency. Attribute clarity reflects a person's ability to display different aspects of themselves boldly and distinctly, including personal character, visual image, and competence. In this regard, @sashfir consistently highlights a combination of aesthetic capability, fashion preferences, and personality that represents modern yet environmentally conscious values.

The second component, relevance, emphasizes that personal branding should be closely linked to the individual's true identity and core values. Branding that is irrelevant or inauthentic tends to be perceived as manipulative and gradually loses traction in the

long term. This relevance is evident in how @sashfir's content not only highlights style but also aligns with sustainability values that are consistently integrated into visuals and narratives. As a result, her personal branding not only appears attractive but also carries a depth of value that resonates meaningfully with the audience.

The third component is consistency, which, according to Wright and Jackson (2023), functions as a major factor in maintaining the long-term strength of personal branding. This consistency includes messaging, visual presentation, and social interactions that are maintained within the same identity corridor. A sustained commitment to building and reinforcing one's self-image demonstrates seriousness and credibility in personal brand development. In the case of @sashfir, this consistency is evident in the continuity of visual aesthetics, communication tone, and the values conveyed in the content, all of which integrate into a cohesive and recognizable branding narrative.

Overall, integrating the principles of Montoya et al. (2002), the strategic dimension proposed by Minor-Cooley and Parks-Yancy (2020), and the McNally and Speak framework discussed by Jacobson (2020) provides a comprehensive understanding of how personal branding is formed and managed. In today's digital era, particularly on platforms such as TikTok, personal branding serves as one of the most important instruments for constructing public identity, expanding social influence, and conveying value-driven messages such as sustainability. This integration highlights how theoretical frameworks remain highly relevant when applied to contemporary digital communication practices.

METHODS

This research uses an interpretive-qualitative approach with an instrumental case study method. The instrumental case study is chosen because it provides a methodological framework for understanding broader social phenomena through a single case, namely the application of sustainability values and personal branding strategies in the content of @sashfir's TikTok account. This account is selected as a critical case because it consistently produces content that emphasizes minimalist and timeless fashion, making it a representative example of how sustainability values are embedded in digital personal branding. The choice is also supported by the account's visibility and engagement, which indicate that its practices influence audience perceptions and contribute to wider meaning-making processes. This approach emphasizes the use of pragmatic findings to explain social media practices, rather than merely investigating abstract theoretical constructs (Mizukoshi, 2023). The object of this research is the TikTok account @sashfir, which consistently displays "outfit check" content in an elegant, simple, and timeless visual style. This style of

dress emphasizes sustainability through the selection of clothing that is not driven by momentary trends, the use of earth tones and monochrome colors, and visual consistency that constructs a classy yet minimalist self-image.

The research is conducted through non-participatory observation of three TikTok videos that are intentionally selected and uploaded between January and March 2025. The criteria for selecting the videos include displaying a style of dress that aligns with the principles of sustainable fashion, creating a strong visual impression (elegant, expensive, and mature), and reflecting a stable and coherent self-image. These videos are analyzed across various contexts, including vacations, sports activities, and everyday routines, in order to capture consistency across settings. To strengthen the credibility of the findings, the researcher also examines audience responses by analyzing representative comments under each video, focusing on recurring themes such as perceived authenticity, sustainability, and lifestyle resonance. This limited triangulation ensures that interpretations are not based solely on the researcher's observations but also take into account how audiences receive and interpret the content.

Data collection is carried out through digital documentation by archiving and systematically observing selected videos. The researcher serves as the main instrument to record visual elements, including types of clothing, dominant colors, non-verbal communication styles, facial expressions, camera framing, captions, and visual backgrounds. All data obtained are compiled into observation sheets and pre-designed analysis templates to maintain consistency in documentation. In addition, a preliminary coding scheme is developed to guide the analysis by grouping visual and textual cues into thematic categories, such as minimalist aesthetics, sustainability indicators, and branding consistency. This framework ensures transparency in how raw data are reduced and organized into meaningful analytical themes.

