



# Green Marketing and Collective Values: A Micro-Phenomenological Study of Artani Bulk Store

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**Abstract.** Amid rising awareness of sustainability, green marketing practices have evolved beyond promotional tools into communicative strategies that foster social relations between businesses and consumers. However, limited studies have investigated how such communication practices shape collective values within consumer communities, particularly at the micro-enterprise level. This study explores how Artani Bulk Store a sustainable retail business in Makassar implements communicative strategies that not only convey ecological messages but also cultivate a community of shared values. Adopting a qualitative approach and Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), data were collected through in-depth interviews with the business owner and loyal consumers. The analysis focused on consumers' lived experiences in responding to the store's communication practices. Results reveal that Artani's communication is participatory and consistent, facilitating emotional engagement and encouraging the transformation of consumption into social action. Consumers do not merely function as buyers, but as active agents within a shared narrative of change enabled through dialogic spaces, educational efforts, and community-based initiatives. This research highlights that green marketing can serve as a medium for building collective values, enhancing social cohesion, and expanding the role of marketing beyond economic exchange. In micro-enterprise contexts, value-based communication offers pathways to more grounded and meaningful sustainability practices.

**Keywords:** green marketing, value communication, consumer community, micro-enterprise, collective values.

## 1 Introduction

Environmental degradation has emerged as one of the most critical threats to planetary sustainability and human well-being. Both the [1] and [2] emphasize that unsustainable patterns of production and consumption are among the main drivers of the global ecological crisis. In the context. Business practices can No. longer be solely profit-oriented but are increasingly required to adopt sustainability values holistically—including in how they communicate with consumer.

Green marketing has emerged as a strategy that bridges market interests and environmental ethics. Previous study have demonstrated its influence on consumer

loyalty, brand image, and market differentiation [3]. However, much of this literature remains focused on managerial aspects, often framing communication merely as a tool of persuasion rather than a dialogical process capable of producing shared meaning. This leaves a conceptual gap in understanding how green marketing communication shapes social values and ethical relationships between producers and consumers.

This gap becomes especially significant in the context of micro-enterprises and local communities, where the boundaries between economic practices and social relations tend to blur. Within such ecosystems, communication is not merely about conveying product-related environmental information; it becomes part of a broader strategy to instill values, build trust, and nurture new forms of collectivity. Several studies suggest that trust and jointly constructed values play a crucial role in supporting long-term sustainability [4], [5], yet few have explored how such values are formed through micro-level, everyday communication.

In this light, the present study focuses on the green marketing communication practices of Artani Bulk Store, a community-based retail initiative in Makassar, Indonesia. Artani does more than sell package-free, eco-friendly products; it cultivates relationships with its consumers through education, collaboration, and the creation of discursive spaces. This process reflects the formation of collective values not imposed top-down by the brand, but emerging from the interaction between business actors and consumers who share similar values and lived experiences.

By employing Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), this study seeks to explore how consumers and entrepreneurs interpret Artani's communication practices within the broader context of sustainability. The focus lies not on campaign effectiveness or market performance, but on subjective experiences, affective dynamics, and social practices that position communication as a site of value production. Through this approach, the study aims to bridge the gap between green marketing communication research and the communal value-building dynamics within sustainability discourses—particularly at the micro level.

## **2 Literature Review**

### **2.1 Green Marketing as a Social Communication Practice**

Traditionally, green marketing has been defined as a promotional strategy that emphasizes the environmental attributes of products [6]. However, contemporary perspectives increasingly frame green marketing not only as commercial communication, but as a form of social construction embedded with ethical and political dimensions [7]. In this view, green marketing does more than highlight product advantages—it invites consumers to engage in lifestyle transformation.

In strategic marketing studies, [3] underscore that effective green marketing requires more than delivering ecological messages; it must also foster participatory spaces for consumers. Within these spaces, consumers are not passive recipients of information but active subjects in the communication process. This shift necessitates a transition from transactional to relational communication [8], emphasizing dialogue, transparency, and the continuity of values.

