



Authenticity and The Journey from Local Identity to Global Trust in Indonesian Products

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Abstract. This research will explore the notion of authenticity as a spell, which is one of the communication styles that can help shape Indonesian products from domestic brand to global trust. So, where it used to be important to only the best in the area at one point, today it is true for an invincible customer relationship analyst digital revolution and global competition. Qualitative descriptive method is used in this research, which involves in-depth interviews with a single informant through purposive sampling since the participants had considerable insight as well as active participation in the Indonesian brands' communication strategy. Can even how some of the Indonesian brands communicate to their customers.

This research innovatively uncovers that transparency, strong cultural pillars, moral production narrative and a consistent digital identity matter significantly in how authenticity is constructed around brands and therefore the trust they garner. But authenticity is no longer a marketing strategy but rather an investment of time into your values, the consistency of messaging and doing things within your community will be what authenticity truly looks like going forward. Digital is the medium of real stories getting around the world. The research clearly signals that authenticity then becomes the pragmatic bridge connecting both pillars of local identity and global trust, making Indonesian products able to compete in the global market without giving up on its unique cultural identity. In addition, this research contributes both theoretically to the development of digital communication studies and practically by providing strategic insights for Indonesian brands to build sustainable and globally competitive authenticity-based communication.

Keywords: authenticity, local identity, global trust, Indonesian products, digital communication strategy, inclusive growth, SDG 8, SDG 9, SDG 12

1 Introduction

Authenticity, digital communication, and global trust have become central elements in understanding how local products compete in the global market [1]. Over the last several years, the digitalization, cross-borders e-commerce, and also the rising awareness of emerging markets brand have made it easier for local Indonesian products to pene-

trate to the global stage. Those artists - the people with the products that include home-made and unique goods, beauty products, food and lifestyle brands needed money to take it to their higher level, but they also needed travelers to pump some culture to it. Prior studies suggest that local brands relate to the personal aspect of consumer motivation as identity reminiscent of them such as uniqueness, pride, or locality of resources. To demonstrate this, brand owners deliberately emphasized the local aspects of their brands [2].

According to data from We Are Social, Indonesia has more than 213 million internet users, with over 70% actively engaging in digital commerce, highlighting the urgency of digital-based communication strategies for local products [3]. Nevertheless, it needs to be highlighted that following improved access into foreign market, Indonesian products are still in front of significant obstacles in their international expansion efforts: to gain customers confidence. Trust is still a key ingredient as buyers buy in markets assuming they are not well connected to, or where they are not on the beating path of the global value chains.

The following report, Asia Consumer Insights Center: The Indonesian consumer is evolving (a persistent tension between local identity and global trust), helps to illustrate evidence of such tension. The report closes a big gap in prior literature by serving as a case study that illustrates the tension between the desire to localize and the elite nature of global reaches. That helps to explain how firms do this: Local taste and preferences for fashion brands, but foreign sounding brand names to boost credibility and price premia. The firm was local but foreign: As for the locals Indonesians, they believe in local companies, take pride in using local brands and feel that local companies understand the Indonesian consumer and market better than the foreign decoded [4]. This case illustrates trust of local identity on the global stage of prestige.

In the real world, confidence is hardly built around product utility characteristics. Instead, people use stories, signals, and other symbolic cues to decide if something is real, trustworthy, and worth their time. This method of evaluating localized commodities for emerging nations such as Indonesia is closely linked to the concept of identity and its interpretation across many cultures. One of the most essential ways for local goods to have an effect on the world market.

Authenticity has become one of the most crucial ways to talk to people on this journey. Authenticity is how truthful people think the origins of a product, brand, or message are. This is how well it genuinely reflects its sources (culturally, geographically, etc.) and its ideals. Prior studies have demonstrated that authenticity fosters emotional involvement, trustworthiness, and perceived integrity, particularly among consumers in markets seeking significant ethical purchasing experiences. However, since authenticity is a manufactured and conveyed attribute, perpetually seen by audiences, it is not an inherent or bestowed trait, but rather something that is cultivated.

Limano's formulation also echoes the dynamic architecture of authenticity, which, as a counterbalance, distinguishes and constrains cultural identity needs, thereby promoting originality that cultivates knowledge. But there is nothing that is completely original and pure in the construction of the culture itself, there is always mutual borrowing and adoption from one culture to another. Cultural identity, cannot be called original and authentic at this time. Because if the transformation is not carried out by

adapting and borrowing from "modern" culture, it will be obsolete [5]. Authenticity, therefore, resides in a struggle between safeguarding fundamental principles and responding to modern global pressures. This shows that there is a gap in the research since previous research have not done a good job of explaining how authenticity works as an ongoing communication process that turns local identity into global trust, especially in Indonesia.