Data analysis uses a descriptive-interpretive approach to visual content analysis. The first stage involves describing each video in detail to capture its visual and narrative characteristics, after which the researcher groups the findings into broader visual themes such as elegant simplicity, neutral color palettes, and consistency in personal branding. Categorization is conducted without numerical or symbolic coding, relying instead on an in-depth interpretive reading of recurring visual meanings displayed across the content. This analytical process allows patterns of sustainability-oriented personal branding to emerge organically from the data while remaining grounded in systematic observation.

Interpretation is carried out by associating the identified visual patterns with the personal branding theory proposed by Montoya et al. (2002) to understand how sustainability values are implicitly communicated through visual aesthetics as users construct a strong and distinct self-image on social media. By systematically linking empirical observations with theoretical constructs, the research increases the rigor and validity of its interpretive claims. This theoretical anchoring also helps clarify how visual consistency and stylistic choices function as strategic elements of personal branding rather than as purely aesthetic decisions.

This research does not involve informants or human participants directly, as all data are drawn from publicly available online content. Therefore, informed consent is not required. However, research ethics are maintained by avoiding assumptions beyond the observable data, disguising the identities of other individuals who appear in the videos, and presenting interpretations in an academic, cautious, and proportionate manner (O'Callaghan & Douglas, 2021). This ethical approach ensures that the analysis respects digital research standards while preserving analytical integrity.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The results of observing TikTok content on the @sashfir account show the consistency of a simple, timeless, and elegant fashion style characterized by neutral color tones. Observations are conducted on three videos with different themes, namely vacations, work activities, and iftar moments, which together illustrate recurring visual and stylistic patterns. However, these findings remain limited to three purposively selected videos and therefore reflect patterns of branding practice rather than a holistic portrayal of the creator's entire content output.

Figure 1 Plain Earth Tone Outfit

In the first video uploaded on January 18th, 2025, represented in Figure 1, the TikTok account @sashfir shows a plain earth-toned outfit paired with an eco-friendly Tencel belt. The caption is quite short: "Day 3 outfit Bali." This content implicitly educates the audience about the importance of ecological awareness in choosing fashion materials, which forms an integral part of sustainable fashion practices. The selection of

eco-friendly materials, such as Tencel, demonstrates a conscious effort to support sustainability through fashion that is not only aesthetically pleasing but also environmentally responsible.

Content presentation is carried out in a frontal style while still prioritizing a natural and non-patronizing impression, thereby building emotional closeness with the audience and increasing the effectiveness of message delivery. The clean visuals, relaxed video style, and natural delivery also strengthen the content's appeal, making it easily accessible and enjoyable for various groups of TikTok users. The video receives a strong user response, with 68.9 thousand likes and 448 comments, reflecting a high level of audience engagement. However, while interaction is substantial, the comments largely emphasize visual appeal (such as "aesthetic" and "expensive") rather than explicitly recognizing sustainability, suggesting that sustainable branding is present but not strongly foregrounded in audience interpretation.

Figure 2 Simple Office Outfit

Furthermore, in the video uploaded on February 22nd, 2025, represented in Figure 2, Sashfir wears a simple office outfit accessorized with timeless glasses. The caption, "outfit ke kantor hari jumat" (translated as "outfit for the office on Friday"), provides a relatable everyday context for the audience and situates the content within routine professional life. With a consistent visual approach and a relaxed yet elegant communication style, this content conveys messages of clothing reuse and understated sustainability through its emphasis on timeless design rather than trend-driven fashion. However, the sustainability narrative remains implied rather than explicitly articulated, which raises questions about whether audiences decode the content as "sustainable" or merely as "minimalist chic." The interactions obtained, 28.5 thousand likes and 189 comment, indicate substantial engagement, yet they also suggest that aesthetic appeal continues to dominate audience interpretation over sustainability awareness on platforms such as TikTok.

