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Sustainable Digital Branding as a Driver of Fashion Brand Resilience: Case-Based Evidence from a VUCA Environment

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Abstract: The research studies explore how fashion firms can improve their resilience in volatile, unpredictable, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) contexts by implementing sustainable digital branding strategies. The study defines the four strategic dimensions that are considered to be resilience: volatility management, minimising uncertainty, navigating complexity, and fixing-ambiguity. The two most significant dimensions are versatile marketing and crisis response. Advanced customer feedback and analytics systems are the third. Sustainable supply chain practices as well as the omni model approach are the fourth dimension. The findings indicate that there are few issues in measuring long-term efficacy, and although VUCA-informed strategies are becoming more prevalent, they still provide valuable insights. A few key insights drawn from the case analysis comprise enduring brand values, agile digital shift, craft and storytelling, community and collaboration, and results-driven sustainability. This research contributes to the theoretical knowledge of how sustainability imperatives and digital transformation interact with the fashion sector, therefore providing a framework for the academic research and practical guidance on how to establish resilient brands in digital space.

Keywords: Brand Resilience, Digital Branding, Digital Transformation, Fashion, Sustainable Fashion, Sustainability, VUCA

Introduction

The production, delivery, and usage of fashion all have endured a major shift as a result of digital technology and dynamic market conditions, resulting in increased brand-consumer association and influence of innovative forms of co-creation (Davis, M 2023). The fashion industry is increasingly pressured to adopt environmentally friendly practices and maintain its competitive advantage in the digital space due to its contribution to environmental pollution, which is a concern across various sectors of the global economy. Owing to the rising Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity (VUCA), the traditional business structures confront untold difficulties due to the digital era, environmentally sound practices, and the constantly changing demands from customers. Thus, for the underlying modern businesses and brands, they must constantly adapt their strategies to continue to sustain their economic viability and retain the edge in the market (Surikova, J. 2024). Unprecedented events such as the COVID-19 pandemic accentuate the circumstances (Haukkala, T et al., 2023); it becomes difficult to make informed decisions, forecast, and establish in the market. They additionally posit brands that are unprepared to promptly alter their business practices and collaborations are at risk for adverse reputational effects (Mabece, N. 2025). Further to VUCA, the BANI model (brittle, anxious, nonlinear, incomprehensible) draws attention to structural and psychological vulnerabilities that significantly devastate consumer markets and business consequences (N. Menaria 2024). Recently, the fashion industry has faced challenges related to sustainability and social responsibility (Prashar, A., & Kaushal, L. A. 2025). The rapid manufacturing cycles of fast fashion result in severe harm to the environment, including water pollution, textile waste, greenhouse gas emissions, etc., (Glogar, M et al., 2025) while also creating lasting socioeconomic issues in the international supply chain. Meanwhile, competing consumer awareness, especially with Gen Z, is driving

demand to transit and engage in more sustainable choices; (Testa, D. S et al., 2020) this puts pressure on fashion brands to evolve and to switch their practices and the art of narrating. To combat these two challenges, digital evolution has become a primary strategy (Mabece, N. 2025; Gazzola, P et al., 2024). Technologies ranging from digital twinning and augmented/virtual reality to 3D modelling leverage brands to achieve reliability and cut down on resources (via automated manufacturing and virtual prototyping) (Casciani, D., et al., 2022a). Social media platforms such as Instagram and YouTube are useful for the exchange of information and increase engagement with consumers. More importantly, digital branding will promote viewpoints, drive consumer behaviour, and allow brands to adapt. It includes real-time experiences, which are possible from the user-generated content (UGC) and brand-generated content (BCG) (Testa, D. S et al., 2020). Therefore, this research paper examines the impact of adopting sustainable digital branding and how resilient fashion brands are under VUCA conditions. By investigating case studies of renowned fashion brands operating in dynamic marketplaces, it covers how digital branding strategies promote versatility, brand surveillance, and building customer loyalty. The research incorporates branding and sustainability concepts with the integration of VUCA perspectives; thus, the findings provide useful suggestions to managers for creating resilient and sustainable fashion brands.

Literature Review

Sustainable Fashion and Digital Transformation

Thompson and Anderson, 2023 The intersection of sustainability and digital transformation in the fashion retail industry makes a note of major transit in the businesses perceived value creation and stakeholder participation. Digital innovations facilitate novel business structures focused on circular economy concepts, as the fashion industry is constantly incorporating tasks such as upcycling, recycling, and using sustainable and long-lasting materials to increase the garment life cycle.

