

VISUAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGY TO BUILD AWARENESS OF REUSABLE TOTE BAG HOARDING

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ABSTRACT

Reusable tote bags have become a popular trend since government policies have taken concern by banning plastic usage these last few years. Reusable tote bags are surely better for the environment compared to plastic if used correctly. But at this time reusable tote bags were becoming more and more unsafe because of certain activities with no assurance to beware. Sooner, reusable tote bags could be something more harmful than plastic waste to the environment if ignored. Unfortunately, no action and visual communication has ever been designed in a systematic way. Target aimed at those who live in houses, apartments in big city with 20-30 aged young people who are either studying or working. First step to build a new behavior is choosing the communication journey that could reach the target and sustain the messages. Qualitative methods are used for data collection such as survey, focus group discussion, and observation. The author used a communication journey named New Consumer Journey 5A (Aware, Appeal, Ask, Act, Advocate) with ownership, collectivism, and commitment spurring action. Based on media habits and behavior, the main media used in this visual communication is social media and application. The results of the research are used to determine the message to be conveyed. Therefore, it was found that none of them know the solution, so they prefer not to do anything.

Keywords: Reusable tote bags, hoarding, communication strategy, visual communication, visual media communication

1. INTRODUCTION

In the last few years, reusable tote bags have become a popular trend in conjunction with government policies on the negative impact of plastic waste on the environment. These policies significantly take concern by banning plastic usage in restaurants, supermarkets, and daily usage (Dinas Lingkungan Hidup, 2022). Indeed, the replacement of plastic to reusable tote bags was good by the time, while in the other case, activities and events that are commonly held cannot be separated from reusable tote bags as their goodie bag, souvenir, or anything (Freeman, 2023).

Compared to plastic, reusable tote bags that are used correctly will surely be better for the environment (Visser, 2023). However, at this time, reusable tote bags were also being used as part of product promotion or marketing. As mentioned before, the usage of reusable tote bags has become more and more unsafe. The increasing market interest in reusable tote bags will continue to impact the increasing production. In this situation, there are a lot of bags that are used only once or not at all, and end up as trash (Anna, 2019). If ignored for a certain period, reusable tote bags, which should be a harmless solution, will also become a harm to the environment due to excessive use (Hunt, 2023).

In a case study, there are some guidelines for how many reusable tote bags should be reused so they can have a better impact than single-use plastic. A study from Denmark in 2018 found that most reusable tote bags used by the public had to be reused by at least 37 times or until they

become unfit to use. This study also states that 40% of people forget to bring a reusable tote bag so they end up using a plastic bag or buying a new reusable tote bag (Thornton, 2018). Followed by a case study from England in 2015, it was found that 10 well-known supermarkets have sold 1,5 billion reusable tote bags, which means every household had approximately 54 reusable tote bags (Schlanger, 2019).

Figure 1

Visual of Plastic Ban and Reusable Tote Bags Replaced



The United Nations Environment Programme reported that reusable bags require more expensive recycling processes to separate their different materials. Consequently, reusable bags are not recycled. In this context, people who are prohibited from using plastic chose to buy new reusable tote bags as the government policies suggested (Figure 1) as they are not aware that it will accumulate, until it does. Reusable tote bags that accumulate in their dwelling can neither be distributed nor recycled anywhere because no solution or communication has been devised.

This condition then results in accumulation of reusable tote bags that is not proportional to their daily use resulting to a lack of effective use and a decrease in their original function (Anna, 2019). Through pre-research literature studies, it was not found that there were any solutions or further education to build awareness of excessive accumulation of reusable tote bags, especially in Jakarta. In fact, according to datebooks in 2020, 43,1% of UMKM in Jakarta have shifted to reusable tote bags. Therefore, appropriate communication is needed to raise the public awareness as an effort to minimize the accumulation of reusable tote bags and support the goal of this research, which is to analyze visual communication strategy that can be efficiently used continuously.

Literature reviews

Reusable tote bag

Reusable tote bag is a type of shopping bag which can be reused many times, a perfect alternative to single-use paper or plastic shopping bags. Reusable tote bags are often made of fabric such as canvas, jute, woven, or a thick plastic, which are much more durable than disposable plastic bags and can be used for multiple times. In some cases, reusable tote bags need to be used over 100 - 7000 times for the better impact than a single-use paper or plastic (Cho, 2020).

