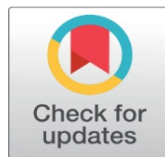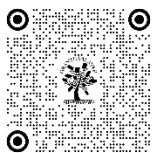# TIMELESS DESIGN EMBRACING SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH BRAND COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES: A STUDY OF INDIAN APPAREL BRANDS

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ABSTRACT

Sustainability goes beyond the label. It's not just a green logo stamped on a product, but a deep commitment woven into the fabric of a brand, reflected in the actions behind the scenes. However, it reflects how the brand communicates its identity in the domestic and international markets to sustain its identity in a longer race in response to other competitive brands. The textile industry in India is a true powerhouse, employing millions and housing a massive number of companies, both large and small. Indian celebrity apparel brands such as Rheson by Sonam Kapoor and Indian apparel brands such as Patanjali Paridhan and Craftsvilla are successful in terms of initial launch but later end up in terms of brand growth due to a lack of brand communication and brand strategy. Whereas other brand products, such as Jaypore, Raymond, and Fabindia, can create an impact in terms of brand growth by combining motion graphics, artificial intelligence, cinematography, powerful visual merchandising, 3D art installations, and the art and power of storytelling to promote the identity of different products through different visual elements that speak about the product's functionality. The purpose of this research paper is to build the brand product category's emotional relationship with the user, extend the product's lifespan in the customers hearts, and promote brand identity.

1. INTRODUCTION

Visual communication is the brush that paints a brand's story, captivating hearts and minds. A picture tells a thousand words, and in branding, it tells one powerful story. From logos to campaigns, effective visual design is the foundation of successful brand conversion [2]. By appealing to emotions and evoking experiences, visual design fosters brand loyalty and engagement. Powerful visuals translate across languages and cultures, turning brands truly global citizens. Visuals are the window to a brand's soul, revealing its values and personality. Visuals speak volumes, but design speaks languages. Beyond the picture, design bridges words and emotions. Don't just see it; feel it: design is the silent conversation [9]. Think of design as the magic wand that transforms words into a brand that resonates. Beyond just

looking pretty, visuals are the bridge connecting brands with their audience. Visuals are the voice, branding is the message, and design speaks volumes, building brands that last.

The Power of Pixels Visual communication in the apparel industry is the silent salesman. It's the emotional trigger that turns heads, sparks desire, and ultimately drives sales. Designers need to be trained in research and user-centred thinking, not just aesthetics and self-expression. The goal of design shouldn't be mere artistic expression but solving user problems and creating meaningful experiences. [12]

Data, research, and methods don't stay within borders; designers have always been open to cross-disciplinary collaboration. Design isn't a silo; it doesn't operate in isolation. Since the beginning, designers have drawn inspiration and methods from across disciplines. [5]

Storytelling through Sight: Clothes are more than just fabric; they're statements of identity and aspirations. Visual communication tells the story behind your brand, its values, identity, and the emotions it evokes. Think compelling photography, evocative videos, and on-point graphics that showcase the lifestyle your apparel represents.

Building Emotional Connections: People connect with visuals on a visceral level. Powerful imagery creates desire by showcasing the fit, texture, and movement of your garments. Think high-quality product shots, engaging lifestyle images, and emotional storytelling that resonates with your target audience.

Standing Out in a Crowded Market: The apparel industry is fiercely competitive. Visual communication helps you cut through the noise and differentiate your brand. Think unique colour palettes, innovative layouts, and consistent brand identity across all platforms.

Beyond Aesthetics: Building Trust: Visuals can build trust and credibility. Showcasing sustainable practices, ethical sourcing, and diverse models through your visuals fosters a connection with conscious consumers.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The design world is shifting. Today, just being great at creating visually stunning work isn't enough. Companies are seeking designers who wear multiple hats, combining their visual communication skills with a keen understanding of design marketing strategies. This fusion of aesthetics and strategy is paving the way for a more human-centred approach to design, often referred to as human-centred design (HCD) [4] [11]. As globalisation opens doors and technology changes the game, the fashion industry needs designers who understand business, not just trends. From sketches to spreadsheets, the new era of fashion demands designers who think beyond the runway and who are no longer just artists but business architects too. Many design professionals are experiencing this firsthand, facing limitations in their careers due to a lack of additional skillsets. To meet the demands of the modern world, they're taking a bold step: returning to school, not for more design but for knowledge in entirely different dimensions. Design professionals are enriching their skillsets with areas like business and marketing, economics, anthropology, and world cultures [6]. Disneyland, like many places, can be seen in different ways. In the real world, it's a business that provides services, just like a restaurant or a store. However, for many people, it's more than that. It's a land of dreams, stories, philosophies, fantasies, and hopes where everything seems perfect and free from the problems of the real world like crime, prejudice, decay, violence, pain, discontent, abuse, racism, and sexism. This ability to create and sell these dreamlike experiences is a big part of Disneyland's success through "story manufacturing and story commoditization [1].

