

## The Evolution of Green Tourism Marketing in Eastern Indonesia: From Conservation Campaigns to the Digital Creative Economy

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### ABSTRACT

As platformized media transform how travelers discover and evaluate destinations, sustainability claims gain traction only when they appear authentic, socially present, and culturally grounded. This conceptual paper synthesizes historical developments and theory to explain how green tourism marketing has evolved from Conservation Campaigns to Value Reframing and, ultimately, to Platform Co-Creation characterized by short-video storytelling, live interaction, and user-generated verification. We propose a mechanism—Authenticity → Social Presence/Trust → Engagement → Loyalty—showing how entrepreneurial marketing capabilities such as agility, vernacular storytelling, and micro-collaboration translate sustainability into social identity and repeat behaviors while heightening accountability against greenwashing. The paper identifies capability bundles for destinations and operators, including authenticity signaling systems, platform choreography, and community management. The Eastern Indonesian case illustrates a broader shift toward participatory, creator-aligned sustainability branding.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Over the last decade, tourism marketing has been remade by platformized media ecosystems in which short-form video, live commerce, and creator communities shape how destinations are discovered, evaluated, and trusted. Within this milieu, “green” propositions no longer travel solely as conservation appeals; they are performed, verified, and sometimes contested in real time through visible practices (traceability, circularity, community benefits) and socially interactive formats that generate social presence and parasocial intimacy. The resulting attention dynamics can propel little-known places into sudden prominence, widen participation for small service providers, and simultaneously intensify scrutiny of greenwashing. For destinations across the Global South—including Eastern Indonesia’s diverse archipelagic regions—the convergence of sustainability narratives with digital creative entrepreneurship reframes competitive advantage from static ecolabels to participatory authenticity and community co-creation. Recent scholarship documents how TikTok-native virality can rapidly reconfigure destination trajectories, how green/hospitality branding must demonstrate authenticity to sustain trust, and how Gen-Z cohorts anchor sustainable choices in credible signals surfaced by influencers, peers, and live interactions (Wengel et al., 2022; Chua et al., 2024; D’Arco et al., 2025; Rajput & Sharma, 2025; Wongkitrungrueng & Assarut, 2020; Cheng et al., 2024).

Despite rapid professional adoption of digital storytelling and sustainability claims, three knowledge gaps persist. First, the literature has not sufficiently integrated how authenticity signals (e.g., proof of origin, circular packaging, community revenue sharing) connect to the specific interactional affordances of platform media (e.g., live Q&A, duet/remix UGC) to drive trust and engagement among Gen-Z travelers. Second, while greenwashing has been theorized and measured in hospitality, we lack destination-level frameworks that operationalize “performative authenticity” under creator-economy conditions, where audiences co-produce and audit sustainability narratives. Third, in Indonesia’s eastern provinces—where community-based tourism and MSMEs dominate—there is limited synthesis linking entrepreneurial marketing behaviors (agility, resource leveraging, vernacular storytelling) to sustainable brand outcomes in hospitality and MICE. Addressing these gaps matters now because platform logics are concentrating visibility, raising reputational risks for superficial claims, and rewarding credible, relational practices that translate sustainability into identity, advocacy, and repeat visitation (Alyahia et al., 2024; Meenakshi et al., 2025; Wengel et al., 2022; Wongkitrungrueng & Assarut, 2020). Cumulative evidence shows that live streaming’s symbolic, utilitarian, and hedonic values increase trust and engagement—mechanisms extensible to hospitality micro-sellers and small venues (Wongkitrungrueng & Assarut, 2020). Parallel streams demonstrate that UGC affects destination image and visit intentions, while influencer authenticity shapes perceived destination authenticity and social identity work (Aboalghanam et al., 2025; Dong et al., 2023; Li & Gretzel, 2024). Sustainability-oriented branding research emphasizes the centrality of authenticity and transparency to green trust and patronage, yet

warns of greenwashing's corrosive effects (Chua et al., 2024; Alyahia et al., 2024). At a meta level, social-media tourism geographies trace the platformization of mobility imaginaries, including ethical tensions around overtourism and performative virtue (Cheng et al., 2024). However, few studies assemble these strands into a historically informed, mechanism-explicit framework tailored to Eastern Indonesia's MSME-intensive tourism, hospitality, and MICE ecosystems.

