

Value Co-Creation and Sustainability Communication: A Case Study of Lyfe With Less' Instagram and Telegram

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Abstract

Globally, the term sustainability has been widely used since its first inception back in the 1990s. However, the term itself has only been popularly used in Indonesia for the past half-decade, following the initiation of the Sustainable Development Goals by the UN, which Indonesia supported. Since then, there have been numerous sustainability initiatives by civil communities that are based online. These communities somewhat became the 'spearheads' of sustainable consumption communication in Indonesia, educating netizens about various aspects of sustainable consumption, through various platforms – including Instagram and Telegram. This paper aims to analyze how followers and group-members co-create value related to sustainable consumption and lifestyle across the two communication platforms of a sustainable lifestyle online community: Lyfewithless. This paper employs qualitative approach, using value co-creation concept to understand the interaction and communication pattern on both Instagram & Telegram, and communication about/of sustainability as a macro lens to situate this case in the growing body of sustainability communication. Through analyzing the interaction on both platforms during the period of February-May 2022 and February-May 2023, this study shows that the Instagram account & Telegram group of Lyfewithless have slightly different value co-creation dynamics and levels, but complement each other to co-create value among its members and followers in building and rebuilding understanding about sustainable consumption. Furthermore, this study proposes that to achieve its intended impact, organizations must conduct both communication about sustainability and communication of sustainability. This study contributes to the sustainable consumption communication literature and supports the notion that civil communities hold important role in educating more people to adapt a more sustainable consumption behavior in the Indonesian context.

Keywords: sustainable consumption communication; sustainability communication; value co-creation, telegram; instagram

Introduction

In the past decade, discussion about sustainability communication has been growing more robust, with more scholars focusing specifically in this new area of research and contributing in various discourses in public

relations practice, corporate social responsibility, consumers behavior, tourism, and consumption practice (Fischer et al., 2016, 2021; S. Kang, 2019; Tölkes, 2020; Weder et al., 2019). Similarly, studies on value co-creation has risen both in volumes and topics;

and studies found that value co-creation is indeed an important element in fostering a more sustainable consumption practice in various aspects of society (Palakshappa & Dodds, 2021; Pomeroy, 2017; Scandellius & Cohen, 2016; Trencher et al., 2017).

However, very few studies look at these two concepts together; and the concept of value co-creation is more often researched under the umbrella field of marketing. For example, Palakshappa and Dodds (2021) investigated how sustainable consumption could be mobilized by brand co-creation through their marketing efforts. In the study, even though the brands' social media platform is among the units of analysis, but the focus of the study is in the overall marketing of the brands. Branding is also a sub-field in marketing that employs value co-creation in many studies, and indeed brand co-creation is a growing body of research as well (Bange et al., 2020; Cheung et al., 2020; Hajli et al., 2016).

On the other hand, the concept of sustainability communication is generally discussed as a 'standalone' topic, providing empirical evidences in differing contexts. Many studies in the field investigate factors that contribute to successful communication to promote sustainability in various area: tourism (Luk, 2021; Tölkes, 2020), social media content (Kapoor et al., 2021; Rahman, 2022), corporate communication (Reilly & Larya, 2018), packaged food (Tseng et al., 2021), and fashion (Turunen & Halme, 2021).

To the extent of the author's knowledge, there are still limited number of studies that discuss sustainability communication and value co-creation as related concepts or processes. One of the papers that enunciates that is from Ge & Gretzel (2018) which argues that value co-creation is indeed a complex process that involves different stakeholders and is done through various communicative actions – particularly in social media. In a slightly different vein, Scandellius and Cohen (2016) proposes a way for brands to collaborate and co-create with their stakeholders to achieve a more sustainable practice through branded sustainability programs, as an alternative to the more conventional approach of corporate social responsibility (CSR).

Going back to the identified gap, this paper endeavors to contribute to the limited discussions that combine sustainability communication and value co-creation; and

argue that value co-creation is principal in further promoting a more sustainable consumption lifestyle. Moreover, sustainability communication perspective also brings in valuable insight to value co-creation on the different levels of dynamic and engagement of value co-creation.

This paper will scrutinize one Indonesian online community, Lyfe With Less (LWL), and is interested in exploring how this online community contributes to a sustainable consumption lifestyle through value co-creation process on its two platforms: Instagram and Telegram. As such, this paper aims to answer the question: how does an online social-media-based community communicate and co-create value about sustainable consumption among its members?

Theoretical Framework

Theoretical background contains previous theories as the basis of research and the temporary hypothesis. The theory can be in the form of scientific articles, articles in journals, textbooks, or other sources of scientific writing. This theory will be used to provide state of the art of your manuscript from research problems that have been proposed. The theory that should be used primarily is the theory related to communications. Other theories that are still needed to solve the problem of research to support theories that are delivered after the theory of communication is discussed.

This paper will take a starting point at the robust literature in the value co-creation field, and will briefly summarize some main points that help build the argument for this paper. After that, the author will highlight arguments related to value co-creation for sustainability and the concepts of communication *on* and *about* sustainability. Lastly, more detailed information about Lyfe With Less (LWL) will be described to provide a better understanding of the context.