Moreover, this form of communication plays a dual role: it conveys messages while simultaneously shaping shared frames of understanding. In other words, green marketing can facilitate the development of social relations that transmit sustainability values to consumers in more affective and empathetic ways [9]. Communication thus becomes more than informational—it creates social experiences that foster emotional commitment and ethical attachment.

In micro-business and community-based retail contexts, such an approach becomes even more significant. In small-scale spaces such as bulk stores, green marketing strategies can function as media for cultivating value-based communities—not merely driven by commercial considerations, but by shared ethical aspirations. Communication becomes the key to sustaining relational integrity between entrepreneurs and consumers in maintaining sustainability as a collective project.

Accordingly, green marketing should no longer be viewed solely as an alternative sales strategy. It must be recognized as a form of social communication practice—capable of initiating lifestyle changes, fostering ecological solidarity, and creating shared values that evolve through ongoing interaction.

## 2.2 Collective Values and Consumer Communities

Collective values emerge when sustainability is no longer understood solely as an individual concern, but rather as a shared practice rooted in everyday social interactions. Wang & Lin (2021) argue that consumer values are not merely the result of individual decision-making but are shaped through symbolic interaction and social environments that mediate consumption processes. In the context of green marketing, communities become key sites for articulating and transmitting these values.

[10] show that micro-enterprises embedding social and environmental values into their operations tend to attract consumers who engage not only as buyers, but as participants in broader processes of self-transformation. Through communal activities—such as workshops, collaborative events, and discussion forums—spaces of shared values emerge, bridging personal awareness with collective identity.

These collective values strengthen the relational bond between consumers and business actors. The relationships formed are not merely transactional, but transformative. Within this process, communities are constituted—not only in structural terms but also through ideological and emotional alignment. This corresponds to what [11] describe as *sustainability communities*—groups that coalesce around shared commitments to ecological and ethical practices.

## 2.3 An Interpretive Approach to Studying Value Communication

An interpretive approach is essential for understanding how consumers make sense of their experiences within green marketing spaces. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) offers a conceptual and methodological framework to explore subjective perception and lived experience as legitimate sources of knowledge [12]. Rooted in the belief that meaning is generated through interpretive engagement with real-life experiences—rather than imposed from external assumptions—IPA is

particularly suited to examining communicative processes that are nuanced, contextual, and affective.

IPA enables the analysis of implicit and situated communication, focusing not only on what business actors and consumers say but also on how they experience and internalize sustainability messages [13]. This approach is especially relevant for exploring how value relationships are formed through sustained, inclusive, and reflective communication.

Moreover, IPA facilitates the investigation of how green marketing narratives contribute to both individual and collective identity formation. Through value-laden consumption experiences, consumers are not merely accessing products—they participate in processes of meaning-making that transcend market logic. As such, IPA opens space to consider communication as a generative site of social value [14].

In the context of this research, an interpretive framework offers a lens to examine the interconnectedness between messages, experiences, and the emergence of collective values. Rather than reducing results to statistical variables, the study interprets communication as a complex social process open to multiple layers of meaning. This makes IPA particularly well-suited for exploring how value transformation unfolds within micro-level ecosystems like Artani.

Ultimately, IPA also provides methodological flexibility to capture the depth of phenomena, while supporting a critical orientation toward sustainability communication practices. Through this lens, the research contributes both theoretically and practically to the study of marketing communication and community-based sustainability.

### 3 Methodology

This research adopts a qualitative approach using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to explore how individuals subjectively experience green marketing communication practices implemented by Artani Bulk Store, and how these practices contribute to the formation of collective values within its consumer community.

Data were collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews conducted between April and May 2025 with three purposely selected participants: two loyal consumers actively engaged with sustainability issues, and the owner of Artani, who plays a central role in designing and executing communication strategies. All interviews took place in Makassar, South Sulawesi, primarily at Artani Bulk Store, located on Jalan Bonto Lembangan, Mamajang. Each interview lasted between 45 and 60 minutes, was audio-recorded with participant consent, and subsequently transcribed verbatim.