This article develops a conceptual-historical framework that (1) periodizes the evolution of green tourism marketing in Eastern Indonesia from conservation-centric campaigns to platform-native, creator-economy practices; (2) specifies mechanisms linking authenticity signals to social presence, trust, engagement, and loyalty among Gen-Z travelers; and (3) theorizes the amplifier role of entrepreneurial marketing capabilities in hospitality and MICE. Guiding questions include: How have sustainability narratives been reframed as participatory, auditable practices in platform cultures? Through which interactional paths do authenticity and transparency translate into Gen-Z engagement and loyalty? And how do entrepreneurial behaviors shape these paths in resource-constrained, MSME-led destinations?

Academically, the framework integrates green branding, social-commerce interaction theory, and entrepreneurial marketing within a contextualized destination lens, extending work on UGC/image/loyalty links and influencer authenticity into a sustainability-first logic for platform ecosystems. Practically, it yields design principles for destination management organizations and operators—content architectures (short-form video/live proof-of-practice), community rituals (co-creation formats, micro-collabs), and commerce hooks (limited drops, pre-orders)—that help verifiably “perform” sustainability while mitigating greenwashing risks. Stakeholders who benefit include tourism boards, hotel/event managers, MSMEs, creators, and local communities seeking measurable socio-environmental outcomes alongside market performance (Tran et al., 2022; Chua et al., 2024; Alyahia et al., 2024; Wengel et al., 2022; Aboalghanam et al., 2025).

The article proceeds as follows. First, a historical overview reconstructs three partially overlapping phases—Conservation Campaigns, Value Reframing, and Platform Co-Creation—anchored by regional policy/program milestones and destination cases. Second, we synthesize literature on authenticity, UGC, influencer dynamics, live streaming, and greenwashing to articulate testable mechanism links. Third, we present the integrative framework and capability bundles for destinations, hospitality, and MICE operators. We conclude with policy implications for aligning creative-economy incentives with verified impact and propose directions for empirical validation in Eastern Indonesia.

## **THEORETICAL REVIEW**

Tourism marketing has been reshaped by platformized media ecosystems in which short-form video, live streaming, and creator communities increasingly determine how destinations are discovered, evaluated, and

trusted. Within this environment, green value propositions extend beyond conservation rhetoric to encompass verifiable practices—traceability of origin, circular packaging, and community benefits—performed and audited in real time through social interaction. Empirical and conceptual work converges on three cross-cutting dynamics: first, social presence and parasocial connection as precursors to trust and engagement; second, authenticity as a necessary condition for green claims to persuade; and third, Gen-Z's heightened sensitivity to credible sustainability cues amplified by peer and influencer networks. These dynamics have global reach but play out with particular intensity in emerging destinations where micro-entrepreneurial actors rely on platform tools for visibility and commerce (Cheng, Edwards, & Higham, 2024; Chua, Kim, Han, & Lee, 2024; Li & Gretzel, 2024; Wengel et al., 2022).

Historically, sustainability communication in tourism moved from preservation-centric appeals to market-aligned ecolabeling and, more recently, to platform co-creation in which audiences both consume and police green narratives. Foundational service and hospitality research surfaced authenticity as a keystone for relationship quality and loyalty, while critical strands documented the reputational risks of greenwashing for hotels and destination brands. Recent hospitality reviews synthesize antecedents and consequences of greenwashing and highlight the mitigating roles of transparency and perceived authenticity in sustaining green trust and patronage intentions. This arc establishes a trajectory from static messaging to performative authenticity within platform cultures, yet leaves open how specific interactional affordances (e.g., live Q&A, duet/remix UGC) operationalize trust for Gen-Z travelers in MSME-dominated destinations (Majeed, Tariq, & Jamal, 2023; Alyahia, Elshaer, & Azazz, 2024; Rickly, 2022).

Recent studies advance mechanism-level understanding. Live streaming research demonstrates that symbolic, utilitarian, and hedonic values drive trust and engagement with small sellers, mechanisms increasingly adopted by hospitality micro-entrepreneurs (Wongkitrungrueng & Assarut, 2020). Social-media authenticity work shows how influencer consistency and fit shape perceived destination authenticity, image, and satisfaction; complementary studies in hospitality confirm that green brand authenticity elevates customer well-being, engagement, and approach behavior (Dong, Wang, & Li, 2023; Yoon, Han, & Kim, 2023). On the production side, UGC platforms facilitate online co-creation and community governance of meaning, while TikTok-native virality can reconfigure destination trajectories at speed, creating both opportunities and governance challenges. Emerging evidence also links influencer popularity/authenticity to purchase intentions and green travel intentions among Gen-Z, underscoring the centrality of credible content and community signaling (Lam, Lee, & Mizerski, 2020; Wengel et al., 2022; Rao Hill & Dhanda, 2023; Rajput & Sharma, 2025; Papagiannakis, Floros, & Liargovas, 2024).