3. GATHERING INFORMATION AND RESEARCH APPROACH

This study uses an interview-based research design. This approach allows for the analysis of the subjective opinions and experiences of the respondents. Participants were carefully selected from the fields of visual communication design and related areas to ensure relevant insights.

1) Be a passionate design student or design enthusiast, eager to delve deeper into the world of brand communication.
2) To fully grasp the nuances explored in this programme, participants are encouraged to have some prior exposure to brand communication strategies in the apparel industry.

Table No 1

S.no	Biological Sex	Adulthood	Occupation	Sovereignty
A]	Female	22	Film Cinematographer {Visual Communication Design Student}	Telangana
B]	Female	24	Film Editor	Odisha
C]	Female	21	Sound Designer	Rajasthan
D]	Male	35	Adverting Director {Visual Communication Design Student}	Meghalaya
E]	Male	21	3D Art Installation Designer	Madhya Pradesh
F]	Male	34	Motion Multimedia Developer	Maharashtra
G]	Male	18	Colour Designer	Gujrat
H]	Male	24	Artificial Intelligence Tool Developer	Delhi
I]	Male	18	Visual merchandiser and Graphic Designer	Karnataka
J]	Male	24	Advertising Copywriter {Visual Communication Design Student}	Uttarakhand
K]	Female	21	Catchy Commercial Jingle Maker {Visual Communication Design Student}	Tamil Nadu
L]	Male	25	Exhibition Designer	Uttar Pradesh
M]	Male	22	Lyricist and Voice Artist	Jammu Kashmir
O]	Female	23	Set Designer	Himachal Pradesh
P]	Male	22	2D 3D Animator Animation Student {3D Clothing Technology}	West Bengal
Q]	Female	22	Creative Designer and Photographer WGSN {Worth Global Style Network}	Amravati
R]	Female	24	Immersive Media Virtual Reality Designer {Apparel VTO Technology}	Punjab
S]	Male	22	Fashion and Textile Design Student	Jharkhand
T]	Female	21	Speculative Designer	Manipur
U]	Female	19	Design / Creative Director {Futuristic Design Trend Forecaster}	Kerala

The author picked the people for the interviews themselves. This might be a problem because they don't know much about brand communication strategies, especially for designers from different domains in terms of branding for the

Indian apparel industry. It was first ensured that design students were made aware. The process involved conducting seven virtual lectures each week. In addition to the lectures, a four-day intensive workshop was offered to provide a comprehensive understanding of brand communication strategies in the apparel industry. Following the selection process, interviews were conducted with 40 participants identified as meeting the established criteria. These participants included 20 visual communication designers and 20 design students. The interviews aimed to gather valuable new insights, ensuring an adequate sample size for the study. The interviews were stopped once theoretical saturation was achieved, indicating no further new insights would be gained from additional interviews [13]. While some studies suggest theoretical saturation may be achieved with as few as 12 participants in homogenous groups, this is not a universal rule [3]. Through the continuous efforts, 40 participants were identified to form a homogenous group within the age range of 20 to 35 years. The study involved participants from diverse geographical locations. Gender representation was balanced, with 11 participants identifying as male and 9 as female. Interviews were conducted virtually, using both English and Hindi, and each lasted roughly 30 minutes. To support the qualitative analysis and to ensure its validity and trustworthiness, the researchers utilised the software programmer NVivo Pro 12.