The changing nature of authenticity is especially crucial for local products that want to progress from being known in their own nation to being acknowledged all over the world. Research conducted by Oenica and Maulida emphasized the significance of innovation. Brands ought to persist in innovation while preserving their fundamental core values [6]. Septiani also stressed that local firms need to find a balance between their own identity and the status of their global competitors. The rising cosmetics business in Indonesia is a double-edged sword for local brands. They have to compete with big global beauty brands and also attract customers who are more aware of their own identities [7].

To build up to global trust, Sabrina and Gati deemed local products need a rebranding, where they guarantee consumers that the terms 'local' at their standards. Their research shows us how Geographical Indications (GIs) act as this guarantee. The protection of geographical indication in Indonesia is expected to provide guarantees to consumers and protect the reputation, quality, and characteristics of products originating from a certain area. In addition, this research elaborates on the responsibility of unnecessary local authenticity and rights in contributing to make Indonesian girls' products recognized and leverage (by non-unsubstantial scale) globally through inter-synergy with organization such as WIPO [8].

While the topics of authenticity and trust have been increasingly examined across branding and marketing literature, studies still tend to approach these concepts in isolation or from a singular perspective. They focus on authenticity as a branding strategy or trust as an outcome variable — without a proper exploration of their dynamic, temporal relationship with local identity and authenticity communication. Moreover, there is often a strictly firm-centred or market-entry approach to emerging-market products that does not capture the process of how local identity becomes global trust. However, this research tends to examine authenticity and trust separately or focus primarily on branding outcomes rather than the communicative process that links local identity to global trust.

This article bridges this gap by defining authenticity as a journey—a modality of communication that connects local identity with global trust. The study wants to avoid using a definitive definition for authenticity as something that will be seen as trait-based, and would try to attempt to see how Indonesian local products negotiate their cultural identity and authenticity in order to garner the trust of the wider public, gradually. By focusing on this (necessary) journey, so-called local significances and global anticipations open up a place for communion, which emphasizes the function of communication.

Therefore, this research aims to analyze authenticity as a communicative process that bridges local identity and global trust in Indonesian products. This research em-

employs a qualitative-descriptive approach through in-depth interviews with selected digital marketing practitioners and brand managers, complemented by documentation analysis of Indonesian brand communication strategies. The novelty of this research lies in positioning authenticity not merely as a branding attribute or outcome, but as a dynamic communication process that evolves over time. In doing so, this paper makes both theoretical and practical contributions by situating the Indonesian products within wider discursive contexts of authenticity, trust, and global communication. In theory, it improves understanding of authenticity as an evolving communicative framework that emerges with audience analysis and trust building. In practical terms, the framework also provides local producers/communicators/policymakers with a better understanding of how to organize for Indonesian products positioning in more credible and sustainable way. Thus, this article focuses on the research question: How does authenticity as a communicative process foster transition from local identity to global confidence in Indonesian products?

2 Literature Review

2.1 Product Authenticity

Product authenticity is the perception that a product possesses authentic, honest, unadulterated qualities and consistently communicates its identity, values and origins. In the field of marketing and brand communication studies, authenticity is understood to be not only an objective condition in relation to raw materials or production processes, or even geographic location, but also a social construct born into narratives, symbols and consumer experiences [9]. In addition, product authenticity is also how consumers perceive that the product is really genuine and not a counterfeit, and can fulfil what it promises by the manufacturer in materials, process or values represented. This idea is more than just the physical characteristics of a product, it also includes more intangible elements that consumers log when interacting with a product [10].

In theory, product authenticity is an issue of originality, genuineness and credibility. When a product has its goal in mind without following market trends, if they have values on which it is based and history that you can refer to whether it's practice, culture, etc. Authenticity then pertains to the materials ones use, inherited ways of production, and a commitment of belonging to specific regional contexts within these local Indonesian products. Conceptually, authentic products embody a degree of entity-referent correspondence (i.e., the relationship between the actual product as an entity and ideal referent / reference) between consumers' perception and perceived reality of the product itself which is why it widely discussed in marketing literature [11]. Thus, authenticity can be understood as a multidimensional construct combining objective attributes and subjective consumer interpretations, which together influence perceived credibility and trustworthiness.

From an authenticity point of view, there are two main approaches to understand it: Objective and Subjective. The objective approach emphasizes objective elements like

certification, geographical indications or specific quality standards. For instance, a geographical indication-registered product suggests to consumers that there is a direct connection between the quality of the product and its place of origin. On the other hand, the subjective approach sees authenticity as something that lies within consumer perception: a product is authentic when brand story, packaging design, marketing communications and consumption experience cohere in an impression of consistency and integrity. Brand authenticity, in marketing research, is explored in terms of dimensions like credibility, integrity, symbolism and product continuity. These four dimensions speak to the degree that a product is seen as aligned with its heritage, values and promises to consumers without being manipulated or distorted in terms of claims (integrative framework) [12]. As globalization and digitalization happen, authenticity has become a critical imperative as consumers are now bombarded by many options. Authentic products become more easily emotionally attached, loyal and trusted for the long run. Authenticity is a strategic differentiator of local products in the global marketplace. When local identity is communicated in the right way, it can end up being a source of symbolic value that legitimizes a product's place in global commerce. Authenticity of products is often also linked with physical and non-physical characteristics. For instance, products that have strong ties to local culture, traditions, or particularities are more easily accepted as authentic. This is due to these characteristics which provide heritage value that makes the product more legitimate in terms of consumers' perception [13]. This involves the emphasis placed on product attributes by companies and consumers alike, allowing for syntheses to emerge that authenticity can come from shallow understanding or perception rather than inherent characteristics.