Concepts and implementation of value co-creation

Value co-creation emerged as a research field following the notable studies related to service-dominant logic in marketing (Lusch & Vargo, 2006; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004; Vargo & Lusch, 2004). These studies argue that marketing needed to shift from goods-dominant logic to service-dominant logic. Goods-

dominant logic is based on the exchange of goods that are usually manufactured output and focused on tangible resources, embedded value, and transactions (Vargo & Lusch, 2004). Service-dominant logic offers a new perspective on exchange that focuses on service provision, and consequently, the exchanged value no longer lies on the goods but on the customers' feedback of the value proposition from the company. In the service-dominant logic, customers are no longer mere recipients of goods, but instead a coproducer of service. In this logic, 'marketing is a process of doing things in interaction with the customer' (Vargo & Lusch, 2004).

Following the new perspective, since 2008 there has been an increase in literature related to the topic of co-creation, with a noticeable increase in recent years (Kargaran et al., 2022). The literature certainly does not exist in vacuum and we also witness the shift in how firms and companies manage and foster relationships with their customers, putting them in a central role in the marketing efforts. Indeed, the customer-firm relationship is considered to be essential to the success of an existing/new product or service (Yen et al., 2020). Moreover, studies also found a positive correlation between customers' value co-creation with customer loyalty, commitment, and satisfaction (France et al., 2018; Rubio et al., 2020). Therefore, many companies now employ a co-creation approach to build solid engagement with their customers and other stakeholders, including internal stakeholders (Merrilees et al., 2020).

Due to its collaborative nature, value co-creation has been adapted and implemented by firms in various fields to engage their stakeholders in more than one-way interaction. Co-creation is used by firms and companies in various industries, such as fashion, hospitality, service, and even luxury brands (Hussain et al., 2021; Palakshappa & Dodds, 2021; Üçok Hughes et al., 2016; Yen et al., 2020).

Value co-creation for sustainability

As a concept, sustainability is simple, yet complex and loaded with meanings. Today, discussions about sustainability mostly refer to the environmental sustainability of sustainable development, that concerned with "a form of economics and lifestyle that does not endanger our future" (Godemann & Michelsen, 2016, p. 5). Sustainability became a bigger global

concern following the UN's launch of the SDGs in 2018 and prompted countries, firms, organizations, and civil society to endeavor to achieve them by 2030.

Businesses move swiftly and allocate resources to move toward sustainability along their business process. This is done more and more using a value co-creation approach to engage other stakeholders and produce more value for those stakeholders as well. The result of this strategy has extended its field of implementation to retail, engineering, education, travel, hospitality, and other fields (Almeida et al., 2021), and has contributed to the growing literature on value co-creation for sustainability.

In the field of education, value co-creation is employed by universities and societal organizations to create and implement sustainability-advancing knowledge, tools, and societal transformations (Trencher et al., 2017). In the fashion retail industry, brands such as Lululemon and Kowtow are co-creating sustainability with their consumers through various online platforms, as well as continuing their sustainable business process (Palakshappa & Dodds, 2021). In sustainability co-creation, the role of corporate sustainability communication is also important in creating a conducive environment to foster collaboration, innovation, and co-creation (Scandellius & Cohen, 2016). As such, value co-creation is a versatile approach that can be used to create, implement, and communicate sustainability programs in various organizations.

Being a relatively new field, value co-creation has many literatures proposing different models and framework that applies in different contexts. In the Product-Service Systems (PSS) field, value co-creation framework includes PSS suppliers and providers, the society, and the customers and end-users (Li & Found, 2017). Palakshappa & Dodds (2021) proposed a sustainability co-creation framework that describes how sustainability is co-created from the brand's and customer's perspectives. In a sponsored online community ecosystem, a model on value co-creation was developed and showed how firms can act as both co-creator and facilitator (Priharsari et al., 2020). The latter frameworks will be used to analyze the interaction between members and the community administrator, and among members in LWL's Instagram and

Telegram, and will be explained in the methodology section.

Sustainability Communication and Sustainable Consumption Communication

As a research field, sustainability communication is a relatively new field, but is growing and becoming increasingly relevant. It breathes the similar air as its ‘older siblings’, namely environmental communication and climate change communication, and is defined as a process of “mutual understanding dealing with the future development of society at the core of which is a vision of sustainability” (Godemann & Michelsen, 2016). This definition is indeed Western-centric, as the discourse was first introduced in the Western world, but studies from Asia have begun to emerge (Kasuma et al., 2022; Mohamad Saleh, 2022; Rahman, 2022).

Besides empirical studies, conceptual studies in the field are also prominent. One of the most notable of which is the differentiation

between communication of sustainability, *about* sustainability, and *for* sustainability (Newig et al., 2013). Based on the study, communication *of* sustainability refers to communication that focuses mostly on one-way message distribution and is generally done to inform or provide legitimation to an institution’s behavior.