Figure 3 All-White Outfit

The third video, uploaded on March 8th, 2025, represented in Figure 3, shows an all-white outfit complemented by a bag and gold accessories, followed by the caption "pucet banget kalau ga pakai lip product" (translated as "I look so pale without any lip product"). In this video, the choice of neutral colors and minimalist design reflects the values of timeless fashion, which rejects fleeting trends and prioritizes the enduring quality of style. The video receives 52 thousand likes and 1,500 comments, indicating a high level of audience engagement with the visual presentation on TikTok. Audience responses again emphasize elegance and aspirational appeal, but few explicitly mention sustainability, which underscores a gap between the creator's intended sustainability message and the audience's dominant aesthetic interpretation.

In each video, consistency is evident in the use of visual elements such as neutral fashion colors, minimalist designs, and subtle, natural video-editing techniques. Sashfir's personal branding style is implicitly communicated through the choice of wearables and fashion, which function as the core characteristics of the content. Viewer comments indicate that audiences perceive Sashfir's style as "expensive," "aesthetic," and "elegant" despite its simplicity, and many express a desire to emulate her appearance. This response suggests that sustainable fashion is branded indirectly and that its effectiveness depends largely on aesthetic resonance rather than on explicit ecological discourse.

This discussion is grounded in the personal branding theory developed by Montoya et al. (2002), which outlines eight main principles: specialization, leadership, personality, distinctiveness, visibility, unity, perseverance, and goodwill. In the context of this research, emphasis is placed on the four most prominent principles evident in the content practices of the TikTok account @sashfir, namely specialization, personality, visibility, and leadership. These four principles are analyzed to understand how personal branding strategies are constructed through visual approaches and implicit narratives, particularly in representing sustainable fashion values.

@sashfir's success in building personal branding and conveying sustainable fashion messages is achieved through the application of these four personal branding principles, most visibly manifested in her TikTok content. The first principle is the "Law of Specialization," which allows individuals to focus their self-representation on a distinct domain of expertise, thereby enhancing recognition and retention in audience perception (Musch et al., 2023). Sashfir demonstrates specialization through a consistently applied style of dress that appears simple yet elegant and expensive. Rather than following rapidly changing trends, she reinforces a singular and coherent style identity. This specialization is constructed through several elements, including the selection of neutral-colored clothing combined with eco-friendly materials such as Tencel (Figure 1). The lifestyle portrayed in her content reflects a preference for minimalism and sustainable elegance, and the style of dress itself functions as a personal branding asset that distinguishes her from other content creators.

Specialization opens up strategic opportunities for long-term content development. When an identity is strongly formed, development in other directions—such as product launches, brand collaborations, and community building—can be pursued without obscuring the core essence of the brand, as demonstrated by Savryaninda and Adiprabowo (2024) through collaborations with brands that offer more affordable products while maintaining quality standards. This condition shows that specialization functions not only as an identity marker but also as a strategic asset. In this sense, specialization provides a solid and sustainable foundation for future expansion in various forms.

Sashfir not only builds a strong personal brand through specialization but also demonstrates how a digital identity grows into something that goes beyond outward appearance. Through visual narratives—such as photos, videos, and graphic elements—specific identities and lived experiences are communicated in a more profound and meaningful way (Sabri & Adiprabowo, 2022). This process shows that effective personal branding emerges from authenticity, consistency, and a clear awareness of the values one intends to present to the public. As a result, the branding becomes not merely performative but also value-driven and enduring.

The second principle is the "Law of Leadership." In personal branding theory, leadership refers to an individual's ability to function as a role model or reference figure within a particular field (Montoya et al., 2002). In the context of the TikTok account @sashfir, this principle is reflected in her positioning as a reference point for a simple yet elegant style of dress. Sashfir succeeds in shaping audience perceptions by embodying symbolic authority in defining aesthetically pleasing minimalist fashion trends. This leadership is evident in audience comments that express admiration and encourage imitation of her style, as shown in Figure 4, indicating that viewers actively use Sashfir's fashion choices as personal inspiration rather than merely consuming the content passively.
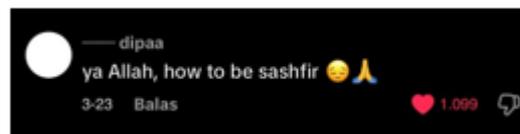