The legitimacy of products is another issue. Does that make copying their designs, appropriating ideas from other cultures or advocating for heavy commercialization any less real? In times like these, how much people do what they claim to believe in is of the utmost importance. Authenticity for modern consumers means being transparent about how things are made and having a consistent socially responsible ethos. A product has a trustworthy relationship when customers interact with the product in trust through clean and clear marketing communications. Authenticity is only derived from an ongoing alignment between consumers' perception of what they should feel based on what you say and their actual feelings. If a product lacks this integrity, it can be viewed as simply marketing.

Yet product authenticity is not some bonus; they follow from how you engage with your customers and build trust with them. For a local product to become "an internationally recognized brand specialized in its field of business", the more appropriate it is a product, both aligned with its movements and represents something that meets market demand [14].

Thus, this research understands product authenticity as that goes beyond being mere product characteristic. It is also a very important way of communicating in terms of building consumer confidence, particularly in global markets. This perspective draws upon previous research by addressing authenticity as a process rather than an end state.

2.2 Local Identity

Local identity is the community or regional narrative of values, symbols, practices, traditions, language and experiences. This identity emerges from a social and cultural history that evolves naturally among a community with an enduring love affair with its physical and social milieu. Local identity not only includes the physical traits that form (such as historical development, culture, nature and governance), but also the symbolic significances co-created among the community [15]. In the context of marketing, local identity functions as a symbolic resource that differentiates products while simultaneously communicating cultural authenticity [16]. Local identity is a key underpinning of product differentiation but especially when the product comes from a specific locale. Adding local culture, whether through traditional motifs, origin stories or community symbols, to digital marketing strategies have been found helpful these besides reinforcing perceptions of the identity of products also help build emotional attachments in potential consumers [17].

Additionally, local identity represents the mirroring of cultural values in goods or places that embodies the socio-historical environment of local society. For instance, in marketing and branding of MSME based businesses, telling the story behind a product while using local symbols or cultural stories to lend a richer narrative to the product is widely known in accounting for both cultural richness as well as making it unique and more authentic for the younger generation trend consumers [16]. Today local identity is often a product of digital platforms; social media created in the service of globalization. With a local wisdom-based digital marketing approach, MSMEs can show how authentic and historical the products are to their brands, making them increasingly accepted in global markets. Such strategy not only enables local identity as a product attribute but also makes it a living narrative, building deeper emotional resonance with consumers. [17].

This research often conceptualizes local identity as an image that is embedded within a static reading rather than as a dynamic story enacted through communication. Local identity in practice is used through stories, imagery and cultural stories embedded within marketing communication.

Local branding studies affirms local identity closely tied to commercial communication strategies. As an example, in the Indonesian cafe case study, a local company that applies local cultural values in every aspect of its marketing; the logo, the stories and the design, would look different than its competitors. It is therefore not just merely telling stories on the culture but how to do it for the target audience [18]. What that translates to, is that being local is not the end game, if being local, does not end up in meaningful and connected communication with customers.

Local identity is not simply a name or a location. It is an evolving concept that originates from socio-cultural interactions, collective experience, narratives from the past and the emotional linkages a collective group share to their surroundings. This identity has been at the center of different fields such as marketing, anthropology, and cultural studies, forming a fundamental part of cultural preservation strategies and tying important global cultural values to local economies [19]. We have adapted to this change,

which indicates that local identity is an expression variable that must be explicit to build perceptions of authenticity.

Therefore, in this research local identity is viewed as the primary source of authenticity that, when wisely interpreted, creates trustability in front of consumers globally. Whereas previous works acknowledged the relationship of local identity and processes of communication and trust, this clarifies that link.