On the other hand, communication *about* sustainability focuses on the process of exchanging and debating ideas, information, issues, and interpretations about sustainability issues. In other words, it focuses on establishing a discourse on sustainability in the public and can therefore take a one-to-many or even many-to-many mode of message distribution. Taking on a slightly different aspect, namely the normative aspect, communication *for* sustainability concerns about how communication should have a transformative impact towards the SDGs, and not just on providing information and increasing awareness.




	Communication counterproductive to sustainability	Neutral communication on sustainability	Communication for sustainability
Communication of sustainability	Greenwashing in sustainability reporting or corporate statement	Scientific communication of “facts” and updates related to sustainability	Educating students or the public
Communication about sustainability	Discourses oriented to impede genuine sustainable development	Scientific deliberation about sustainability-related phenomena	Participatory dialogues and forums
	<i>Defensive</i> 		 <i>Transformative</i>

Figure 1. Differences in Sustainability Communication Process with Example
Source: Newig et. al., 2013.

Along with the growth of sustainability communication discourse, another body of knowledge expands, namely sustainable consumption communication (SCC). It is a relatively young multidisciplinary research area and is still in the emerging field category in the context of sustainable communication, in contrast to, for example, climate change communication, which is more developed. Communication plays an important role in the problematization of consumption and in encouraging discussion and debate among society toward changing consumption patterns (Bengtsson et al., 2018).

According to Geiger et al. (2017), sustainable consumption is the “individual act of satisfying needs in various aspects of life by obtaining, using and disposing of goods and services without compromising ecological and

socio-economic conditions of all people (present or future) to meet their needs”. Thus, SCC could be described as a communication process that aims to transform consumption patterns to be more sustainable.

Following this understanding of sustainability communication and SCC, the case study being analyzed in this paper indeed falls under both sustainability communication, and more specifically, sustainable consumption communication.

Lyfe With Less: Minimalist Community Indonesia

LWL identifies itself as a “minimalist community Indonesia” that aims to be the ‘most influential platform for minimalism life in Indonesia’ (*About Lyfe with Less*, n.d.). It was established in 2018 by Cynthia Lestari, initially

as a self-healing journey platform for Cynthia herself in facing her quarter-life crisis. The platform turned out to receive positive responses from other people, and so the community was established as it progressed.

The community has five main communication platforms, namely Instagram, Telegram, website, podcast, and YouTube.

Among the five, YouTube and podcast are not as actively managed as the other platforms. On the other hand, Instagram and Telegram are the most active, with the most followers/members. Both platforms are regularly updated, and filled with active interactions with and among members/followers.

Table 1. Lyfewithless Online Communication Platforms (as per Sep 30th, 2023)

Platform	No. of Followers	Main Usage
Instagram	125k	As main communication platform, sharing information about different campaigns, values and principles of minimalist lifestyle, collaboration programs.
Telegram Group "Lycfewithless"	5,285	Multi-way interactions between members, sharing information, tips, how to slowly adopt the minimalist lifestyle (incl. reducing waste, using natural products, etc.).
Website	n/a	Provides information on the background, vision, mission; as well as different campaigns. Provides blog-type articles related to minimalist lifestyle, e-zine, events, and how to contact them.
YouTube	394	Platform to store recorded video of live-streamed events/talk show involving Lycfewithless.
Podcast (Spotify)	n/a	Platform to share short podcasts (duration ranges from 7mins to 1hr) related to minimalist lifestyle

In their Instagram, LWL publishes updates in the form of feeds and reels regularly, 3-5 times/week. Their contents could be categorized into several topic areas, such as *#BelajarJadiMinimalis* (*#LearnToBeMinimalist*), *#BijakBerkonsumsi* (*#ConsumeWisely*), *#LWLTalk*, *#LWLChallenge*, and *#AkuCukup*. Besides posting content on different ways to live a minimalist lifestyle and reduce consumption in one's daily life, they also organize events related to their main objective.

Their Telegram group is an extension of their Instagram, and members are free to communicate and share information, practical tips, and best practices for shifting to a more minimalist and sustainable consumption lifestyle. LWL also runs a 'side account' for their *#SalingSilang* program – which is a barter or 'declutter-sale' program among members of the *#SalingSilang* group on Telegram. On top of that, LWL also posts collaboration content with other brands, such as Emina, Unilever Indonesia, and Bank Jago Syariah.

LWL is among many online social-media-based communities in Indonesia that promote sustainability issues from a variety of angles. These angles include, for example, composting and waste reduction

([@sustainableindonesia](#), [@zerowaste.id_official](#)), sustainable lifestyle tips and information ([@sustanation](#), [@cleanomic](#)), and plastic reduction, recycling and upcycling ([@parong.pong](#), [@kertabumirecyclingcenter](#), [@byebyeplasticbags](#)).

The recent emergence of these communities and initiatives in Indonesia indicates positive uptake and interest in the sustainability issue among young people in the country. Moreover, this development opens up the possibility for exploratory and investigative research on the impact that these communities have in furthering sustainable consumption among their followers.