Figure 4 Audience Engagement Reflecting the Aspirational Appeal of Sashfir's Minimalist Style

The audience associates Sashfir with a figure who excels at combining simple yet aesthetically pleasing clothing. The style of dress displayed reflects her expertise in creating an attractive and minimalist look that remains refined. In addition, the high number of likes and comments on her video uploads indicates strong recognition from the audience. This pattern suggests that Sashfir is not only visually appreciated but is also regarded as a reference figure in shaping an aesthetically pleasing and inspiring style of dress, as shown in Figure 4.

For example, comments such as "apapun yang dipakai Sashfir pasti cantik" (translated as "Sashfir makes anything she wears look beautiful") and "kiblat fashion hijabi girl" (translated as "fashion role model for hijabi girls") illustrate two key aspects of the principle of leadership. First, they indicate a perception of excellence, showing that Sashfir is viewed as highly skilled in combining simple yet visually appealing clothing. Second, they reflect recognition through a high volume of likes and comments, which signifies public acceptance of her authority in presenting fashion content that is perceived as stylish and aspirational, even when sustainability is communicated implicitly. This form of symbolic leadership is particularly relevant in the social media environment, where leadership is shaped less by formal authority and more by cultural influence and visual appeal that guide audience tastes and aspirations on platforms such as TikTok.

The third principle is the "Law of Personality." This principle emphasizes the importance of authentic character in forming a strong personal brand (Montoya et al., 2002). In Sashfir's TikTok content, the personal characteristics presented are calm, elegant, and restrained. She does not position herself as a flamboyant or gimmick-driven figure but instead adopts a composed and unpretentious approach. This natural presentation strengthens the audience's perception of Sashfir as a genuine and trustworthy figure, reinforcing the sense of authenticity in her lifestyle and appearance.

According to the audience comments in Figure 5, she does not appear exaggerated or distant but instead presents a calm, elegant, and relatable side of herself. This presentation reinforces the perception that she is a genuine individual with meaningful personal value. This perception is also reflected in various

audience comments stating that Sashfir's content feels "relatable," "calm but classy," or even "cool." Such responses reveal a clear emotional resonance between the persona Sashfir projects and the audience's expectations of a public figure who is not only visually appealing but also authentic. In a digital environment saturated with excessive imagery and performative self-presentation, this calm and authentic personality functions as a strategic differentiator that strengthens her personal branding position.
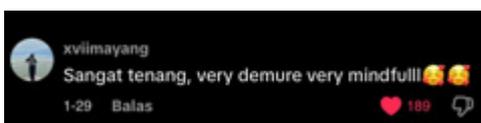

Figure 5 Audience Comment Highlighting Sashfir's Authentic and Calm Persona in Her Content

The fourth principle is the "Law of Visibility." In personal branding theory, the principle of visibility emphasizes the importance of maintaining a consistent and easily recognizable public presence (Montoya et al., 2002). In practice, Sashfir demonstrates a high level of visibility through the consistency of the content she uploads. She not only uploads videos regularly on TikTok but also maintains uniformity in visual elements such as neutral clothing tones, minimalist backgrounds, and recurring background music across multiple uploads. This strategy enables audiences to recognize Sashfir's distinctive style even before identifying the account itself. By consistently presenting videos with a similar aesthetic and repeated audio cues, her presence becomes recognizable and memorable, reinforcing visibility as a key pillar of her personal branding.
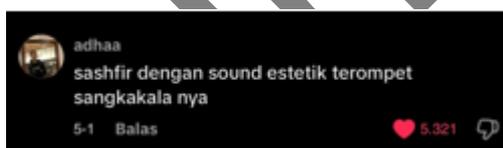

Figure 6 A Viewer's Comment Highlighting Sashfir's Signature Sound as Key to Her Recognizable TikTok Identity

The visibility built through these repetitive elements provides a strong branding recall effect, which is represented in Figure 6. Several audience comments, such as "immediately knew this was Sashfir's video only from the background sound and the color of her clothes," indicate that this visual and auditory identity is firmly embedded in public memory. This level of consistency is crucial for building a personal brand that is not only briefly noticed but also remembered in the long term. In a highly competitive and fast-changing TikTok ecosystem, this form of sustained visibility plays a key role in retaining audiences and expanding the reach of influence.