Visual communication strategy

A visual communication strategy is a planned method of using visual components—such as layout, typography, and images—to successfully communicate with a target audience. It entails determining the main point to be made, knowing the preferences and requirements of the intended audience, and creating visual components that bolster and amplify the message's impact and clarity. Brands and organizations can engage their audience, explain complex ideas concisely, and reinforce their brand identity by carefully choosing and organizing visual elements. These

techniques are crucial for holding the attention of viewers, making information understandable, and preserving brand identity over a variety of communication platforms (Datalabs Agency, 2023)

2. RESEARCH METHOD

The research method used in this research is qualitative (Sugiyono, 2021). Literature studies and observations related to excessive accumulation of reusable tote bags were also conducted as a preresearch phase. According to Miles and Huberman, data analyze starts with reduction, data display, and drawing conclusion (DQLab, 2022). Reducing the data to collect more significant and quick information. Then, data display by removing data that is not relevant to make more systematic data based. Last, drawing conclusions based on data that has been arranged in a neater form. By analyzing the situation and ensuring the urgency level, the target of this research is run towards young people aged 20-30 years who is living in Jakarta. The data collection method was using a survey using Google Form to understand daily behaviour and habits related to the use of reusable tote bags, as well as social media habits. The next step was a focus group discussion interview categorized by age, place of residence, and frequency of reusable tote bags usage. The interviews in this research were conducted in 2 sessions, first sessions were conducted online via Zoom Meeting platform on September 13th 2023 then the second session was conducted offline on September 14th 2023. The results of the survey and interview data are new insights and then needed to analyze efficient visual communication strategies applied to communication approaches and strategies, and the communication journey.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Situation analysis of reusable tote bags hoarding situation

Situation Analysis is an explanation that functions to obtain the correct strategy formulation. It is an analysis model that can identify every weakness and advantage of an institution, making it useful in minimizing impacts and consequences that may occur in the future.

The ownership of an excessive reusable tote bags by residents can have both advantages and disadvantages. For some people, having reusable tote bags with various sizes and materials could make it easier for them to use them for various needs. People also can make reusable tote bags as other storage at home making it functional. However, this explained the fact that reusable tote bags can be functional to various needs. The large number of tote bags owned will likely make a messy or dirty house. This could occur when the frequency of ownership and usage is not comparable or does not differ significantly. In this case, the reusable tote bag, which is supposed to be owned for good usage, becomes damaged and unfit to use. The threat that will be felt is that this hoarding will end up becoming a new pile of pollution problems.

Media habits

Based on the conducted survey's results, respondents were young people ranging from the age of 20-30 years old that chose digital media as the most used media that contributed the most in their activity and mindset. The most frequently used social media is Instagram at 93,5%, followed by Line & WhatsApp at 62,9%, and TikTok at 59,7%. From the results of the media habits survey, it was also found that 43,7% of respondents spent 5-8 hours a day surfing through social media, with the main preferred content being entertainment and education, with the respective percentage of 91,9% and 74,2%. In this case, the most effective media used to communicate the messages regarding the reusable tote bags hoarding is Instagram.

Consumer insight

To find out more deeply about the target's point of view, actions, and mindset to this condition, a focus group discussion interview was conducted. From the interview, it was found out that the sources realized the accumulation of reusable tote bags in their home, however they chose to buy new reusable tote bags because they forgot to bring it when they left the house. The sources also felt that they had no way out regarding the accumulation of reusable tote bags that they owned. Furthermore, the sources also felt that they had contributed to the environment by buying and using reusable tote bags no matter the frequency of use that were only less than 5 times. In this case, sources knew and realized the condition of reusable tote bags which were no longer organized and started to feel overwhelmed. Most of them felt that the reusable bag would likely be used in the future but were unsure about the convenience and practicality of buying it directly. With that fact, the accumulation of reusable tote bags can be minimized starting from the intention, effort, and sense of ownership. Therefore, having reusable tote bags will not be a fatal problem that can be organized so that they will give positive impacts to the environment.

The results of the interview then adapted with the customer insight approach (True, Tacit, Touches the Heart, Tension Involved, Trigger) (Figure 2). It is important to know that this insight grouping can determine the visual communication strategy development as an effort to approach interest and approach that is needed in line with the target.

Figure 2

Consumer Insight (5T)

TRUE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Audience is aware of RTB hoarding - Audience often forget to bring RTB when leaving the house - The audience has no way out regarding the large number of RTBs
TACIT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Audience feels that buying and owning an RTB has already contributed to the environment - Audience only uses less than 5 RTBs
TOUCHES THE HEART	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The audience stressed by the condition of scattered RTB in the house - Overwhelmed with a lot of RTB
TENSION INVOLVED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The RTB that will be donated may be used in the future - They want to do something about RTB but confused about where to start - Hesitate between the convenience and practicality of buying directly rather than take a used RTB
TRIGGER	Audiences who choose to buy RTB again will increase the accumulation of RTB

Communication objectives

Related to the results of media habits survey and consumer insight interview that have already been conducted, the objective from this communication is to encourage targets not only to ignore the scattered reusable tote bags but also to recognize, maintain, and use them as much as possible preventing hoarding in their home. Awareness of the accumulation of reusable tote bags without action will not have any impact. People must be aware and participate actively by donating their unused or rarely used tote bags. Emphasizing the information that every reusable tote bag will undergo the process of life and journey, benefiting both people and the environment.