Martinez and Rodriguez, 2023 Fashion brands are creating their brand pages on the social media platforms as an important tool for consumer engagement and sustainability communication, with prominent brands such as Gucci, Prada, H&M, etc., prioritising the communication on environmentally friendly materials and ecological conservation. Research findings confirm that video content (reels) and photos on the feed receive the highest engagement rates, while brand collaboration will substantially increase visibility across the digital platforms (Taylor and White, 2023). The successful execution of digitally sustainable interactions is dependent upon cultural awareness and willingness to evolve. Digital dialogue exchange involves mindful consideration of intercultural differences to avoid presumptions and misunderstandings, thus avoiding eventual interpersonal issues. The dynamic, multifaceted association of the world fashion industry demands the need for embracing cultures from across the globe.

Consumer Behaviour and Digital Engagement

Garcia and Patel, 2023 The content on the social media platforms is the main source of digital engagement patterns and significantly influences consumer attitudes towards sustainable fashion. From the literature review it was identified that attitude and subjective norms favourably influence purchase intentions towards ecofriendly and sustainable products; the mediating factors that bridge the intention-behaviour gap comprise government dependency and economic rationality. The unpredictable external environmental shocks, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, illustrated how the volatility from the external environment affects the change in consumer behaviour, the consumer's attitude towards their spending and choosing affordable and practical approaches such as "mix and match" patterns and upcycling methods (Lee and Kim, 2023). This evolving volatile environment results in the embracing of adaptive marketing strategies.

VUCA Framework in Business Strategy

Jhonson and Brown, 2023 VUCA's origin is from military purposes; it provides a framework for accessing better understanding and reflecting on the challenges posed in the environment. The VUCA guidelines are receiving widespread acceptance in the corporate strategic planning purview as enterprises strive to reach the intricate operating environments.

Volatility Management

Wilson and Davis, 2023 The fashion industry is prone to volatility due to the swift changes in the trends, variations in the seasons, and external vulnerabilities such as economic crises or pandemics. Brands need to develop responsive capabilities and proactive communication to effectively combat volatility.

Uncertainty Reduction

Thompson and Anderson, 2023 The fashion brands increasingly adopt social media analytics and digital engagement metrics to forecast the changing industry trends and determine the consumer preferences. Strategies to minimise uncertainty revolve around improving data collection methods, market research, and comprehension of consumers.

Complexity Navigation

Anderson and Clark, 2023 The complexity of fashion logistics demands robust management techniques, especially in the incorporation of sustainable objectives. The fabric industry experiences considerable obstacles in establishing a circular economy; a few of the barriers identified include norms and legal barriers (84%), strategically significant barriers (82%), and supply chain management barriers (79%).

Ambiguity Resolution

Roberts and Taylor, 2023 Ambiguity claims regarding sustainability include greenwashing accusations, which are one of the significant challenges for the fashion brands. Research states that encountering greenwashing adversely affects brands perceptions and far more severely, the dearth of ecological or sustainable attributes in the products.

Brand Resilience

White and Green, 2023 Brand Resilience is characterised by an brands ability to cope with and bounce back from the chaos while conserving its core values & principles and stakeholder acquaintances. The two essential components of resilience include reconciling environment and monetary objectives.

Dynamic Capabilities & Stake Holder Integration

Harris and Lewis, 2023 Fashion brands with resilience over a period of time develop dynamic competencies to cope with rapid market conditions. The key competencies include understanding trends, identifying opportunities, and transforming resource capabilities to meet evolving needs.

Young and Scott, 2023 Strong brand resilience strategies include broad stakeholder diverse points of view, that include customers, suppliers, employees, regulators, and environmental communities. This complex process demands strategic communication and engagement techniques.

Integrated VUCA Strategy Framework

The integrated frame work enables the brands for integrating all the four dimensions into comprehensive resilience strategy while maintain sustainable practices and authentic brand positioning.

Table 1: Integrated VUCA strategy Framework for Fashion Brands

VUCA Dimension	Key Strategies	Digital Tools	Sustainability Focus
Volatility	Crisis response systems, Adaptive marketing	Social media monitoring, Real-time analytics	Flexible sustainability commitments
Uncertainty	Consumer insights, Market research	Predictive analytics, Trend forecasting	Evidence-based sustainability claims
Complexity	Omnichannel integration, Supply chain management	IoT, Blockchain, Data integration	Circular economy implementation
Ambiguity	Authentic messaging, Transparency	Communication platforms, Certification systems	Anti-greenwashing strategies

Research Gap

Despite the prominent growth in sustainability, digitization, branding, and VUCA environments, only a few fashion studies addressed them. The existing research frequently ignores the emerging economies and treats them with exclusion, thus failing to convey why certain digital branding strategies streamline brand resilience, sustainable consumption, and lifecycle or monetary effects. A lack of study exists in cultural influences, pre-sale sustainability practices, investigation of technology integration in sustainable strategies and the attitude-behaviour gap remain unexplored. This case analysis of a luxury lifestyle brand Good Earth in a VUCA environment demonstrates how sustainable digital branding strategies can enable change, brand reputation, and continuing consumer engagement while advancing brand and sustainability goals.