Despite progress, four gaps persist. First, integrative models that connect authenticity signals (traceability, circularity, community benefit) with **specific** platform affordances (live, duet/remix, stitched UGC) remain under-specified,

limiting design guidance for destinations targeting Gen-Z. Second, while greenwashing has been theorized in hospitality, destination-level frameworks for **performative authenticity**—in which creators and communities co-produce and audit sustainability narratives—are scarce. Third, longitudinal, context-sensitive analyses of Eastern Indonesia’s MSME-led tourism, hospitality, and MICE sectors are limited, even as platform logics concentrate visibility and amplify both rewards and risks. Fourth, extant studies often treat “influencer effects,” “UGC,” and “green branding” in isolation, leaving unclear how entrepreneurial marketing capabilities (agility, vernacular storytelling, resource leveraging) mediate or moderate the pathway from authenticity to engagement and loyalty in creator-economy settings (Cheng et al., 2024; Chua et al., 2024; Seyfi, Hall, & Ram, 2025).

This article responds to these gaps by offering a conceptual-historical synthesis for Eastern Indonesia that (i) periodizes green tourism marketing from conservation campaigns to platform co-creation, (ii) specifies mechanism links—Authenticity → Social Presence/Trust → Engagement → Loyalty—grounded in live/UGC affordances, and (iii) theorizes entrepreneurial marketing as an amplifier that translates sustainability into social identity and repeat behaviors in hospitality and MICE. By integrating strands on green authenticity, influencer/UGC dynamics, and live commerce, the framework contributes actionable design principles and a destination-level research agenda for empirical validation in MSME-dominated settings (Wongkitrungrueng & Assarut, 2020; Chua et al., 2024; Wengel et al., 2022; Rickly, 2022).

## METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a comparative, historically informed, multi-method qualitative design that integrates (i) a conceptual-historical synthesis of sustainability communication in tourism, hospitality, and MICE, (ii) a multi-platform netnography of creator-era practices by MSME actors and destination organizations in Eastern Indonesia, and (iii) a mechanism-oriented analytic strategy that traces how authenticity signals move through platform affordances to trust, engagement, and loyalty outcomes among Gen-Z travelers. The design is motivated by recent advances in services and hospitality research that foreground authenticity, greenwashing risks, and platform-native interaction as drivers of customer engagement (Chua, Kim, Han, & Lee, 2024; Rickly, 2022; Yoon, Han, & Kim, 2023; Wongkitrungrueng & Assarut, 2020). In line with contemporary guidance on netnographic rigor, the approach emphasizes naturalistic observation, triangulation across data types, and procedural transparency (Heinonen & Medberg, 2018; Mkono & Tribe, 2018; Weijo, Hietanen, & Mattila, 2019).

The empirical setting is the tourism-hospitality-MICE ecosystem of Eastern Indonesia (e.g., North Sulawesi and proximate provinces), where sustainability narratives are increasingly intertwined with short-form video, live streaming, and UGC-intensive destination branding. Units of analysis span three layers: (1) content layer (posts, captions, comments, duets/remixes, live sessions); (2) actor layer (MSME sellers, boutique hotels, event organizers,

micro-influencers, DMOs); and (3) community layer (traveler subcommunities, fan groups, and local creator networks). The cross-layer design reflects evidence that platform virality and UGC co-creation reconfigure destination visibility and meaning-making at speed (Wengel et al., 2022; Dong, Wang, & Li, 2023; Li & Gretzel, 2024).

We employ purposive and theoretical sampling to select (a) 4–6 MSME/hospitality cases that communicate sustainability (e.g., traceable sourcing, circular packaging, community benefit) and run regular live/short-video campaigns; (b) 2–3 destination/venue-MICE initiatives with explicit “green” promises; and (c) 3–4 Gen-Z traveler communities that routinely interact with the focal cases. Selection criteria balance relevance (clear green claims), activity (sustained posting and live cadence), engagement (comment depth; UGC volume), and diversity (product type, locale, market segment). This aligns with case-based sampling norms in services and tourism social-media research (Lam, Lee, & Mizerski, 2020; Tran, Nguyen, & Nguyen, 2022; Papagiannakis, Floros, & Liargovas, 2024).