The findings show that visual-based personal branding combined with subtle and implicit communication effectively shapes audience perceptions of sustainable fashion values (Milanesi et al., 2022). Sashfir's style of dress and communication tone construct a digital image that aligns with ethical principles and heightened consumption awareness. This alignment confirms that performative and interpretive approaches remain relevant for reading and analyzing fashion content on TikTok, where meaning is often conveyed through aesthetics rather than explicit statements (Rees-Roberts, 2020).

This research observes three TikTok videos uploaded by @sashfir between January and March 2025, as presented in Figures 1, 2, and 3, each representing different themes: vacations, work activities, and iftar moments. The results of these observations are analyzed using personal branding theory, which consists of eight main principles: specialization, leadership, personality, distinctiveness, visibility, unity, perseverance, and goodwill. Through this analytical framework, the research identifies how recurring visual patterns and narrative cues collectively contribute to the construction of a sustainability-oriented personal brand.

Personal branding on @sashfir's account is formed through visual consistency, delivery style, and the presence of value-laden content in each post. The three purposively selected videos observed show repetitive patterns in neutral clothing color tones, minimalist yet luxurious fashion styles, and subtle, aesthetic video editing (Figures 1–3). Although there is no explicit verbal explanation delivered continuously, viewers are still able to capture the intended message through visual elements and implicit narratives conveyed by Sashfir's appearance and self-image. In particular, the style of dress presented does not follow fast-fashion cycles but instead leans toward timeless fashion that supports sustainability. This pattern suggests that @sashfir strategically crafts an image of herself as an environmentally conscious figure while remaining aesthetically relevant on platforms such as TikTok.

When examined through the lens of personal branding, these three videos reflect a holistic application of the principles proposed by Montoya and Vandehey. The visual strategies, forms of audience engagement, and narrative choices demonstrate that Sashfir does not merely present outfits, but also communicates personal values and identity. This phenomenon occurs due to several interrelated factors, including the development of digital media culture, shifts in audience preferences, and the increasing sophistication of targeted visual communication strategies (Svitlana Semenko et al., 2024).

First, social media platforms such as TikTok function as primary spaces for shaping digital identities (Wang & William Feng, 2022). Within an increasingly visual media culture, imagery becomes

Table 1 Summary of Purposive Research Findings on Three TikTok Videos by @sashfir

DATE	18/01/25	22/02/25	08/03/25
Video Theme	Holiday Outfits	Office Outfits	Iftaar Outfits
Outfit Description	Earth tone tunics and hijab, Plain black pants, Eco-friendly tencel belt material, Plain black bag.	One set of plain grey cardigan, Plain black hijab, Plain brown bag, Timeless model black glasses.	Plain white hijab, Plain white inner dress, the dress, Shoulder bag, Gold-colored bracelet, and rings.
Caption	Day 3 Bali outfit	Friday office outfits	We look very pale if we don't use lip products
Implicit Message	Educate the audience on the importance of ecological awareness in choosing fashion materials, which is an integral part of sustainable fashion practices.	Order reusable and sustainable clothes.	The choice of neutral colors and minimalist designs reflects the values of timeless fashion, which rejects fleeting trends and prioritizes the enduring quality of style.
Visual Style	Natural and Earthy Aesthetic	Minimalist Urban Look	Elegant Minimalism
Likes	69.800	28.500	52.000
Comments	488	189	1.500

a central element of communication and meaning-making (Yarchi & Boxman-Shabtai, 2025). As a result, consistent, aesthetically pleasing, and meaningful visual presentations actively shape public perceptions of personal identity (Woloshin et al., 2023). @sashfir capitalizes on this condition by constructing a clean, minimalist, and elegant content aesthetic that is easily recognizable and symbolically coherent.