2.3 Global Consumer Trust

Global consumer trust: the amount of trust between people. It shapes their expectations of a product, service or organization or an entire market for that matter and accordingly their transactions around the globe. The extent to which customers trust that a business or brand will deliver on its promises related to quality, value and social responsibility ultimately determines their level of trust. Few argue this is an important outcome variable that could be shaped by multiple things such as product quality, clear communications and the customer experience. And many said, you know, this is one of the primary reasons people shop as they do today. Consumer trust can be considered from different psychological and marketing perspectives. E.g. the commitment–trust theory, the technology acceptance model and marketing ethics and transparency perspectives. Empirical research highlighted that consumer trust serves as a mediating role between product quality, online reviews, and experience of buying that follows the purchase intention, brand loyalty, and customer satisfaction. In online buying environments and under intensified market competition, trust alleviates perceived risk and enhances purchase intention. In addition, global consumer trust is not only affected by economic outlook, but also heavily influenced by marketing practices, product quality and digital experience. Studies indicate that accurate online customer reviews and clear-cut organizational policies can hold water as trust, which in turn enhances consumer confidence towards a brand resulting in greater purchase intention. Trust is also proved as the mediating variable among different components of digital marketing and consumer purchasing decisions [20]. Prior research tends to focus on trust as an end result without sufficiently examining the communicative processes that lead to its formation, particularly in relation to authenticity and cultural identity.

There has been a drastic change of consumer trust lately. Trust in institutions, companies and technology has eroded over economic uncertainty, geopolitical conflicts and consumer fears around the use of artificial intelligence-based technologies according to research firm Forrester. In many countries, consumers have grown increasingly reluctant to work with organizations that offer the bare minimum regarding transparency or allow data quality and security to crumble, while putting a greater priority on those who are exhibiting integrity, security, and openness where relevant [21].

For instance, global surveys like the Global Consumer Confidence Index (GCCCI) report different levels of confidence across regions. For instance, a number of reports from 2025 said that consumer confidence in Indonesia had increased and been above the global average but then dropped again due to persistent economic uncertainty. Trends like these show that consumer sentiment regarding economic conditions, larger purchases and future expectations can change quickly and vary widely from country to

country. This shift suggests that trust is no longer built solely through functional performance but through meaningful and authentic communication. Consumers evaluate brands based on alignment between communicated values and actual practices.

Be transparent and ethical with your marketing so that you build trust. In this, what with the B2C engenderment time frame digital-age consumers about their very secrecy and existence being human beings coming down to rudimentary as a result of quantitative research that pointed out well-written marketing data helping in getting stronger iron-clad trust and long-run relationship thereby on millions of landseas; scope different nations around the world. Moreover, not least in the context of today's global dynamics, younger (millennial / Gen Z) consumer behavior shapes the trustworthiness calculations differently. They are also generally more skeptical of marketing claims, more reactive to firsthand experiences and peer reviews, and less forgiving toward corporations that lack a commitment to social and environmental issues — factors that constitute a growing segment of the global consumer trust index today.

Global Consumer Trend 2025 (1): Smart and Self-Sufficient. The first reason people feel more in control is that they are more self-sufficient. Consumers nowadays are more ready and able to take care of themselves in areas like health, money, fitness, and cooking at home because they have access to digital tools. The cost of living and the lack of good healthcare are two big reasons for this tendency. People over 45 are more likely to cook from scratch than other people. Conversely, younger demographics are engaging in home fitness and pursuing supplementary employment. For brands, it's important to know how to help customers feel more educated and in control and provide them smart choices. (2) Integrity and Quality: Trends in 2025 suggest that people don't trust businesses as much as they used to. Customers lose faith in brands when their products aren't good. Younger people, in particular, don't trust what brands do for the environment, such as greenwashing. Because consumers are becoming more interested in quality and integrity, they expect brands to be more honest and open. They want to know that what they buy is worth the money and that it fits with their values. Our consumer report has a lot of tips and examples for brands on how to deal with trust and integrity. (3) Positive Best: According to Innova Market Insight's survey, "feeling well" is the main reason why people want to live a healthier lifestyle, and feeling mentally and emotionally well is the first health goal. People are coming up with ways to feel better mentally and emotionally. Energy and vitality are also significant goals, and younger consumers care about looking beautiful and feeling fit. (4) Authentic Connections: a crucial observation is that consumers value close relationships, nature, and actual experiences more. They want activities that are more real, important, real, and safe, as a way to counteract our more computerized and short-lived lifestyles. Eating and drinking together is a big part of having close relationships with friends and family, and most of the time, people socialize at home. People enjoy spending time in nature, parks, and gardens more. Nature is the second fastest-growing place for socializing, and natural ingredients are linked to people's health needs. Within this trend, you can learn about different ways to meet consumer needs, as well as strategies and possible gaps in innovation. (5) Transformational Moments: consumers want experiences that make them happy and give them a sense of adventure, connection, emotional release, and escape. They like to treat and reward themselves with daily things, including happy times with family and friends

or little pleasures they can eat. Holidays and fun events are still very essential. What all of these events have in common, big or small, is that they all need to change someone's mood or make them feel better in some way. From a brand and innovation point of view, it's crucial to take advantage of these moments and provide people a sensory and emotional boost, as well as a sense of joy or adventure [22].