Material and Methodology

This paper will approach the case using qualitative perspective, with case study method. The author believes that to understand the pattern of communication among members to co-create values, an emphasis on context is very important. The richness of context and content in information sharing and exchange on Instagram and Telegram is best viewed through the qualitative lens, where 'context provides a central role' (Tracy, 2020). By employing qualitative approach, the author hopes to be

able to delve deeper into the process of value co-creation through information sharing, chats, discussion, and experience sharing among members, and to gain comprehension of the differences in communication pattern across the two platforms.

The methodology used in this study is case study, or the examination of suppositions and principles as they relate to case-based inquiry (Denzin & Lincoln, 2019). Inspired by netnography, this study will analyze the online interaction in Instagram and Telegram using extant data from two periods: February-May 2022 and February-May 2023. Due to its more naturalistic and unobtrusive data collection method, it allows researchers to gain ‘information on the symbolism, meanings, and consumption patterns of online consumer groups’ (Kozinets, 2002). Prior to data collection, the researcher requested permission to use the online content & interaction to the founder, and the permission was granted.

This study will scrutinize a meso-level case, at the community level. Lyfe With Less identifies itself as ‘Minimalist Community Indonesia’, and was established in 2018. The author chose LWL as it is one of the top communities related to sustainable consumption in Indonesia that has a large number of followers on Instagram but does not have commercial interest. LWL also has a Telegram group for those who want to interact directly with other like-minded individuals, allowing another avenue for the author to observe and analyze the communication patterns and dynamics among members.

As qualitative research is somewhat immersive in nature, and the researcher is not only a detached observer but rather an instrument of the research itself (Tracy, 2020),

this paper and its case study is also a community that the author is interested in. The author has been personally interested in the sustainable consumption topic and has followed LWL – along with other similar online communities – since 2019. LWL is of special interest for the author because it not only promotes ‘action’, but a deeper shift in value and understanding of mindful consumption or minimalist lifestyle. This will be elaborated and discussed in detail in the next section.

For this paper, the author will analyze content and interaction with and among members/followers of LWL on two platforms: Instagram and Telegram, between the abovementioned time frames. The analysis on Instagram will adapt the co-creating sustainability framework by Palakshappa and Dodds (2021), and the analysis on Telegram will use the value co-creation ecosystem in sponsored online community from Priharsari *et al.* (2020). Although both frameworks are not developed for the context of independent online community such as LWL, both frameworks still provide valuable and quite suitable basis to analyze the interaction on Instagram and Telegram – from the perspective of both the ‘brand’ (LWL) and the customers.

The co-creating sustainability framework was developed to understand the role of brand and the customer in promoting sustainability through various marketing platforms, including online platforms such as website and Twitter. The author argues that this framework can assist in analyzing how LWL as a ‘brand’ interacts and co-creates sustainability on social media platform – in this case, Instagram.



Figure 2. Co-Creating Sustainability Framework, adapted from Palakshappa & Dodds (2021)

On the other hand, the value co-creation ecosystem in firm sponsored online community framework provides more dimensions to analyze the interaction on tighter-knit, more

dialogic online communication platform such as Telegram. In this case, the Telegram group is the online community that is ‘sponsored’ by Lyfewithless.