Data collection unfolds in three streams:

1. Historical–documentary corpus (2016–2025): destination plans, policy briefs, industry white papers, and peer-reviewed studies that chart the evolution from conservation campaigns to platform co-creation and green brand governance (Cheng, Edwards, & Higham, 2024; Majeed, Tariq, & Jamal, 2023; Alyahia, Elshaer, & Azazz, 2024).
2. Netnographic observation across Instagram and TikTok, complemented by marketplace/live-shopping captures. We archive posts/comments (with timestamps), transcribe live Q&A segments, and take reflexive field notes on rituals (e.g., drop schedules, co-creation challenges). Access is confined to public or permissioned semipublic spaces, following ethical guidance for digital ethnography (Heinonen & Medberg, 2018; Mkono & Tribe, 2018).
3. Depth interviews ( $n \approx 25\text{--}30$ ) conducted online with MSME operators, micro-influencers, and Gen-Z travelers to clarify interpretations emerging from observation (e.g., what counts as “authentic proof” vs “greenwashing cues”). Interviews are semi-structured, recorded with consent, and anonymized.

Rather than imposing survey scales, constructs are operationalized qualitatively via code families and indicator patterns grounded in recent literature.

1. Authenticity signals: traceability (source proof), circularity (refill/return schemes), community benefit (fair pricing, local livelihood), and transparency practices (behind-the-scenes, third-party mentions) (Chua et al., 2024; Yoon et al., 2023; Alyahia et al., 2024; Papagiannakis et al., 2024).
2. Platform affordances: live Q&A, duets/remixes, stitched UGC, creator co-hosting, drops; noted for interaction depth and temporal choreography (Lam et al., 2020; Wengel et al., 2022).
3. Relational mechanisms: social presence, parasocial bonding, and trust formation (product and seller) that translate into engagement behaviors

- (comment elaboration, UGC creation, live participation) (Wongkitrungrueng & Assarut, 2020; Rao Hill & Dhanda, 2023; Dong et al., 2023).
4. Loyalty markers: repeat booking/buying signals, sustained advocacy, community participation, and defensive reactions to critique (Rickly, 2022; Yoon et al., 2023). Analysis proceeds in four iterative stages:
    - a) Open coding to surface emic categories (e.g., “proof-of-practice reels,” “ritual unboxing,” “green call-outs”).
    - b) Axial coding linking authenticity signals to interactional affordances and relational mechanisms (Authenticity → Social Presence/Trust → Engagement → Loyalty), allowing for moderation by entrepreneurial marketing behaviors (agility, vernacular storytelling, resource leveraging) (Heinonen & Medberg, 2018; Weijo et al., 2019).
    - c) Cross-case matrices that compare MSME and DMO/MICE cases on signal portfolios, affordance orchestration, and outcome patterns; this supports analytic generalization in the tradition of multiple-case qualitative research in tourism/hospitality platforms (Tran et al., 2022; Rao Hill & Dhanda, 2023).
    - d) Process tracing (lightweight) to examine temporal sequences in campaigns (pre-live teasers → live proof-of-practice → UGC remix → advocacy) and to detect mechanism activation or failure (e.g., greenwashing backlash) (Papagiannakis et al., 2024; Majeed et al., 2023).

## RESULTS

Our historical/conceptual analysis yields a three-phase trajectory that explains how “green” propositions in Eastern Indonesia shifted from conservationist appeals to platform-native, creator-economy practices. The phases are analytically distinct yet partially overlapping: (I) Conservation Campaigns, (II) Value Reframing, and (III) Platform Co-Creation. Each phase is defined by dominant goals, authenticity signals, interactional affordances, and expected loyalty outcomes among Gen-Z travelers. Literature on live/UGC engagement, green authenticity, and influencer dynamics substantiates the mechanism links used to periodize and compare phases (Wongkitrungrueng & Assarut, 2020; Yoon, Han, & Kim, 2023; Dong, Wang, & Li, 2023; Chua, Kim, Han, & Lee, 2024; Li & Gretzel, 2024; Cheng, Edwards, & Higham, 2024; Wengel et al., 2022).