4. RESEARCH FINDINGS

Following in-depth conversations with the participants, valuable gems of information have been unearthed, which have been organised as follows:

4.1. BEYOND GREENWASHING, CREATING AWARENESS, AND REVEALING AUTHENTIC BRAND COMMUNICATION SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGIES

Navigating any practice requires a clear map. While numerous resources offer guidance, the journey begins with recognising their presence. In the course of this study, the writer interviewed branding designers from various visual communication design industries to explore their perspectives on sustainable and authentic brand communication strategies within the Indian apparel industry. However, a surprising lack of awareness regarding these strategies was discovered. Following the communication of key information, the same group advised that both understanding and acting are essential in this situation. For example, a 24-year-old visual merchandiser and graphic designer expressed that I used to unknowingly waste energy, but with new knowledge about WGSN, I'm actively spreading awareness to prevent others from doing the same. This statement emphasises that Indian designers now understand their responsibility to let others know that WGSN (Worth Global Style Network) offers global perspectives and understands the importance of cultural relevance. They don't simply tell Indian designers to copy the West. Instead, it offers trend reports and analysis that can be adapted to suit Indian sensibilities and aesthetics. Its trend forecasting empowers Indian apparel brands to make strategic design decisions for fashion-conscious consumers.

For example, a 22-year-old male bachelor of fashion and textile design student said the bootcamp really helped them learn about virtual reality for improved product marketing and storytelling, as well as personalised shopping experiences as in virtual showrooms and customisation options, while at the same time enhancing design and development through virtual prototyping. This statement emphasises that Indian designers now understand their responsibility to let others know that immersive brand experiences and VR can offer Indian brands a powerful tool to tell their stories and showcase their collections in a captivating and interactive way. This can lead to increased brand engagement and emotional connection with consumers. Virtual fashion shows: VR can revolutionise fashion shows, allowing audiences from all over the world to experience them virtually, breaking geographical barriers, and increasing accessibility. VR allows designers to create and iterate on clothing designs in a 3D virtual environment. This fosters faster experimentation, reduces physical sample production costs, and enables designers to visualise garments in a more realistic way.

Another 21-year-old girl visual communication design professional native of Tamil Nadu expressed that she gained new aspects of branding through this workshop, namely that speculative design can become a catalyst for innovation in the Indian apparel industry, which focuses on innovation and differentiation, sustainability challenges, building brand identity, and at the same time balancing innovation and wearability as well as consumer acceptance. This statement emphasises that by exploring uncharted territories, speculative design can lead to groundbreaking ideas, materials, and garment functionalities. Such as self-repairing garments that mend tears or adjust to temperature changes. Clothing integrated with technology for health monitoring or augmented reality experiences. Garments grown from biomaterials or made from recycled waste. This eventually leads to the brand's commitment to progress and social responsibility.

4.2. RESPONSIBLE FACTORS THAT WILL LEAD TO IMPACTFUL AUTHENTIC BRAND COMMUNICATION SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGIES

Without accurate information, the essential factors for authentic, sustainable, and impactful brand communication strategies cannot be assessed based on which end user, the consumer, makes decisions and purchases products. To summarize previous research, 10 key points were identified. These points were presented to participants, and their opinions were collected. Table 2 organizes their responses based on how widely accepted each point was. The data in this table reveals the agreement levels of visual communication professionals and undergraduates concerning the issues raised. A lot of people who took part thought that bridging the lines between physical and digital retail, using eye-catching focal statements, and not using false advertising are essential. A lot more people who answered the question said yes to the idea that global activation 3D art installations, signature taglines, minimalist visuals that capture customer attention, contrast and tones, light and shadows, storytelling through visuals and making use of immersive digitalization (VTO), the art of creating captivating pop-up spaces, and the use of 2D 3D animation {3D clothing technology} are also the most significant factors that will lead to impactful authentic brand communication sustainability strategies.

Table No. 2

Factors	N	%
Creating proper brand desire via Motion Graphics	2	10
To create desire, force, art, mystery, to evoke sensation, appealing texture, liquid splashes, and to show how the brand is vibrant.	2	10
Global Activation via 3D Art Installations, Signature tagline, Minimalist visuals that captures customer attention, Contrast and Tones, Light and Shadows, Storytelling through visuals.	3	15
Making use of Immersive Digitization Virtual Try-on (VTO), the art of creating captivating pop-up spaces, and the use of 2D 3D Animation {3D Clothing Technology}	3	15
Bridging the lines between physical and digital retail, using eye-catching focal statements, and not using false advertising.	3	15
WGSN {Worth Global Style Network}, Speculative design as catalyst for innovation	2	10
Social Media Influence - Borderless Experiences, International Intervention	1	5
Extensive brand experience in the visual merchandising and retail display industry, creating surrounding hues that will give a vibrant look for product in its display	1	5
Advertisement with better Film Cinematography, Lyricist, Voice Artist, Set Design, Catchy Commercial Jingle	2	10
Elements with high recall ability deserve emphasis.	1	5

Table No. 2 N refers to the number of participants.