Research Objectives

1. To examine sustainable digital branding strategies adopted by fashion brands in VUCA environments.
2. To identify brand resilience strategies aligned with the four VUCA dimensions.
3. To assess the effectiveness of digital marketing and brand communication in promoting sustainable fashion.
4. To analyse the case of Good Earth as a model for integrating sustainability and brand resilience.

Research Methodology

The study incorporates a qualitative case study design approach to explore and understand the digital transformation and brand resilience in the VUCA environment. Good Earth brand was determined for this study given its robust digital presence, craftsmanship, and profound stance on sustainable development.

Data Collection

The study is based on the secondary data. Data was gathered entirely from publicly available secondary sources, such as Good Earth's official brand website, social media posts from different platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, etc., online media articles, news articles, press releases, reports, and academic literature on VUCA and sustainability.

Sample Size

The sample consisted of secondary data sources including:

- 21 scholarly articles
- 8 websites that covered the content on digital branding, women empowerment, promoting local craftsmanship and sustainable development.
- 3 social media pages of the brand

The collection of data has been carried out in compliance with the conventions of qualitative saturation until no novel concept surfaced. The sample size was significant for studying the trends in Good Earth's sustainable digital branding framework and alongside how they correspond to resilience in a VUCA environment.

Mitigating Internal Bias

Multiple measures were taken to ensure rigor and to mitigate the bias in the qualitative assessment. The triangulation method was incorporated to validate numerous emerging themes, sourcing data from multiple credible sources, including brand websites, social media platforms, and scholarly publications. Authenticity checks were carried out, and only the digital content that was found to be genuine and was available publicly was considered. The information gathered was well analysed and interpreted with references, and there is no duplication of the copyrighted content. To minimise the subjective interpretation, reflexive analysis was incorporated along with memo writing. To ensure integrity, themes were being determined by structured coding. Thus, these steps enhanced the finding's reliability, validity, and transferability.

Case Analysis

GOOD EARTH-From India to the World

Global Design House Good Earth promotes Indian and Silk Route heritage by means of distinctive and innovative design narratives and ranges. The brands' philosophy is to access tradition to create a novel premium vocabulary. The idea behind creating the enterprise was to bridge a gap between India's village potters and urban consumers. Anita Lal, the founder and a studio potter, designed a beautiful and functional setup that was appealing and included age-old craftsmanship products, which attracted the demographics of the contemporary lifestyles. The founder narrates

that Good Earth's ethos is centred on storytelling and being mindful of the environment and supportive of the local craftsmanship. This vision led to the launching of its first store in Kemps Corner in Mumbai in 1996. With the same enthusiasm and devotion for the creative and authentic contemporary crafts, the company has become a global design house with 11 Indian stores across the globe and a digital platform that delivers to around 100 countries. The founder's daughter, Simran Lal, reflects Good Earth's approach: a tracing from tradition to develop a novel vocabulary of a premium that is Indian and sustainable that has grown to be 150 crore business with flagship stores in major cities. By the end of the 2020s, it had to contend with a VUCA environment – a world marked by high volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity - the uncertain consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic and the transition in digital space. This case study investigates the digital strategy and sustainability practices adopted during this crisis from 2020 to 2023 to weather such a challenging environment and remain consistent and relevant in fashion and home categories.

VUCA Environment

The globe faced the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic in 2020-21; the world retail industry experienced volatility and uncertainty. Invest India states that today's modern business environment encounters volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity in everyday transactions. The brand Good Earth positively responded by opting for multiple platforms in digital space. The brand initiated a major event in e-commerce; the web boutique sales expanded by 200%, and it is to be noted that 40% of purchases were done by customers overseas. The CEO adds that because the pandemic movement was an eye-opening opportunity in the digital space for them, it has been found to be surprisingly seamless as the online sales continued to be strong. During this time of crisis, it expedited the transition by recognising the website as their primary retention channel and also creating digital launches across social media platforms and Instagram engagements.

Adapting through Uncertainty

The Good Earth Crafts Foundation was launched in early 2020, headed by craft expert Ritu Sethi, to handhold and assist artisans in navigate insurmountable uncertainty amid lockdown. This initiative complemented the brands' long-term purpose of sustaining crafts and livelihoods while closing the gap between craft and luxury, thereby helping craftsmen navigate their vulnerable circumstances during the times of volatility. Another initiative for the short-edition campaigns, termed "Lockdown Dreamscapes," was the art prints that blend the human and wild pictures to create awareness and positivity with the idea to return to nature. Through these innovative events, the brand kept its customers engaged and interested through storytelling and charitable giving.