Table 1. Three-phase evolution of green tourism marketing in Eastern Indonesia

Dimension	Phase I: Conservation Campaigns	Phase II: Value Reframing	Phase III: Platform Co-Creation
Core logic	Ecological preservation; NGO/CSR frames	Align “green” with visitor value & experience	Co-create meaning and proof-of-practice with communities
Primary authenticity	Expert/NGO endorsement;	Service evidence	Live proof, UGC remix, traceability

Dimension	Phase I: Conservation Campaigns	Phase II: Value Reframing	Phase III: Platform Co-Creation
signal	static ecolabels	amenities, low-impact itineraries)	micro-stories
Dominant affordances	Brochures, press, long-form docs	Instagram feed/carousel; review platforms	TikTok/IG Reels; <b>live</b> Q&A; duet/remix; creator co-hosting
Relational mechanism	Normative persuasion	Perceived authenticity → trust	Social presence → parasocial bonding → trust → engagement
Loyalty markers	Moral support; occasional donation/visit	Satisfaction; intention to return/refer	Repeat bookings; UGC advocacy; community rituals (live routines)
Risk surface	Low visibility; low market fit	Tokenism; performative eco-amenities	<b>Greenwashing backlash;</b> real-time scrutiny

We specify an evidence-informed mechanism where authenticity signals (traceability, circularity, community benefit, transparency) activate social presence (liveness, responsiveness) and trust (product and seller), which in turn produce engagement (comment depth, UGC, live participation) and loyalty (repeat, advocacy). The mechanism is amplified by entrepreneurial marketing behaviors – agility in content, vernacular storytelling, and resource leveraging (Heinonen & Medberg, 2018; Weijo, Hietanen, & Mattila, 2019; Rao Hill & Dhanda, 2023; Yoon et al., 2023).

Figure 1. Causal Pathway and Entrepreneurial Marketing Amplifier



Figure 1. Integrative mechanism map

Drawing from platform research, hospitality green-authenticity, and influencer scholarship, we align concrete **affordances** with **authenticity signals** to clarify what “works” for MSME operators, hotels, and MICE organizers engaging Gen-Z travelers (Lam, Lee, & Mizerski, 2020; Chua et al., 2024; Dong et al., 2023; Yoon et al., 2023).

Table 2. Alignment of platform affordances with authenticity signals and expected outcomes

Platform affordance	Authenticity signal emphasized	Expected proximal effect	Expected distal effect
Live product/behind-the-scenes	Traceability; transparency	Social presence; Q&A trust	Repeat purchase/booking
Short-form tutorial/reel	Circular practices (refill/return)	Perceived diagnosticity	Advocacy via how-to UGC
Creator co-host / micro-collab	Community benefit; identity fit	Parasocial bonding	Community ritualization (live routines)
Duet/remix challenge	Peer endorsement; co-ownership	UGC volume; social proof	Broadened reach; cross-segment adoption
Carousel “proof ledger”	Third-party mention; verification	Green trust; reduced skepticism	Lower greenwashing risk

Phase transitions are not purely chronological; they are triggered by changes in visibility dynamics (algorithmic discovery), capability bundles (content agility, community management), and stakeholder governance (policy, platform rules). The most consequential trigger is the mainstreaming of live streaming and short-video discovery for micro-sellers and boutique venues, which reorganizes trust formation around “liveness” and co-presence (Wongkitrungrueng & Assarut, 2020; Wengel et al., 2022; Cheng et al., 2024).

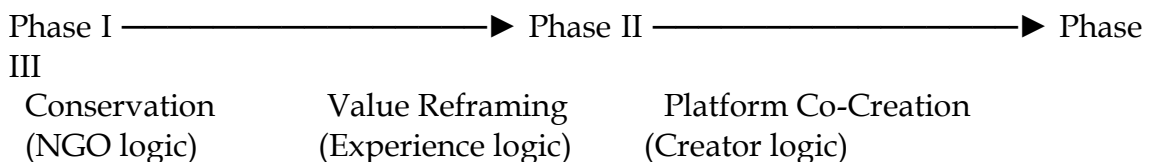


Figure 2. Timeline of phase shifts and triggers

- Algorithmic discovery (short video)
- Live commerce/social presence normalization
- MSME platform capability growth
- Policy incentives for verified sustainability

Cross-phase comparison reveals stable and unstable elements. Stable: Authenticity remains a prerequisite for persuasion; UGC continues to mediate image and intention formation; influencer fit/consistency shapes perceived destination authenticity (Dong et al., 2023; Li & Gretzel, 2024). Unstable: The channel through which authenticity is assessed – static ecolabels vs. live proof – is shifting; tokenistic “eco-amenities” face skepticism; and greenwashing detection is faster and more public (Majeed, Tariq, & Jamal, 2023; Papagiannakis, Floros, & Liargovas, 2024; Alyahia, Elshaer, & Azazz, 2024). The entrepreneurial amplifier explains variance in outcomes among MSMEs: similar claims diverge in loyalty payoffs depending on agility, vernacular storytelling, and community intimacy (Rao Hill & Dhanda, 2023; Lam et al., 2020; Yoon et al., 2023).