Communication strategies

With the determined communication objectives, the communication strategy used will refer to Donald Gunn's 12 Types of Advertising, namely with symbol and graphic analogy to demonstrate a problem or solution. This kind of communication strategy will emphasize the

situation and condition of the problem of accumulating unused reusable tote bags that end up becoming damaged.

Communication approaches

Based on the communication objectives and strategy, the effective communication can be completed by communication approach. The communication approach refers to “The Advertising Effect: How to Change Behaviour”. Through the action arrangements used in communication approach motivation can be directed to habits with ease, increasing the behavioural tendency. Therefore, to influence the behavior, the first thing to do is to influence the motivation to do the new behavior and the ease of doing it (Ferrier & Fleming, 2014).

In the first stage “Motivation” aspects examines the benefit individuals receive when they carry out this behaviour, and its effects on social norms. The next stage is “Ease” which will determine how individuals utilize skills, resources, and competences to carry out this behaviour, as well as whether the surrounding environment will support it. Based on The Advertising Effect, the recommended communication approach to reduce accumulation of reusable tote bags involves high motivation when supported with easy access. Therefore, at the motivation spurs stage, ownership and collectivism will be used to emphasize benefits and responsibilities of owning reusable tote bag (economical and practical) to support sustainability. Subsequently, during the ease spurs stage, commitment will be emphasized to ensure consistency in the new target’s behavior.

Consumer journey

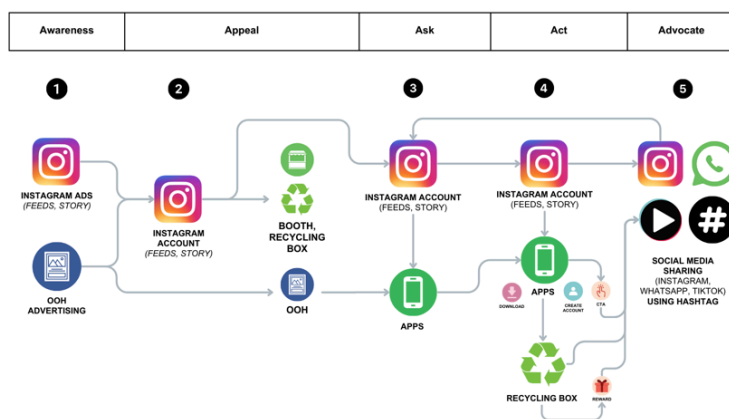
Referring to habits, insight and determining the communications effort to be used, the most effective media to use is Instagram. This choice is supported by the target audience primarily composed of youth who are active users of smartphones, with applications serving as supporting media. Applications can be utilized to track and organize the structure of well-delivered communication. Furthermore, an effective communication strategy approach is also needed to reach this research’s objective.

In this stage, the most appropriate communication and media journey is New Consumer Path 5A (Awareness, Appeal, Ask, Action, dan Advocate) (Figure 3). This journey can describe the process starting from building awareness, being interested, willing to know further by asking, and encouraging action. In the final stage, target will recommend and invite people around them to participate in this communication because of how they felt from the benefits (Kotler & Armstrong, 2017).

Figure 3
Consumer Journey (5A)

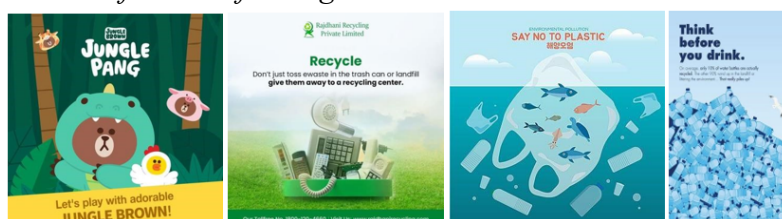
AWARENESS	I am aware of the RTB Hoarding and what impact it have if it is not addressed
APPEAL	I am interested and love to joining the campaign. I need further information
ASK	I want to know more about how to participate in this campaign in the hope of getting a solution to the RTB problem
ACTION	I want to follow the method and apply it in my daily life
ADVOCATE	I recommend and invite everyone to donate unused RTB and I have felt the benefits

Figure 4
Media Journey



The Media Journey (Figure 4) reflects how individuals navigate diverse media channels throughout their communication journey. Awareness is the first age of this consumer journey. Its primary goal is to make the target audience aware of the man problem, which is the accumulation of unused reusable tote bags, and to convey potential impacts that may occurred if they are ignored. During this stage, targets will encounter content through media used, specifically Instagram (feeds, story, ads) (Figure 5) as well as on ground media in this communication placement.