This trend has had significant implications for both multinationals and small businesses. Consumer trust is seen as the building block of customer loyalty and retention. When consumers believe they can rely on a brand to deliver on their quality and service expectations, they are more likely to re-purchase from that brand and suggest it to others; an effect that is particularly meaningful in such a competitive global economic landscape of today [23]. Related to behavioral decision theory, consumer trust is viewed as established through past experience, risk perception inherited before the transaction, and value congruence between both sides (consumer and company). Positive experiences will build trust and lead brands to become preferred providers in the global marketplace [24]. Therefore, trust can be understood as a relational outcome emerging from continuous interaction and communication between brands and consumers.

Global consumer trust interlocks in enmeshments of psychological, strategic and communicative dimensions. The trust becomes more crucial in the era of globalization with rapid physical and social changes, which force companies to manage this strategic asset and use it in their strategies of building sustainable relationships with consumers [25].

3 Methodology

This research uses qualitative descriptive method, to search for the role of authenticity as communicative processes toward global trust towards Indonesian product from local identity. This research adopts a qualitative descriptive research design because it aims to explore meanings, interpretations, and communicative processes that cannot be quantified or tested through causal relationships. This approach is particularly suitable for understanding socially constructed realities and participants' perspectives in depth [26]. Focus on meanings, but not for testing causal relationships Qualitative research is conducted to examine meanings and interpretations as well as socially constructed realities rather than to test causal relationships [27]. A descriptive qualitative design holds researchers accountable to reporting on phenomena as experienced and interpreted by participants, for which there is little in the way of highly abstracted theoretical frameworks [28].

Purposive sampling is applied with Digital Marketing Practice Expert as the informant unit. In this case, purposive sampling is adopted when the subjects are selected from among the group of potential respondents based on their knowledge, expertise, and relevance to deal with the research problem. The researchers selected the informant with as many as (1) Background of profession in digital marketing & brand communication, (2) Actively involved in its campaign about Indonesian product (3) Thoughtful activity for market positioning and trust building. Data collection was mainly through semi-structured in-depth interviews. Semi-structured interviews are flexible yet facilitated a

focused process whereby areas of the interview interacted with central, relevant research themes and were illustrative in exploring perceptions, strategies and interpretations [29]. First, the researchers identified and contacted potential informants based on the predefined criteria. Second, an interview guide was developed to ensure alignment with research objectives. Third, semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted, each lasting approximately 30–60 minutes and carried out through online communication platforms. All interviews were audio-recorded, and transcribed verbatim for subsequent analysis. For example, we observed uninvolved consumers to learn about internet marketing frameworks like brand message, digital efforts and audience engagements. Observation helps to clarify, illustrate, amplify, and contextualize interview data with findings from similar research [30].

The analysis of the data collected in this study was conducted by following the interactive paradigm developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, consisting of three main stages: Data reduction; Data display; and Conclusion drawing/verification. Thematic analysis was used to extract common themes and patterns in tangents of authenticity, local identity, and global trust. This analytical method helps to structure the understanding of qualitative data and increases trustworthiness of the results (Miles et al., 2020). Validation: The study used different methods to validate the data. To guarantee the reliability of the information, we used several sources (interviews and observations) and checked them with selected informants. Fully explaining the research context helped ensure that the findings were transferable to other situations. To increase dependability, we made sure that the analytical process was documented (audit trail) in a systematic manner. We ensured that our findings were situated in the data and not researcher bias [31].

4 Discussion

4.1 Representation of Local Identity in Indonesian Product Communication

The local identity in product communication is more than just geographic markers. It also comprises the symbolic constructions that are related to where the product was manufactured, to culturally significant values and practices, and all relevant ethical narratives. This study aims to illustrate the crucial role that local identity can play as a symbolic and strategic communication tool, impacting how authenticity is perceived. An informant from this research stated that a product can be called "Indonesian" as long as its composition contains 60–70% Indonesian raw materials. This perspective expands the definition of local identity from simply ownership of capital to one that centers on actively constructing the national economy. Prior consumer research has confirmed that country-of-origin identity is an important aspect of the buyer's perception of trust and quality. This effect, however, really depends on a certain consistency between the identity claims and the substance. Overall, the results suggest two broad stages within consumer perception during which local identity matters: (1) recognition through national identity that are mutually beneficial and (2) trust sustained via product quality. The formation at the first level is the awareness trigger through local pride with

"Made in Indonesia" label. But only the quality of products can lead to sustainable relationship with the consumers in the next stage. This is not a time for easy orders of Indian products, said informant; quality matters. This result proves that being authentic has to be accompanied with good product quality, not just stories. Research on current consumer ethnocentrism shows that people are less likely to buy domestic products if they think they are of poorer quality. That being said, local identity will only succeed if it is linked to a promise of value that makes sense.