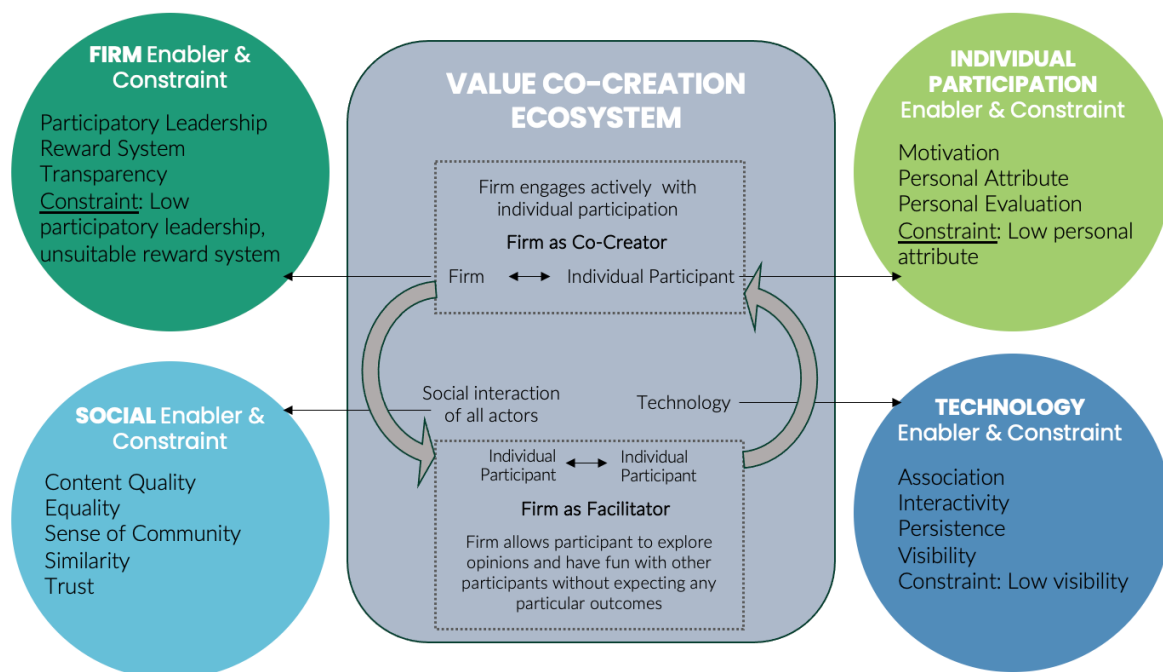


Figure 3. Value Co-Creation Ecosystem, adapted from Priharsari, et. al. (2020)

To better provide contextual understanding on the interactivity on both platforms, a descriptive quantitative content analysis is also done by quantifying the number of posts and interaction (likes, comments, share) on Instagram; and the number of messages on Telegram. Analysis would also be conducted by comparing the two periods of observation.

Result and Discussion

Observation and analysis of Lyfewithless’ Instagram and Telegram account shows that LWL as an online community is quite active and passionate about sustainable lifestyle, and the community indeed serves as a value co-creation platform that contributes to achieving more sustainable lifestyle – one person at a time. The result and discussion will start with the concept of minimalism as an alternative to ‘sustainability’ jargon that has become somewhat overused, followed by how LWL falls into the sustainability co-creation framework by Palakshappa and Dodds (2021) and Priharsari et al. (2020), and the different kinds of interaction and hence, value co-

creation, that take place on Instagram and Telegram.

Minimalism as an alternative to ‘sustainable’ jargon

Although minimalist lifestyle as a concept receives critique for focalizing problems with vague narratives such as ‘too much’, ‘clutter’ and ‘busy’ and ‘leaving unquestioned the economic system as such’ (Meissner, 2019), it is still relevant to promote more sustainable behaviors in longer term and to encourage firms and producers to seek ways to make their production modes more sustainable to adhere to the customers’ minimalist lifestyle (J. Kang et al., 2021). Moreover, Kang et al. (2021) also argues that minimalism has positive effect on flourishing and negative effect on depression – another benefit of minimalist lifestyle.

Taking into context the period when LWL was established – year 2018 – LWL’s use of the term ‘minimalist’ could be viewed as an effort to differentiate itself from other similar online communities and initiatives that emerge during that period. Back then, the term ‘sustainability’ was trending, and many new

online communities or initiatives use words and jargons related to it, such as Sustaination, Sustainable Indonesia, ZeroWasteID, and Zero Waste Nusantara.

The term ‘minimalist’ itself could be translated into different behaviors and actions, that mostly correlate closely with sustainable consumption, mindful consumption, and waste reduction or zero-waste. Although not using the word ‘sustainable’ in their name or description, LWL’s values and objective is aligned with other communities mentioned above, and they often collaborate or support the same campaign together. One such collaboration is the #PakaiSampaiHabis campaign from LWL and ZeroWasteID that was still ongoing until the end of August 2022. It is such values and behaviors that LWL promote and educate through their communication channels.

The use of minimalism also allows them to tailor their content in a more versatile way

and relate the concept with various topics, such as Ramadan, women empowerment, financial management, and wellbeing. This opens more opportunities to collaborate with other communities and brands, in crafting messages that are more relevant to their followers/members.

In terms of account growth, this strategy also proves to work, particularly visible on their Instagram, as can be seen in their growth from 2022 to 2023. A few notable points are: (1) despite the decrease in number of posts during Feb-May 2023 compared to the previous year, there is an increase in comment and shares, i.e. the active engagement (Dolan et al., 2015); (2) increase in number of reels and decrease in number of carousel feed shows shift in content strategy related to platform’s algorithm. More detailed figures are highlighted in Table 2.

Table 2. Lyfe With Less Key Figures Growth (2022 to 2023)

Key Figures	Feb-May 2022	Feb-May 2023	Increase (in %)
Instagram followers	84,800	125k	47.4%
Telegram group members	4,634	5,294	14.2%
Total no. of post (IG):	94	73	-22.3%
Feed	32 (34%)	25 (34%)	=
Carousel feed	49 (52%)	25 (34%)	-18%
Reels	13 (14%)	23 (32%)	18%
Total interactions (IG):	150,173	122,665	-18.3%
Likes	143,902	115,154	-19.9%
Comment	3,089	3,517	13.8%
Shares (reels only)	3,182	3,994	25.5%

Value co-creation for sustainability by Lyfewithless on Instagram

During the first observation period, 1 February-31 May 2022, LWL posted a total of 94 content feeds, averaging 23.5 posts per month. The total number of engagements in terms of likes and comments are 143,902 and 3,089, respectively. With total number of followers 84.8k (per 30 June 2022), this amounts to an average of 1,531 likes and 33 comments per post. During the second observation period, 1 February-31 May 2023, LWL posted 73 content feeds, averaging 18.25 post per month. The total number of engagements for likes and comments are 115,154 and 3,517, or an average of 1,556 likes and 47 comments per post. As mentioned in the previous section, the engagement for LWL’s post is quite high. Even with the decrease in number of posts in the second observation period, but the engagement remains high and

even higher in the active engagement activity (comment & share). The higher engagement rate could be used as an indicator of value co-creation as it provides a snapshot of how the brand engage with the customers through relevant and relatable content, and how customers are willing to engage with the brand in a more meaningful way than just following the brand.