Figure 5
Visual Reference of Instagram Post

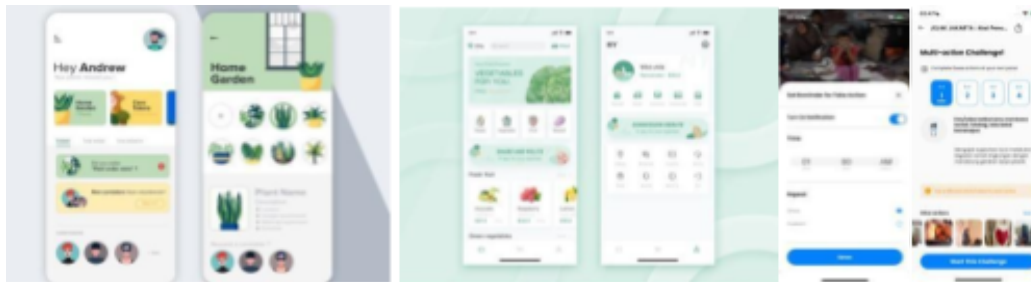


The next stage is appeal. In this stage, the target will start to show interest and feel something related to their condition from the previous stage and prompting them to want to find out. The media used is the same media from the awareness stage as further stage to increase interest and curiosity of the target through Instagram, as well as on ground media.

The target's curiosity during the appeal stage is then continued to the third stage which is ask. This stage is where the target starts to pose numerous questions and seek for further information on how to catch up in the hope of contributing to the environment. To transition between the stages before the third stage, the target may pass by the booth activation without using social media initially. However, they could later explore the Instagram account by searching the username or hashtag. Hashtag are also particularly categorized to be important because they reach targets with categorically the same interests and continuously (Alkatili et al., 2022). Additionally, the introduction of applications can help to improve sustainability in this communication (Figure 6).

Figure 6

Visual Reference for Application on Ask and Action Stages



The fourth stage is action. In this stage, targets are expected to carry out the result of the conducted communication by installing the application as well as by making donations (Figure 7). To do this new behavior in this stage will require time that is not instantaneous, in fact, in carrying out this action, the understanding of commitment and consistency is crucial to be within the target.

Figure 7

Visual Reference for Action Stages

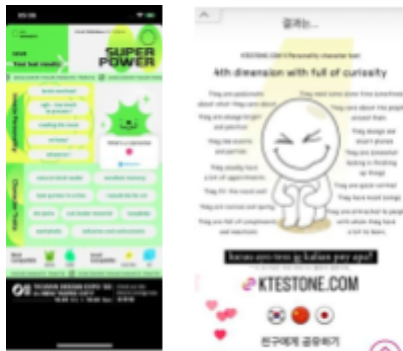


Next is the final stage which is advocate. This stage is a crucial role in supporting communication sustainability, ensuring that it does not stop at one target but continues to spread to many other. creating a sustainable communication. In this stage, the target will experience the positive impact from the action from the previous stage. When the target senses it, the target will

spontaneously recommend and invite people around them to participate in the ongoing communication correctly with direct communication or social media sharing by using the same hashtag at the ask stage. Additionally, targets could share their own character from the apps to their social media (Figure 8). In this position, it is anticipated that another target will do the same thing so that this advocate stage can become the stage that leads to overall communication sustainability.

Figure 8

Visual Reference for Advocate Stages



Target segmentation

This communication targets young aged people, both men and women around 20-30 in DKI Jakarta. Target consists of college students, fresh graduates, or upper-middle class workers that are actively using smartphones, especially social media, having an awareness about their environment condition but are accustomed to something easy, fast, and practical. Target is also easily influenced, up to date, and prioritizes simplicity that has a big impact. Targets also have some behaviors such as doing intentional online shopping especially for online food, and frequently doing outdoor activities, such as public spaces. The target is aimed at those who live in houses, and apartments in large city centres. In this case, the target place of residence will support the sustainability of this communication as it influences ownership and communication needs.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The urgency in communicating this message lies in the fact that reusable tote bags can be more harmful than plastic waste. Many people think they are already doing something eco-friendly by owning reusable tote bags. However, it's not as straightforward as it is. By only owning them but not using it, it will turn more to hoarding than saving. In the end, the reusable bags are likely to become no more than trash itself. In terms of making new behaviors, how the messages communicate well is one of the keys. The communication should be directly to the target and sustain because the communication will require time that is not instantaneous. In this case, the New Communication Path 5A (Awareness, Appeal, Ask, Action, Advocate) is effectively useful because of the last few stages. The Last stage, Advocate, is needed to make this communication sustainable. Targets are expected to share their experience to another target, and they will do the same thing so that this advocate stage can become the stage that leads to overall communication sustainability.

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