Then, the second dimension that came out was this idea of "product DNA" as a way to set things apart. When asked about it, informants tended to avoid the habit of using an 80–90% mirror of what anything does (color, illustration, aesthetics) because it made an image that no one else uses (Dino Augusto, Interview, February 13th, 2026). This research shows that inconsistency and mimicry hurt the perception of authenticity and, in the end, hurt trust around the world. Brand authenticity theory states that perceived authenticity only grows when there is an initial difference based on values, history, and consistent brand representation [32].



Fig. 1. Examples of local Indonesian products from the *Sejauh Mata Memandang* brand.

Source: Researchers Observations, 2026

The Fig. 1 share above is one of Indonesia local products that inspired by the brand which called *Sejauh Mata Memandang*. This Indonesian original brand has gained international fans by exploring traditional motifs and sustainability principles. Authenticity is only part design; production transparency and sustainability story also count. When products were simply derivative from the global map, as the fashion houses like Miu Miu showing in Figure 2, the local identity becomes mimicry without meaning. Then, more recent literature verifies that symbolic uniqueness encloses the likelihood of brand attachment as well as spricks trust in international markets [33].

With respect to global competition, the informant contrasted Indonesia's approach with that of China which is known for cost efficiency and mass production supply chain innovation. Indonesia could not be competitive due to a low-price strategy, but with craftsmanship, cultural stories, and moral values. In theory, under competitive identity, developing countries are likely to perform better in leveraging cultural capital instead of becoming price-makers. These findings emphasize the inherent tension between local identity and global trust. Excessive localization may limit global acceptance, while excessive imitation of global trends weakens authenticity. Local identity representation

must convey messages around narratives of skilled craftsmanship, precision and humanistic values [34].

Local Indonesian Products



Miu Miu Products



Fig. 2. Indonesian products that imitate miu miu's global designs.

Source: Researchers Observations, 2026

Influencer interveners of local identity an informant from the influencer community stressed the need for forming a trinity in all discourse about local identity: integrity, authenticity and accountability. He recommends only what he actually uses and courts no one whose brand has a replication problem. Trustworthiness and perceived authenticity are identified as the principal determinants of purchase intention in contemporary influencer marketing literature [35]. As influencers uphold steadfast values, audiences develop long-term trust — earlier and more skeptical, with the capability for self-verification. In this case, local identity is constructed by producers and confirmed by authoritative public figures. This study is conducted based on platform analysis focusing on how the communication strategies of influencer differ one another in promoting Indonesian products — incoming products that embrace local identity into its brand. Content is a component of TikTok, but so too are the cultural forms emerging in that place, wrapped up around points of content and hooks for new audiences. With Instagram, and specifically this feed product, you are so much more in a realm of working on your direct relationships and driving loyalty. This reinforces the earlier theory on social media engagement in identifying various formats of messages required to push through the awareness stage and retention and relationship maintenance stage [36]. Local expressions are not just in what you see; they are also in direct interactions, such as DMs and talks about local products or activities to try. This study reveals that influencers serve as trust validators, with genuine recommendations profoundly influencing audience perception.

Local brands can take responsibility for their mistakes in three ways: fix the problem as quickly as feasible, do as little damage as possible, and start over. This strategy is based on situational crisis communication theory, which emphasizes how crucial it is

to act swiftly and feel morally obligated to modify how others see things [37]. A defensive brand or one that denies, without an explanation, would likewise hurt a true picture of the local identity. So, it's very important to remember that the reputation of Indonesian products depends on the honesty of communication. This study emphasizes the imperative of advanced literacy or education to foster innovation rather than just imitation on the world stage. From a knowledge-based point of view, the ability to innovate comes from putting together what an organization already knows and has done [38]. If you don't have a high level of literacy, local identity is just a way to talk to others, and you can't make things.

Four pillars of local identity when selling Indonesian-made goods: quality, unique DNA, honest communication and continuous innovation. The "Indonesia" label has served well enough as an emotional marker, but others believe that as the business case for sustainability increasingly takes center stage, we must shift from feel-good initiatives to those that make a difference and drive differentiation. It laments that from this perspective, a strong local identity does not emerge out of the shallow claims of authenticity but emerges from how cultural values become entwined with production practices and accountability in communication. In this manner, Indonesian products could create an everlasting trust across the world which will last longer than just a wave of nationalism [33]. So, digital ecosystems not only assist producers to establish local identity, they also confirm it by using social proof techniques that makes you feel as though they are real.

4.2 Global Consumer Perceptions of the Authenticity of Indonesian Products

The globalization of consumers evaluating Indonesian products as cultural artifacts (such as handicrafts and traditional cuisine) or contemporary commercial goods reveals a cultural value issue that affects global trade dynamics and quality, necessitating consideration in international marketing strategy decisions. This research finds that perceived authenticity is multidimensional, consisting of cultural-symbolic, functional-quality, emotional, and ethical dimensions. Authenticity includes cultural narratives, production transparency, and perceived sincerity [39]

This idea of authenticity works as both a physical sign and a psychological phenomenon. It includes localized stories meant to take advantage of a certain culture, the production process (the level and use of purity in relation to admixture), and how international audiences see it when they use it. For example, the brand *Warnatasku Indonesia* in Figure 3 below (which shows an illustration of Indonesian items) uses ethnic traditional themes and leather weaving, designs that are similar to those of local craftsmen.