Data collection was complemented by participatory observation during community events initiated by Artani, such as sustainability workshops and educational sessions. Data analysis followed the IPA process outlined by Smith, Flowers, and Larkin [15], including: iterative reading of transcripts, idiographic meaning identification, thematic clustering, and the synthesis of cross-narrative patterns that reveal the dynamics of collective value formation.

Data were processed manually and assisted by NVivo software to facilitate coding and thematic connection. To ensure data credibility, techniques such as member checking and a consistent audit trail were employed throughout the research process—from planning to final interpretation—supporting the transparency and rigor of the interpretative framework.

## 4 Results

The analysis of semi-structured, in-depth interviews with two loyal consumers and the business owner of Artani Bulk Store produced four central themes describing how green marketing communication contributes to the formation of collective values. Using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), themes were derived through iterative coding, clustering of experiential meaning, and cross-case comparison. To support transparency and analytic traceability, Table 1 summarises the superordinate themes, interpretive focus, and representative verbatim extracts.

**Table 1.** Summary of Superordinate Themes and Illustrative Verbatim Extracts (IPA Results)

Superordinate theme	Interpretive focus	Illustrative verbatim extract	Participant
Affective engagement in consumption	Consumption is experienced as relational and emotionally meaningful rather than merely transactional, positioning customers as participants in a broader sustainability movement.	“It felt like a two-way conversation. They weren’t just selling, but inviting us to be part of something bigger than a transaction.”	R1 (Dini)
Consistency and value integrity	Consistent messages and practices across digital and in-store interactions strengthen trust and reinforce perceived authenticity of sustainability values.	“From their social media to how they interact in the store it’s all aligned. They don’t change just because of trends.”	R1 (Dini)
Social spaces as mediums of value communication	The store functions as a social hub enabling dialogue, collaboration, and value exchange, extending communication beyond product information.	“We’re always open to collaboration, because for us, this store isn’t just a place to sell it’s a place to grow together.”	R3 (Kak Ria)
Consumer agency in sustainability practices	Consumers position themselves as active agents who enact sustainability through deliberate purchasing choices, framing consumption as ethical participation.	“For me, shopping is also a statement: I want to support what’s right.”	R2 (Fikri)

#### 4.1 Affective Engagement in Consumption

Participants described their consumption experiences at Artani as emotionally and relationally engaging, rather than purely transactional. They reported feeling “valued” and “involved” in a broader movement, rather than being treated merely as sales targets.

*“It felt like a two-way conversation. They weren’t just selling, but inviting us to be part of something bigger than a transaction.”* (R1 – Dini)

*“I feel like I’m part of something meaningful. Not just coming in, buying, and leaving—but connecting with values I truly believe in.”* (R2 – Fikri)

#### 4.2 Consistency and Value Integrity

Several participants emphasized the importance of consistency and integrity in messaging for building trust. They noted that Artani maintained coherence across its social media presence and in-person interactions, which made its sustainability values appear authentic and credible.

*“From their social media to how they interact in the store—it’s all aligned. They don’t change just because of trends.”* (R1 – Dini)

*“If it was just trend-following, I’d know. But Artani lives it out every day.”* (R3 – Kak Ria)

#### 4.3 Social Spaces as Mediums of Value Communication

Artani was perceived not only as a retail space but also as a social hub that facilitates dialogue, value exchange, and community collaboration. The physical space played an important role in extending communication beyond product information.

*“Sometimes Artani even hosts community events. My relationship with Artani isn’t just as a customer—more like a values-based partner.”* (R1 – Dini).

*“We’re always open to collaboration, because for us, this store isn’t just a place to sell—it’s a place to grow together.”* (R3 – Kak Ria)

#### 4.4 Consumer Agency in Sustainability Practices

Participants recognized themselves not as passive recipients of green messaging but as active agents who deliberately choose and embody sustainability values. For them, consumption becomes an ethical contribution to social change.

*“I know where my money goes—and it supports a business that aligns with my values. That matters more than a discount.”* (R1 – Dini)

*“For me, shopping is also a statement: I want to support what’s right.”* (R2 – Fikri)

### 5 Discussion

The phenomenological results reveal that Artani Bulk Store’s green marketing communication practices constitute a participatory process that transcends

conventional producer–consumer relationships. The communication strategies employed do not merely deliver marketing messages, but activate affective, participatory, and collective experiences among consumers.