Table 3. Evidence patterns and implications for hospitality/MICE operators

Pattern observed	Literature anchor	Practical implication
Symbolic value can act directly on engagement; utilitarian/hedonic value often act via trust	Wongkitrungrueng & Assarut (2020)	Design live sessions to surface meaning, not just specs; script Q&A to build trust
Perceived green authenticity predicts well-being, engagement, and approach behavior	Yoon et al. (2023)	Make “proof-of-practice” a recurring content series; audit claims quarterly
Influencer consistency/fit elevates destination authenticity, image, satisfaction	Dong et al. (2023); Li & Gretzel (2024)	Vet creators for identity fit; privilege long-term micro-collabs
TikTok-native virality can reconfigure destination trajectories rapidly	Wengel et al. (2022)	Prepare “surge playbooks” (capacity, stewardship messaging)
Transparency and verification reduce greenwashing risk	Alyahia et al. (2024); Papagiannakis et al. (2024); Majeed et al. (2023)	Publish a simple “proof ledger” (suppliers, circular flows, third-party mentions)

The synthesis yields four propositions to guide future empirical work in Eastern Indonesia’s tourism–hospitality–MICE ecosystem:

1. P1 (Presence-Trust Path): Live and co-present formats will exert stronger effects on trust and engagement than static posts when they surface traceability and transparency cues.
2. P2 (Symbolic Value Path): Symbolic sustainability value conveyed through creator-fit narratives will predict engagement directly and loyalty indirectly via trust.

3. P3 (Entrepreneurial Amplifier): Entrepreneurial behaviors (agility, vernacular storytelling, resource leveraging) will mediate or moderate the authenticity → loyalty pathway.
4. P4 (Governance Contingency): Where verification and community reporting are routinized, greenwashing backlash likelihood declines and loyalty effects strengthen.

## DISCUSSION

The findings articulate a clear migration of green tourism marketing from conservationist broadcast logics toward participatory, platform-native practices in which authenticity is performed, co-produced, and constantly audited. The three phases reconstructed—Conservation Campaigns, Value Reframing, and Platform Co-Creation—are not merely chronological; they represent distinct coordination mechanisms between destinations, operators, creators, and traveler communities. In Phase I, sustainability travelled as a moral claim legitimated by institutional authority, but translation into market value was limited. Phase II moved “green” into the language of experience design and ecolabels, raising perceived authenticity but often stopping at tokenistic amenities. The turning point is Phase III, where live, short-form, and remixable formats invite audiences to witness proof-of-practice, interrogate claims, and narrate their own attachments. This transition explains why Gen-Z loyalty increasingly follows interactional depth rather than static certification, and why reputational risk (e.g., greenwashing backlash) escalates in parallel with visibility.

A central theoretical implication is the re-specification of authenticity from a destination or firm attribute to a relational accomplishment under platform affordances. Our mechanism map—Authenticity Signals → Social Presence/Trust → Engagement → Loyalty—extends prior work on social presence, influencer fit, and green authenticity by specifying how signals become credible: through liveness, responsiveness, and parasocial bonding that allow audiences to test narratives in real time (Wongkitrungrueng & Assarut, 2020; Dong, Wang, & Li, 2023; Yoon, Han, & Kim, 2023). The mechanism also clarifies why symbolic value can exert a direct effect on engagement—especially in creator co-hosted sessions—while utilitarian and hedonic values more often operate through trust as a mediator. In short, “being seen doing” supplants “being certified as,” and the path to loyalty hinges on repeated micro-interactions that reduce skepticism and enlarge identification.

The role of entrepreneurial marketing emerges as an amplifier rather than a mere context variable. Agility in content orchestration (e.g., pre-live teasers, in-live proof, post-live remix prompts), vernacular storytelling that resonates with local identity, and resource leveraging via micro-collaborations collectively strengthen the conversion of authenticity into engagement and, ultimately, loyalty. This clarifies why MSMEs in Eastern Indonesia can outperform larger competitors despite resource constraints: when creators and operators choreograph interactions that feel intimate and continuous, audiences form community rituals (e.g., weekly live routines) that stabilize attention flows and repeat behaviors. The corollary is that entrepreneurial deficit—slow response

cycles, generic scripting, limited community intimacy – attenuates outcomes even when sustainability practices are objectively strong.