After these points, the need for WGSN, {Worth Global Style Network}, speculative design as a catalyst for innovation in the Indian apparel industry has been recognised as a noteworthy driver by visual communication designers and undergraduates. Visual communication professionals expressed that advertisements with better film cinematography, lyrics, voice artists, set design, catchy commercial jingles, and creating proper brand desire via motion graphics were influential factors in communicating brand identity. Professionals and undergraduates cannot summon any clear perspectives from attendees, suggesting an impartial response. To create desire, force, art, mystery, to evoke sensation, appealing texture, liquid splashes, and to show how the brand is vibrant; social media influence—borderless experiences; international intervention; extensive brand experience in the visual merchandising and retail display industries, Creating surrounding hues that will give the product a vibrant look on its display was crucial to addressing these minute details for this specific case.

4.3.   DESIGN MEMORABILITY

Professionals and undergraduates cannot summon any clear perspectives from attendees, suggesting an impartial response for design memorability beyond greenwashing, creating awareness, and revealing authentic brand communication sustainability strategies. While driving quick sales is attractive, impactful brand communication goes beyond that. It should also strive for powerful visuals. Effective visuals as well as advertising trigger cognitive responses in viewers, and the clarity of its message directly influences how well it is remembered [7]. Effective ad design seamlessly integrates visual elements that promote recall, making its importance undeniable. Opinions on the visual communication design elements for the Indian apparel industry were split. An equal number of respondents agreed and disagreed. A 21-year-old visual communication design student (a male respondent) disagreed, stating, I don't believe the recall element would be effective for global activation using 3D art installations for Indian apparel branding. Recalling the installation requires the audience to put in double the effort, hindering its effectiveness.

Another 23-year-old visual communication design professional considers design memorability to be crucial for impactful visuals when it comes to brand communication that guarantees increasing the brand desire, force, art, mystery, evoking its sensation, appealing texture, liquid splashes, and communicating that the brand is vibrant. Research has conclusively shown that the primary factor behind a brand being globally successful is advertisement with better film cinematography, lyrics, voice artist, set design, catchy commercial jingle with other design elements like global activation via 3D art installations, signature tagline, minimalist visuals that capture customer attention, contrast and tones, light and shadows, and storytelling through visuals. Print and television advertising: strategic use of print magazines and television commercials can reach a wider audience, especially in regions with lower internet penetration. Browse Machine Refinement: Refinement of Internet sites and virtual information to stand above in browsing machine findings. This will make the brand more discoverable for potential customers searching for Indian apparel. Collaborations: Partner with established designers, celebrities, or trendsetters to produce exclusive version treasures or mobilize their extend and influence.

The design industry is facing a new reality: a world overflowing with information that is instantly accessible. Gone are the days of simpler times, when globalization and a rapidly evolving market weren't factors. Today, complexity and professionalism are essential across all industries. As a result, driven by this intricate web of factors, including globalization, the design industry now finds itself needing to draw on knowledge from other disciplines to ensure its long-term success in the global marketplace. [8]

Community Engagement: Support local communities and causes to build brand loyalty and positive brand association. Experiential Marketing: Create interactive pop-up shops, workshops, or events to engage with customers and build a brand experience.

CEOs, COOs, CFOs, business heads, presidents, directors, brand masterminds, publicity investigators, architects, and creative minds are increasingly recognizing the value of storytelling as a communication tool [10].