Taking the ‘co-creating sustainability’ framework from Palakshappa & Dodds (2021), it becomes more apparent on how LWL co-create the sustainability value through interaction with its followers. LWL consistently facilitates co-creation by embedding their minimalist value that are mostly aligned with sustainability behaviors into all their ‘marketing’ practices. Although as an online community LWL do not promote or market any product, but they do promote and market the values and practices that they

believe in, namely the minimalist lifestyle and behaviors. In this sense, it could be said that LWL acts as a ‘brand’ in co-creating sustainability through interacting and engaging with their customers.

The co-creating sustainability framework outlines four aspects of marketing

practices through which brand facilitates co-creation, namely product/service, supply chain, promotion, engagement. Below is the analysis on how LWL implements all aspects in their online activity on Instagram:

Table 3. Analysis of Lyfewithless using co-creating sustainability framework (Palakshappa & Dodds, 2021)

Aspect of marketing practices	Definition	Analysis of Lyfewithless on Instagram / Telegram	Empirical example
Product/service	Creating, producing and delivering sustainable products	The product itself is the ‘value’ that they promote and co-create with followers and other stakeholders.	Feeds and highlight content that are consistently promoting and educating about minimalist lifestyle and mindful consumption.
Supply chain	Ensuring a responsible and transparent supply chain	Due to its online and ‘value-based’ nature, LWL’s supply chain is not apparent. However, we could translate this into a responsible and transparent sponsorship or collaboration program that it organizes. In this sense, LWL tries to be responsible and transparent by stating their partners or sponsors in their content.	Collaboration content with other stakeholder – such as with Unilever Indonesia, Emina Cosmetics, Cahaya Naturals, etc. – always have the counterpart’s logo besides LWL logo. The collaboration contents also mention the counterpart’s IG handle both on the content’s owner and the caption.
Promotion	Actively promoting sustainable practices and consumption	Promoting minimalist value that are mostly aligned with sustainable practices and consumption regularly; posting new feed 4-5 times/week and engage daily with Telegram group members.	Organizing #PakaiSampaiHabis campaign, Angkut Brankas, encouraging mindful and sustainable consumption and purchase through bite-sized educational content; facilitating discourse on sustainable consumption on Telegram.
Engagement	Implementing brand engagement and co-creation activities online and offline	Actively engaging with followers through feed comments, organizing webinars or IG live to discuss about various related topics, creating engaging campaigns.	Replying to questions and comments on feed and providing answers and recommendations (about 70% of the time; sometimes other followers help providing answer or recommendation), collaborate with multiple stakeholders (brands, communities) to promote their values.

Reciprocally, to co-create sustainability, the consumers must engage with the brand through three aspects: consumption, brand

engagement, and personal. Below is the analysis of Lyfewithless’ customers engagement aspects:

Table 4. Lyfewithless' Customers Engagement Aspects

Aspect of customer engagement	Definition	Analysis of LWL followers on Instagram / Telegram	Empirical example
Consumption	Purchasing, consuming and disposing sustainable products	Customers follow the IG and implement the value and behaviors that LWL promotes / Members join Telegram group and share personal experience	Followers stating their actions and behaviors when replying to the content / Members of Telegram group share practical tips & experience through
Brand engagement	Participates in brand interactivity and interactive activities online and offline	Followers engage with LWL by liking and replying to content, joining group and participate in community meetup.	Followers/members share their experience, tips, ask questions on IG comment or Telegram group. Fellow followers/members contribute to the discussion.
Personal	Identifies with sustainable values and open to learning about sustainability	Customers who decide to follow LWL or join Telegram group are most likely those who are open to learn about sustainability – albeit through minimalist approach.	Customers follow the IG account, and share their actions, learning process to adapt more sustainable lifestyle in the comments section.

The interaction between LWL and its followers on Instagram shows value co-creation dynamics between the 'brand' and the customers through likes, share and comments – both on the feed and the reels. From Newig et al.'s (2013) perspective of sustainability communication, the value co-creation dynamic on Instagram could be categorized as communication *of* sustainability, which mainly focuses on educating their followers about living a more minimalist lifestyle in a more informative instead of discursive way. However, due to the interactive nature of social media, it could be argued that this dynamic could be considered as communication *about* sustainability. This discussion will be expanded in the latter section.