Second, a shift in values emerges among younger audiences, particularly Gen Z and millennials, who increasingly recognize the importance of sustainability and ethical fashion consumption (Manley et al., 2023). While not all audience members explicitly advocate sustainable fashion, many show growing interest in timeless fashion, reuse practices, and minimalist lifestyles (Heinze, 2021). In her content, Sashfir does not explicitly position herself as an environmental activist, yet she successfully evokes audience sympathy by implicitly aligning with these emerging values. This implicit alignment allows sustainability messages to resonate without overt moralizing.

Third, the success of @sashfir's personal branding is closely linked to her understanding of TikTok's algorithm and audience behavior. Through short captions and a relaxed yet classy communication style, she creates emotional closeness with viewers while avoiding a patronizing tone. This approach strengthens audience engagement and enhances the perceived authenticity of her digital persona.

To provide a more concrete and measurable illustration of the application of personal branding principles in TikTok content, this research conducts a purposive analysis of three videos uploaded by @sashfir between January and March 2025, as presented in Figures 1, 2, and 3. This analysis aims to identify the extent to which the visual, narrative, and communication strategies employed reflect the personal branding principles outlined by Montoya et al. (2002). The results of this analysis are presented in the Table 1 below as a structured summary of the findings discussed in the preceding sections.

The comparison of the three videos shows the consistency of Sashfir's personal branding, particularly in emphasizing simplicity, sustainability, and refined visual aesthetics. This consistency aligns with personal branding principles that stress differentiation, coherence, and the relevance of communicated messages to the target audience. Through repeated visual and narrative patterns, Sashfir reinforces a recognizable identity that remains meaningful and accessible to viewers on platforms such as TikTok.

CONCLUSIONS

This research aims to understand how personal branding strategies are built through sustainable fashion representation on TikTok @sashfir accounts. In the context of social media, which increasingly emphasizes authenticity and value, this research examines how sustainability functions as an integral part of a content creator's personal image. Using a qualitative approach and an instrumental case study, the researcher explores TikTok @sashfir's content through key dimensions of personal branding, including specialization, leadership, personality, distinctiveness, visibility, unity, persistence, and goodwill.

The results shows that @sashfir builds a strong and cohesive personal image by making sustainable fashion a core value in its communication. Through visual consistency, narrative development, and eco-friendly product selection, @sashfir not only introduces a sustainable lifestyle but also positions itself as an environmentally caring, creative, and visionary figure. This strategic alignment reinforces the credibility of sustainability as an authentic component of the creator's personal branding.

The benefit of this research lies in its contribution

to understanding how sustainability values are integrated into personal branding strategies in the digital age. At the same time, it provides a critical reflection on the limitations of branding sustainability through visual cues alone, without explicit discursive reinforcement. This research offers insights for communication practitioners, content creators, and brands seeking to build meaningful relationships with audiences by aligning with the social and ethical values they strive for. In addition, this research also strengthens the relevance of personal branding as a theoretical framework in the research of social media and digital culture.

However, this research has several limitations. First, the analysis focuses on only one TikTok account (@sashfir), so it does not provide a broader picture of sustainability-based personal branding strategies among diverse content creators. Second, this research does not explore in depth how audiences respond to the implementation demonstrated by @sashfir, meaning audience acceptance is not fully examined. These limitations reduce the generalizability of the findings and indicate the need for methodological triangulation, such as interviews, surveys, or systematic content coding schemes.

For further research, a comparative research is recommended, either across multiple content creators or across different social media platforms, to examine variations in personal branding approaches within sustainable fashion contexts. In addition, research using participatory methods or digital netnography can be applied to explore audience perceptions, engagement patterns, and reactions to the sustainability narratives constructed by content creators. Such approaches enable a deeper understanding of the dynamic relationship between creators, content, and audiences in digital environments.

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Data Availability Statement: Data available on request from the authors. The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author, [**Fila Sadida; Vani Dias Adiprabowo**], upon reasonable request. Explain the reason why the readers must request the data.

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