Lessons for companies after Patanjali's slowdown

Patanjali's Clothing Brand Paridhan: A Story of Rapid Rise and Decline

No brand has ever experienced such a meteoric rise and then crashed so spectacularly in just three years. Patanjali, a former powerhouse of the domestic production movement under Baba Ramdev, has faced some roadblocks. It's worth examining the potential reasons. Patanjali diversified its product portfolio in 2016 with the introduction of Patanjali Paridhan, a brand offering apparel for all ages. By attempting to be everything to everyone, the brand loses its unique appeal and fails to resonate with any specific audience. Patanjali's rapid launch of numerous brands outside its core offerings has strained its resources and diluted its brand identity, leading to brand confusion and confusing consumers. A brand shouldn't be everything to everyone. Trying to be like a supermarket, selling everything from jeans to ghee, can be a recipe for brand confusion. The Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) has repeatedly flagged Patanjali Ayur-Ved for misinformation in promotional content for various products, including hair serum, plant-based wash, makeup, dessert, kitchen cleaning bars, and freshly squeezed beverages. Patanjali appeared to prioritize short-term gains over

building long-term brand trust. This was reflected in their marketing practices, with numerous complaints filed with ASCI regarding misleading or unsubstantiated claims in their advertisements.

Potential Factors for Decline:

Brand Diversification: Patanjali rapidly expanded into diverse categories like clothing, potentially diluting its brand identity and confusing consumers.

Marketing and Advertising: Concerns arose regarding the accuracy of claims made in Patanjali's advertising for various products, including clothing. This could have eroded consumer trust.

Long-Term Strategy: Some experts suggest Patanjali may have lacked a clear long-term vision for its clothing venture, leading to challenges in sustaining growth and addressing evolving market dynamics.

Inconsistent Products, Casual Branding, and Visual Merchandising

Brand with better visual merchandising, for example, the successful Indian brand Jaypore.

5. CONCLUSION

Visual communication designers, alongside other professionals, require delicate handling, understand their responsibility in communicating the brand identity in a proper way, and actively seek ways to provide impactful, authentic brand communication sustainability strategies. Designers typically avoid personal environmental advocacy in their work. However, their role in social and environmental campaigns is crucial. They ensure the design and message seamlessly align with the campaign's objective of promoting environmental sustainability. There's a disconnect between the product's physical manifestation and its potential to communicate environmental messages or delve into specific subjects. As advertising and product creation continue to flourish, visual communication designers have a crucial opportunity and responsibility to ensure the design and production processes are environmentally responsible. Given the growing concern for environmental impact, it's crucial to address the designer's role and responsibilities in crafting authentic brand communication sustainability strategies. This exploration will outline three key areas for integrating environmental considerations into the design process: (i) Creating awareness and revealing authentic brand

communication sustainability strategies, as well as building trust; (ii) Integrating Responsible Design Principles; and (iii) Recall: Creating Memorable and Impactful Communication.

(i) Visual communication designers and fashion innovators are unaware of the global brand-building potential and brand growth by rescaling the brand artwork. Hence, Colleges of art and design, publicity studios, and market research analysts shall consider running programs revealing authentic brand communication sustainability strategies for their environmental responsibilities and global brand growth.

(ii) The identified responsibilities as well as responsible design principles are bridging the lines between physical and digital retail; use of eye-catching focal statements; and not using false advertising, which will be impactful in brand communication sustainability strategies. However, fewer respondents have expressed that making use of Immersive Digitization Virtual Try-On (VTO), the art of creating Captivating Pop-Up Spaces, the use of 2D 3D Animation {3D Clothing Technology}, as well as global activation via 3D Art Installations, signature taglines, minimalist visuals that capture customer attention, contrast and tones, light and shadows, and storytelling through visuals plays a significant role. Also, visuals capture customer attention. Creating proper brand desire via motion graphics as well as speculative design as catalysts for innovation has a significant role.

(iii) Despite there was a nonpartisan answer on the design memorability in creating awareness and revealing responsible factors that will lead to impactful authentic brand communication sustainability strategies, research has indicated that bridging the lines between physical and digital retail, using eye-catching focal statements, and not using false advertisements are the most effective ways to enhance brand image, in addition to other factors that are mentioned in Table 2, which will play an important role in growing the brand globally. Hence it is feasible by the design memorability of the visual communication industry for its application in the Indian apparel industry. So this design memorability should be incorporated through visual communication branding designers, fashion designers, and the Indian apparel industry too.

Since many globally successful Indian apparel brands have already taken the steps to make use of these impactful authentic brand communication sustainability strategies, for example, brands like Raymond, Mufti, Rare Rabbit, Fabindia, and Jaypore are making use of these strategies to make their brand have a global presence. where other unsuccessful Indian brands like Patanjali Paridhan, Craftsvilla, and Rheson need to take serious steps to make their brand globally successful by making use of these impactful authentic brand communication sustainability strategies.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS
None

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None

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