Lyfewithless' role as co-creator and facilitator in sustainability co-creation on Telegram

Furthering the interaction on Instagram, followers who are keen on engaging with other members and discussing related topics in real time can join the Lyfe with Less Telegram group. At the time of the research (updated on October 1, 2023), the group has 5,293 members who actively discuss about various topics regarding minimalist and sustainable consumption lifestyle.

This dynamic on Telegram is analyzed using Priharsari *et al.*'s (2020) framework for firm-sponsored online communities. Although the paper takes firm sponsored online

communities as the object of the study and argues that firm sponsored online community differs from traditional organizations in their fluidity and the extent to which it depends on voluntary participation, it also states that in said community most individual participants 'come and go easily, while the sponsoring firm does not change. Therefore the firm is assumed to have the responsibility of coordinating value co-creation' (Nambisan *et al.*, 2017 in Priharsari *et al.*, 2020). Following this line of argument, LWL could be categorized as the 'firm' who sponsors the online community on Instagram & Telegram. Similarly, the same could be said with LWL as an online community: followers can easily follow or unfollow the account, whereas the community itself does not change and must coordinate value co-creation, especially since the community is based on value and not goods/products.

LWL's action to create and post relatable and engaging content that prompts followers to contribute digitally (e.g. through comment) or physically (e.g. taking action to clean and separate empty containers), as well as replying to customers' comments, is where it acts as value co-creator. Its role as co-creator also includes 'reward system, internal and external motives and tasks' (Priharsari *et al.*, 2020). As such, collaborations with other stakeholders/brands/communities, campaigns that encourage customers to participate in, and

webinars to share knowledge and values also falls under the brand's role as value co-creator. More than that, value co-creation also takes place in the interaction among customers in the comment sections, where customer reply to other customers and providing answer, information, or sharing personal experience. In this way, LWL functions as facilitator in the community, in line with Priharsari *et al.* (2020). LWL doesn't censor or moderate the discussion, instead it encourages the behavior by showing appreciation.

On the Telegram group, both roles as co-creator and facilitator are even more prominent. As co-creator, LWL does engages actively with individual participants by monitoring the discussion, replying to questions and sharing information about events or collaborations. LWL engages with members in two ways: through 'firm-admin' (username: Lyfe with Less) and through 'human-admin' (username: Permata Salsabila). Both admins act as the firm, but the groups' housekeeping matters seem to be delegated to Permata Salsabila; and although not explicitly stated, the user Lyfe with Less seems to be the founder, Cynthia Lestari and other members refers to them as 'Kak Cyn'.

In their role as facilitator, LWL allows members to discuss and exchange information about all sorts of topic. The topics include, but not limited to: practical tips on minimalist/sustainable consumption lifestyle, where to source various eco-friendly products (e.g. *lerak*, oxy powder), sharing resources (e.g. available eco-enzyme, old containers), where to distribute old goods (e.g. clothes, expired make-ups). Discussions and topics move freely and members are keen on answering questions that popped in the group, sharing their personal experience, referring other Instagram accounts – personal, community, or brands – to other members. Mentioning other accounts or brands is not restricted, and the group members even collaborate to develop an online collaborative document that list all communities/initiatives related to minimalist or sustainable consumption lifestyle.

This online dynamic of value co-creation ecosystem is certainly not only due to LWL's as co-creator and facilitator. Members' individual participation, social aspects, as well

as technology also contributes to the dynamic of LWL group. The members share the same interest related to the objective of the group and therefore are motivated to participate and contribute in the group's discussion. Although not all members are equally active, but the group's dynamic is quite equal, without anyone dominating the discussion or answering all the questions. The knowledge that are being shared and exchanged are varied, and thus contributing to the 'sum-expertise' of the group – which relates to the social aspect of the ecosystem.

In the social aspect, content quality seems to be one of the most prominent characteristics that shape the group dynamic. The members are also equal in that there is no one member who is dubbed as 'senior', but everyone has their own experience, skills, and knowledge to give to the group. Sense of community is also built through shared values and interest.

All of these is facilitated by technology – in this case, Telegram – with its own affordances. It allows for group interaction with large number of members, and thus enabling many-to-many message exchange in real time. Interactivity on the platform is easy and members are allowed to share pictures, videos, and links. The 'instant view' feature also makes link-sharing easier. In terms of visibility, the platform facilitates search within chat/group with ease. In the context of this case study, Indonesia, Telegram is also gaining popularity, and is now the 5th most-used social media platform (*Digital Report 2023: Indonesia*, n.d.). More details on how the four aspects of enabler of value co-creation ecosystem is accomplished by LWL can be seen in Table 5.

Following this discussion, from the perspective of sustainability communication (Newig *et al.*, 2013), the dynamic on Telegram falls more into the category of communication about sustainability. On Telegram, the group dynamic centers on building and nurturing discourses and participatory dialogue to understand and implement more sustainable lifestyle through minimalist and more sustainable consumption approach. This will further be discussed in the next section.