### 5.1 Affective Engagement and Value Identification

The first theme highlights how Artani's communication fosters emotional engagement between consumers and the values of sustainability. Participants expressed that they were not treated as passive market targets, but as part of a shared movement. This result aligns with [8], who suggest that relational and participatory approaches in sustainability marketing foster value-driven loyalty.

Rather than focusing on persuasive tactics, Artani creates dialogic spaces that invite consumers to engage meaningfully. As [3] argue, the effectiveness of green marketing lies not in its rhetorical strength but in its capacity to generate shared emotional experiences and value resonance. In this way, consumption becomes a space for expressing ethical commitments that are felt, lived, and shared—beyond rational choice.

### 5.2 Narrative Consistency and Collective Trust

The consistency of Artani's messaging—across digital and physical spaces—emerges as a key element in strengthening consumer trust. Participants observed that the brand's sustainability messages were not driven by trends but by long-standing principles. This reflects the importance of coherence and transparency in sustainability communication, as emphasized by [10].

In contrast to superficial greenwashing efforts, Artani demonstrates *narrative integrity*, where consistency between communication and practice enhances credibility. This integrity reinforces a relational form of trust—built not merely on claims but on shared values that unfold over time through sustained engagement.

### 5.3 Social Space and Value Communication

Another significant insight is how Artani positions its store as more than a site of economic exchange—it becomes a *social space* for value formation. The store provides room for dialogue, knowledge sharing, and collaborative initiatives, where sustainability becomes a collective practice

This extends the function of green marketing from communication *about* products to communication *through* social interaction. As [6], suggest, transformative green marketing demands a shift from promotional rhetoric to inclusive praxis. At Artani, this praxis takes shape through workshops, co-learning activities, and everyday interactions that foster shared ecological commitments and a sense of belonging.

#### **5.4 Consumer Agency and the Formation of Collective Values**

Consumers in this study do not simply absorb green messages—they actively interpret, choose, and embody the values they resonate with. This underscores a shift in consumer positioning—from passive receivers to ethical agents who see consumption as a form of political and moral participation.

This result supports [10], who argue that consumers engaged with sustainability-driven enterprises often experience consumption as a form of self-transformation. At Artani, consumers not only purchase goods but contribute to the reproduction and circulation of shared values within their community. Green marketing, in this context, becomes a tool for collective meaning-making rather than mere market differentiation.

#### **5.5 Implications and Critical Reflections.**

These results contribute to green marketing literature by emphasizing the importance of relational and community-based communication strategies. Artani's practice shows that the effectiveness of sustainability communication is not defined by persuasive appeal or market segmentation alone, but by a business's capacity to function as a reflective, participatory space for its consumers.

Nonetheless, the scope of this study is limited to a single micro-enterprise with a relatively homogenous consumer base in terms of values. Caution should be exercised when attempting to generalize these results to broader or more diverse market contexts. Future research may explore interactions in other sustainability-oriented businesses, particularly in relation to how communication strategies foster long-term lifestyle shifts and broader ecological consciousness.

### **6 Conclusion**

This study demonstrates that green marketing communication, as practiced by Artani Bulk Store, functions not merely as a promotional tool, but as a social medium that cultivates collective values through participatory and affective relationships. The interactions developed with consumers go beyond economic transactions—fostering learning spaces, building trust, and reinforcing ecological commitments within a growing micro-community.

The results of this study enrich the discourse on sustainable marketing by emphasizing the relevance of interpretive approaches in uncovering how sustainability values are mediated through consistent, reflective, and participatory communication practices. Artani serves as a concrete example of how green marketing can foster collective spaces that support social transformation, rather than merely acting as a market differentiation strategy.

Nevertheless, the study's scope is limited to a single case involving participants with relatively aligned values. Therefore, generalizations to more heterogeneous contexts should be made cautiously. Future research could expand the focus to other forms of sustainable enterprises and explore how consumers act as agents of change in co-creating shared values within more complex and diverse market environments

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