Fig. 3. Authenticity of Indonesian local products.

Source: Research Observations, 2026.

4.3 The Role of Authenticity in Building Global Trust

The results explicitly show that authenticity functions as a mediating process linking local identity to global trust. From this research results, after we know how consumers perceive the authenticity of Indonesian products, in fact there are also other factors which will shape global consumers' perception toward brand authenticity such as narratives rooted on cultures or geographic labels from origin brands but also consistency of communication itself, product quality and integrity between message to Product with the one delivered by each agents own brands or influencers. Informants observe that authenticity claims crumble easily when there is no evidence of actual performance or consideration of the real-time experiences of users around the world, if not raise skepticism and distrust. Such products include Gayo Coffee from Aceh and Kintamani Coffee from Bali, which are protected under Geographical Indication (GI) rights.

This research validates a sequential relationship: authenticity → trust → loyalty → competitiveness. Authenticity fosters trust, which fortifies emotional attachment and loyalty, ultimately bolstering global competitiveness [39]. The strong emphasis on geographic origin, traditional growing methods, and distinctive taste traits enhances the perception of authenticity in these European and American export market groups. Mayora Indah's Kopiko coffee candy is a great example of how being authentic can help Indonesian products earn credibility in the global market. Right away, it's sold as a candy created with actual coffee extract, which gets all the taste from Indonesia that makes it the third-largest coffee producer in the world.



Fig. 4. A snapshot of Kopiko products in the Korean series “hometown cha-cha-cha” source: researcher observations, 2026

Kopiko has already built a strong perception to international customers through actual consumption experiences giving credence to its marketing claim of “real coffee candy”, thus enhancing the credibility of this brand in export markets across 80 countries. It gained even wider exposure when featured in the popular series *Hometown Cha-Cha-Cha*, which also increased its global visibility; consistent quality, distinctive taste identity, and strong connection with Indonesian coffee culture make Kopiko not just a confectionery product, but a symbol of national taste representation that successfully maintains local DNA while meeting global standards, so that its authenticity serves as the foundation for international reputation, consumer loyalty, and legitimacy of Indonesian products in world market competition.

Brand authenticity is being found as a key determinant in gaining the trust of consumers globally in international marketing. Authenticity refers to the consumer's belief that a brand is real, true to its stated values and not manipulative [9]. In contrast, inconsistency between communication and product reality leads to distrust and reputational damage. According to this research, brand authenticity influences global brand credibility because consumers believe local cultural attributes indicate moral and quality beliefs [40].

International branding context indicates that perceived authenticity plays a vital role in trust intentions and long-term relationships of global consumers with brands [39]. The outcome of that was in accordance with the statement from informant, it is mentioned foreign consumer trust more on Indonesian products just because the narrative culturally presented matched what they experienced related to product quality given (durability, functional value or aesthetic) Content that depicts the whole making process of traditional batik, with a narrative by the craftsman himself, will be more likely

to be seen as "stories of authenticity" rather than content which just presents claims about authentic product without visual evidence.

Concerning the intersection of authenticity and international reputation, the global literature states that perceptions about authenticity enhance a product's cultural value (it is often referred to as "value in use"), which, in itself appears to also improve brand equity among consumers, foreign and domestic alike [41]. The findings of field research advocate this position, as global consumers place high value on products that break with the native culture in a cohesive and clear manner. The quality that made Indonesian products admired abroad is not only technical, but also the authenticity of storytelling or product and market narrative in accordance with the social identity of the producing community

These are psychological processes of assessing emotional and cognitive value, relating authenticity to customer loyalty. Consumers' perception of a brand's authenticity is directly bound to their emotional connection with the brand which makes them more likely to be loyal, pay more and suggest it to others. And this research has revealed that global consumers do not only buy Indonesian products once, but they return because what they find represents unique cultural values and quality that can always be trusted.