Table 5. Value Co-Creation Ecosystem of Lyfe With Less

Firm	Individual Participation
Pinned message (rules, event promotion) 'Firm' admin (Lyfe with Less) & 'Human' admin (Permata Salsabila) No reward system Community participatory leadership	Actively sharing – asking questions, answering, sharing experience Reminding – of rules, of related accounts & website Equal activeness every day Broad range of topic
Social	Technology
Highly relevant content for members Equality among members Sense of community built through shared value Similar interest among members Trust in the 'sum-expertise' of the members	Telegram enables large number of members Ability to share image, links (with instant view) Persistence and visibility are accommodated quite well, ease of finding information Growing popularity/common-ness to use Telegram

Communication of and about sustainability: complementary process to achieve sustainability objective

Albeit being a decade old, Newig et al.'s (2013) differentiation between types/modes of sustainability-related communication is still prevalent and provides a strong vantage point to expand discussion about sustainability communication in its wide variety of application. In this paper, LWL as an online community employs both modes – communication *of* and *about* sustainability – in their interaction with followers/members on Instagram and Telegram to achieve their objective, namely to educate more people about minimalist lifestyle. This objective, the author believes, also leads to the bigger goal of a more sustainable lifestyle. Thus, it could be said that LWL conducts all three communication modes: communication *of*, *about*, and *for* sustainability.

Firstly, LWL conducts communication *of* sustainability mainly through their Instagram account that functions as their main channel. Contents published are mostly in an informational/educational manner that talks about different ways of living a more minimalist and sustainable consumption lifestyle through their topic areas (e.g. #BelajarJadiMinimalis, #LWLChallenge, #HowToCare). However, due to the interactive nature of Instagram, followers can still interact with LWL through likes, comments, or share. Some of these comments developed into a casual discussion, and thus contributes to the discourse about minimalist and sustainable consumption lifestyle. In this sense, LWL's Instagram content can also be a form of communication *about* sustainability, albeit in a limited way.

Secondly, LWL conducts communication *about* sustainability mainly on

their Telegram group. In this platform, the discussion, information and knowledge exchange, as well as experience sharing are truly facilitated by LWL and are co-created by both LWL and the members. This process disseminates messages, builds understanding, fosters networking and a sense of community and support that is needed to practice minimalist and more sustainable consumption lifestyle. This latter part also highlights an important aspect of sustainability, namely community. As Hes (2017) aptly states, "there is no sustainability without community engagement", and indeed community has been identified as an element that is integral to shift to a more sustainable consumption life(style) (Akenji & Chen, 2016; Schmitz et al., 2019).

Finally, in terms of communication *for* sustainability, LWL conducts it through their activities – both online and offline, through Instagram and Telegram. In fact, LWL's objective is to influence minimalism life, which is congruent with more sustainable consumption and sustainability. In the macro context of achieving sustainable development goals, LWL contribution through sustainability communication is in disseminating knowledge, concerns, ideas, and practical solutions to society.

From the perspective of value co-creation, both modes of communication *of* and *about* sustainability do expedite value co-creation process, albeit in a different 'level' of dynamic. Communication *of* sustainability – that takes place mainly on Instagram – engages followers in a passive engagement form such as clicking 'likes' (Dolan et al., 2015). Comments and shares can be categorized as a less passive engagement, but not as active as an online discussion, for example. On the other hand, the discussion, ideas and knowledge exchange, practical tips and challenges sharing on

Telegram group are forms of active engagement. That said, even though the interaction and communication dynamic on LWL's Instagram and Telegram group are different, but both do contribute to value co-creation.

With regards to the impact of communication and value co-creation process on LWL's Instagram and Telegram group, the observation indicates that there is impact in terms of attitude and behavior of the followers and members. On Instagram, albeit limited, this can be seen from the comments section in which followers share about what action they have done, or their own experience. On Telegram group, this is more visible because the discussion among members is drawn from their own experience, reflection, trial and error processes in shifting to the minimalist and sustainable consumption lifestyle.

Observing the interaction on both platforms, it could be suggested that the different dynamic and mode of communication is important in achieving two things: 1) the objective of the LWL as a community, i.e. influencing people to shift to minimalism life; and 2) the discourse building around sustainable consumption lifestyle and behavior. This latter part is aligned with what Abson et al. (2017) proposes in their paper regarding "knowledge production and use in transformational processes", and further emphasize the importance of sustainability communication.

Conclusions

Discussing sustainability communication is indeed a complex matter, since both notions –sustainability and communication– are complex and widely encompassing. Adding value co-creation in this discussion contributes to the complexity of the topic discussed, and this paper can only cover a fraction of the vast subject matter in the field of sustainability communication and value co-creation.

Through the discussion above, it is apparent that LWL as an online social-media based community communicates and co-creates value about minimalist and sustainable consumption lifestyle and behavior with their followers and members through conducting both modes of communication *of* and *about* sustainability on their Instagram and Telegram group. Those modes of communication afford

different engagement types and facilitate different levels of value co-creation dynamic, but still results in achieving the community's objective and impact. Hence, this study further exemplifies the importance of civil communities in engaging people to adapt a more sustainable consumption behavior, especially in the Indonesian context.

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