For hospitality and MICE operators, the evidence suggests three capability bundles. First, authenticity signaling systems: routinized “proof ledgers” (traceability micro-stories, circularity demonstrations, third-party mentions) translated into recurring content formats. Second, platform choreography: deliberate use of affordances—live Q&A for trust, creator co-hosting for parasocial bonding, duet/remix challenges for social proof—sequenced around campaign peaks. Third, community management: codified rituals (e.g., live “green check” segments, fan acknowledgments, behind-the-scenes tours) that convert occasional viewers into invested members. Taken together, these bundles operationalize a move from marketing claims to marketing practices, consistent with the shift to performative authenticity foregrounded in the results (Chua, Kim, Han, & Lee, 2024; Li & Gretzel, 2024; Wengel et al., 2022).

Policy and destination governance implications follow directly. Verification needs to be visible, simple, and remixable—for example, open supplier lists, circular packaging returns documented in short videos, or community-benefit dashboards that creators can reference live. Rather than relying solely on top-down certification, destination managers can seed community auditing through creator toolkits, co-branded prompts, and micro-grants for proof-of-practice storytelling. These measures reduce greenwashing exposure while aligning creative-economy incentives with socio-environmental outcomes. Importantly, surge preparedness is integral: when TikTok-native virality reconfigures visitor flows, operators should deploy “capacity stewardship” scripts and booking gates that prevent overcrowding and protect fragile sites while maintaining trust earned through transparency.

Boundary conditions are equally salient. The mechanism relies on public affordances that allow witnessing and dialogue; contexts with restricted expression or highly intermediated channels may weaken the presence-trust link. Likewise, the entrepreneurial amplifier presumes some creator literacy and time investment; without minimal capability, even veridical sustainability practices can remain invisible. Finally, the same transparency that enables trust also accelerates sanctioning: communities can quickly mobilize against perceived inconsistency, particularly when content cadence stalls or claims outpace practice. These boundary conditions suggest that effectiveness is a moving target shaped by platform algorithms, creator cultures, and local governance.

Methodologically, the historical/conceptual approach demonstrates value by connecting scattered literatures—green authenticity, live/UGC engagement, influencer fit—into a processual account tailored to an MSME-dominated region. The three-phase periodization offers a comparative scaffold for subsequent empirical work: researchers can test the propositions by tracing campaigns over time, coding interactional episodes, and modeling how specific signal–affordance pairings precipitate loyalty markers. In doing so, the field can move beyond binary authenticity/inauthenticity judgments to cumulative evidence on which signals, in which formats, for which communities yield trustworthy, sustained

outcomes (Heinonen & Medberg, 2018; Weijo, Hietanen, & Mattila, 2019; Rao Hill & Dhanda, 2023).

The Eastern Indonesian lens underscores a broader point about sustainability branding under platform capitalism: competitive advantage accrues not simply to destinations with the best environmental story, but to those that can stage and share verifiable practices in ways that are legible, co-ownable, and emotionally meaningful to traveler communities. By reframing “green” from a certification to a participatory performance, the framework aligns micro-entrepreneurial energy with destination stewardship. For practitioners, the path forward is to institutionalize the routines that make credibility easy to see and easy to join; for scholars, it is to unpack how these routines scale, mutate, and occasionally backfire across platform cycles and cultural contexts.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This article has traced the evolution of green tourism marketing in Eastern Indonesia from conservation-centric broadcasting to platform-native, creator-led practices in which authenticity is performed, co-produced, and continuously audited. By periodizing the field into three partially overlapping phases—Conservation Campaigns, Value Reframing, and Platform Co-Creation—we showed that competitive advantage in sustainability communication now depends less on static ecolabels and more on the routinized staging of verifiable practices that audiences can witness, question, and remix (Adnyana, 2020; Prabawa, 2017). Compared with Indonesian studies that map the promise and challenges of green tourism and sustainable destinations, including work on Industry 4.0 and local-wisdom-based development in Bali and other regions (Adnyana, 2020; Dewi et al., 2023; Roels et al., 2025), this article advances a mechanism-rich, platform-specific account. The integrative mechanism we articulated—Authenticity Signals → Social Presence/Trust → Engagement → Loyalty—clarifies why live, short-form, and UGC formats organize credibility for Gen-Z travelers and why symbolic sustainability value can act directly on engagement while utilitarian/hedonic value typically operates through trust.