Another dimension of the interaction between authenticity and global trust is product legitimacy. Authenticity, as a form of social legitimacy that occurs when global consumers identify a product as an accurate reflection of the culture from which it hails. Country reputation globally relates to perceptions about the quality and legitimacy of foreign products (Rojas-Méndez et al., 2026). Research shows that analogous to the country-of-origin (COO) investigation outlined above. Evidence suggests that tangible proof of production processes can lead global consumers to associate brands with desirable traits (e.g., meticulous craftsmanship) when they experience Indonesian products. The importance of non-material culture is evidenced by UNESCO's recognition of batik as a list of intangible cultural heritage, which can also improve the position and reputation of Indonesia internationally. Since the recognition, batik is positioned not only as a traditional fabric but also an authentic that holds high culture identity. In the global market, batik translated through stories of its manual creation process, the philosophy inherent within motifs, and association with local craftspeople into a notion that was considered more authentic compared to synthetically patterned textile goods mass produced. Therefore, authenticity mitigates the negative bias on the country of origin in a global competitive environment. UGC and Influencer Marketing also play a very strong role in reinforcing authenticity perception as part of Building Global Trust process — bringing us back to trust established globally. The content produced by people who are not actually connected to the brand is seen as more authentic and credible, a major challenge for marketers trying to convince those wary consumers that a product is real in an age of ingrained skepticism toward any marketing trend. Influencers are expected to know that recommendations and reviews must be real. Thus, when influencers who have integrity tell their country wide product reviews based on real use, it greatly creates trust and interest in the world market.

Digital marketing has posed a new dimension in the context of authenticity and trust. Consumers globally are now extremely critical and have access to information through digital platforms at an accelerated rate. Digital communication further accelerates trust

formation, as global consumers rely on transparent content, influencer validation, and peer reviews. A meta-analytical study suggests that integrative digital communication (contextual relevance and narrative richness) is a critical antecedent of trust in global brands [42].

Such findings align with interviews indicating that content strategies maximizing representations of the production process and cultural narratives behind each Indonesian product must be employed in ways that can establish a long-term perception of authenticity.

Thus, perceived authenticity mediates the relationships between cultural messages, product quality, and global trust that shape brand credibility along with international reputation, consumer loyalty and the legitimacy of Indonesian products in the global market. Authenticity is not just an aesthetic issue but a strategic variable connected to the credence of our brand promises across global consumers experiences. Therefore, authenticity is not merely symbolic but a strategic variable that connects cultural identity, product quality, and communication integrity in shaping global trust, loyalty, and long-term competitiveness.

5 Conclusion and Recommendation

These findings reveal that authenticity is a fluid communicative process connecting local identity with global trust in consumption rather than an object to be ascribed. In addition, just because it says 'Made in Indonesia' or national sentiment does not automatically mean that Indonesian products have potential to enter the global market. Then when sustainable world trust awakens for local identity less punctually perceived in the product quality, a special brand DNA and transparent processes and ethical communication. The research shows that authenticity works on all levels — aligning cultural narratives with the how and what of delivering a product and the integrity of the communicator. Authenticity can reduce adverse country-of-origin stigma and build perceived legitimacy when it ties cultural narratives to real skill, innovation and the intercession of believable authorities. Instead, such acts of imitation, hyperbole and breach of the contradiction between message and reality erode international trust and reputation. Thus, the transition from earning trust through localized identity and highly pronounced authenticity toward a more globalized type of trust has to do with aligning symbolism with functionality at a strategy level, more than anything else. Indonesian products are an example when due to authenticity that is inherent and cultural products can become a brand that survives in the global market crawling and competing with billions of other brands offering loyalty, premium value perceptions, and long-term legitimacy. Hence, authenticity needs to be proven throughout with evidence-based practices from provable product quality through transparency in making processes to consistent communications as they are the cornerstones of sustainable global trust. The most important is for Indonesian producers to improve the quality of their product rather than just set up a good-butler line up in an attempt to promote it. So, if there is to have a performance backing of the authenticity narrative, then locking in innovation capacity, research literacy and quality control become essential. A DNA that at the

emotional level will do miles to dissuade repetition behavior and copy paste because wearing the badge of your expectable brand with a skank background is not really something everyone dreams about. On a more practical level, business actors are called to perform concrete measures that come from quality standardization for storytelling synchronized across digital media and selective use of influencers based on their credibility and value alignment instead of the number of people who follow them. Strategically, digital communications will need to become more transparent, whether by revealing production methods and cultural philosophies, sustainability initiatives or artisan inclusivity. Influencers: It's About Trust, Authenticity, Not Numbers Policymakers at a national level can use this as an opportunity to strengthen protections around geographical indications, export certification and ethical branding standards to institutionalize authenticity. Educational programs that embed cultural literacy best practices, design innovation principles and global marketing competencies as part of the transition from copier to creator will help facilitate these discussions. To further this important work in the empirical generalization and theory development in this area, we recommend that future research should establish quantitative measures of authenticity in terms of its causal effect trust, loyalty, and international competitiveness. This research proposes a few recommendations of a global agenda to sustainability described in SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth); SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure); and SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production). So that local producers and digital marketing practitioners alike must also strengthen the discourse of communication on authenticity based on identity, product origin as well as value behind Indonesian local products so that domestic absorption is more expressive to artistic principles and aesthetics where the trust will be stronger against our local products which at times able to become a support for global economic dynamics from the indigenous entrepreneurship.

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