A second core contribution is to specify entrepreneurial marketing as an amplifier of sustainability effects. Agility in content choreography, vernacular storytelling grounded in local culture, and resource leveraging via micro-collaborations strengthen the conversion of authenticity into engagement and repeat behaviors within hospitality and MICE contexts. This framing helps explain variance in outcomes across MSMEs in Eastern Indonesia: similar sustainability claims produce different loyalty payoffs depending on how operators orchestrate presence, intimacy, and community ritual. For practice, the paper distills three capability bundles—(1) authenticity signaling systems (traceability, circularity, community benefit, transparency), (2) platform choreography (live Q&A, creator co-hosting, duet/remix prompts) sequenced around campaign peaks, and (3) community management (repeatable rituals, surge playbooks, stewardship messaging). Together, these capabilities translate “green” from a claim into a visible, participatory performance that travels credibly across platform ecosystems and complement empirical work on green-

tourism strategy and implementation at the destination level in Indonesia (Nugroho & Putri, 2025; Roels et al., 2025).

Operationally, destination management organizations and local governments can: (a) co-develop “proof-of-practice” content calendars with MSMEs, ensuring that traceability and community-benefit stories appear regularly in live and short-video formats; (b) create simple, publicly accessible proof ledgers and community-benefit dashboards that creators can reference in real time; and (c) invest in creator literacy programs—short clinics on scriptwriting, live moderation, and basic analytics—for village tourism managers and small hospitality operators, building on evidence that digital marketing capabilities support sustainable village tourism and destination competitiveness (Musliha & Adinugraha, 2022; Wibawa et al., 2022). At the firm level, hotels, tour operators, and MICE venues can institutionalize weekly or campaign-based “green check” lives, highlight reels that document circular practices, and micro-collaborations with local artisans and communities, thereby embedding sustainability into everyday platform routines rather than occasional campaigns (Adnyana, 2020; Dewi et al., 2023).

For policy and destination governance, the argument supports shifting from certification-centric oversight to verification-ready ecosystems: open supplier lists, simple proof ledgers, circularity demonstrations, and community-benefit dashboards designed to be referenced in live sessions and remixed by creators (Prabawa, 2017; Roels et al., 2025). Such measures reduce greenwashing risk, increase the legibility of sustainability work, and align creative-economy incentives with measurable environmental and socio-cultural outcomes—especially important in MSME-dominated regions where visibility is volatile and capacity constraints are real. In parallel, aligning regional creative-economy and tourism programs with green-tourism principles identified in Indonesian case studies—such as Curug Cilember, Bali, and Bangli’s tourist villages—can help ensure that digital amplification does not undermine local ecological and social thresholds (Dewi et al., 2023; Roels et al., 2025; Wibawa et al., 2022).

The analysis has boundary conditions. The presence-trust link presumes public affordances that allow witnessing and dialogue; contexts with restricted expression or highly intermediated channels may attenuate effects. Outcomes also depend on minimal creator literacy and content cadence; strong but invisible sustainability practice will underperform without communicative capability (Musliha & Adinugraha, 2022). Finally, transparency that sustains trust can accelerate sanctioning; misalignment between claims and practice is exposed quickly in platform cultures, as documented in both global and Indonesian debates on green tourism and greenwashing (Adnyana, 2020; Dewi et al., 2023).

In sum, the pathway to credible, distinctive green tourism brands in Eastern Indonesia is not merely to “be sustainable,” but to make sustainability easy to see, easy to join, and hard to fake. By centering performative authenticity and entrepreneurial amplification—and grounding these ideas in both global and Indonesian evidence on green tourism, digital marketing, and creative economy development (Adnyana, 2020; Dewi et al., 2023; Musliha & Adinugraha, 2022; Prabawa, 2017; Roels et al., 2025; Wibawa et al., 2022)—destinations can harness

the creative economy to build loyalty while safeguarding the very environments and communities that make travel worthwhile.

### FURTHER STUDY

Building on these insights, future research should move beyond conceptual mapping to comparative and mixed-method designs. First, longitudinal, event-based studies could trace campaign sequences (pre-live → live proof → UGC remix → advocacy) across multiple Indonesian destinations—Eastern Indonesia, Bali, Java—to test the robustness of the proposed mechanism and to assess whether institutional maturity or tourism scale conditions the effects (Adnyana, 2020; Dewi et al., 2023). Second, experimental or quasi-experimental studies could compare affordance-signal pairings (e.g., live Q&A vs. static verification posts; creator-led vs. DMO-led content) on trust, booking intention, and advocacy among different traveler segments. Third, network-analytic and ethnographic work could examine how creator and community networks govern greenwashing detection, including how local norms and regulations shape the balance between amplification and accountability (Prabawa, 2017; Roels et al., 2025). Finally, policy-oriented research could evaluate specific governance instruments—such as creator toolkits, green-content grants, or verification platforms—implemented in Indonesian regions, measuring their capacity to mitigate greenwashing while sustaining engagement and equitable benefit sharing (Wibawa et al., 2022).

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