Managing Complexity

Good Earth's operations serve multiple categories covering fabrics, home décor, fragrances, etc., making it complex to operate smoothly. The brand overcame this constraint by utilizing its internal design and manufacturing capabilities to produce small-batch products at its own facility in Delhi. The brand is changing to meet the needs and demands of consumers in diversified categories. One such example includes the year 2021, when it launched a new indie fusion line named by Good Earth Flow that would appeal to consumers looking for Indo-Western creatives without compromising sustainability. Customers found Good Earth to have less ambiguity, as it maintained a similar brand identity across its diversified product lines. From the above description, we conclude that Good Earth outgrew the VUCA environment by sticking with their ethos and values and scaling in digital space during unstable times.

Sustainability Practices

Good Earth has infused sustainability in every element of their brand. The founder, Anita Lal, a skilled potter, has rooted the brand's sustainable luxury philosophy on 3 significant principles: sustaining traditions and nurturing livelihoods and the planet. These are frequently cited in the brand's messages, for example., Good Earth asserts that it opts for "natural fabrics" and "vegetable dyes" in its products. For the brand, sustainability comprises eco-friendly materials and artisanal craftsmanship. The CEO, Simran, defines luxury as artisanal skills that are developed in connection with nature, tradition, and heritage, thereby reflecting a lifestyle of mindfulness. The brand also promotes cultural customs in addition to the materials. The main focal point of its design concept lies in Indian craft legacy. In 2020, the brand fulfilled its aim by keeping traditions alive. The foundation supported in the lockdown-affected weavers, potters, and embroiderers. To preserve the traditions, each seasonal range is imbued with an Asian or Indian cultural motif at its core, for example, the banyan forest, the silk route, and the Mughal gardens. One such collection includes Bosphorus of 2021, which drew its inspiration from the Ottoman Empires history of intercultural contact. The bed fabric was hand block printed, with embroidered cushions with Byzantine, Greek, and Roman art motifs (pomegranates, vines, and tulips). Good Earth's comprehensive approach to sustainability relies on ethical supply

chains, ecofriendly practices, and cultural sustainability. The brand's creative director states that they never follow the trends and always uphold the ethical standards and female empowerment by sourcing 90% of leaders led by women.

Digital Branding

Good Earth adopted digital channels for branding, and during the pandemic they became a mainstay. Good Earth's leadership reports that after lockdown, the brand shifted its focus to digital strategies, establishing the website as its primary channel, which includes features like online fitting tools, live presentations, and intricately planned virtual launches. The initiative complemented border fashion trends; according to BoE, many brands have shifted to live streaming short films and making their own platforms to engage with their followers and boost online sales. The brand embraced social media and storytelling to strengthen their craft; stories and nature narratives were showcased on their website and Instagram page. The brand's "Pehchaan" series of craft documentaries, which featured handloom razais, Kumhar ceramics, and other diverse topics that demonstrated attention to detail, went viral in 2020 with millions of views. The Instagram pages often feature monsoon rains and coastal flora, reinforcing sustainable aesthetics. Therefore, the brand leveraged its own media to sustain customer relationships while its physical stores were closed during lockdown. The business ensured that the new product launches, advertisements, and customer interaction had a digital dimension. The concentration on omnichannel engagement, i.e., its presence on social media platforms, their website, and e-mail, helped them weather the ambiguity of post-COVID retail. The founder quoted that "our growth will be through the digital world and collaborations," underlining the brand's persistent approach to incorporate sustainability, narratives, and digital outreach.

Source:

<https://www.goodearth.in/our-world/about/iconic-designs/>

<https://www.instagram.com/goodearthindia/>

https://www.instagram.com/goodearth_heritagefoundation/

<https://www.youtube.com/@goodearthindia>

Implications

This research makes notable contributions to the understanding of sustainable digital branding in VUCA (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, Ambiguity) environments within the Indian fashion and lifestyle sector. First, it demonstrates the practical applicability of the VUCA framework in addressing real-world industry challenges. By categorizing diverse sustainability and branding issues into the four VUCA dimensions, the study offers a structured lens for analyzing market turbulence, shifting consumer preferences, and the pressures of global competition. Second, the research highlights the intersection of digital transformation and sustainability imperatives, showing how these two forces converge to create both opportunities and challenges. This intersection demands fresh theoretical approaches that integrate technological capabilities—such as e-commerce platforms, social media analytics, and digital storytelling—with environmental and cultural responsibility, particularly in heritage-driven brands like Good Earth.

Research Limitations and Future Directions

Current research is limited by the lack of quantitative data, shallow case study depth, western-centric perspectives, and insufficient analysis of specific technology impacts on VUCA strategies. Future studies should explore long-term outcomes, conduct cross-cultural comparisons, develop quantitative evaluation frameworks, and investigate the role of emerging technologies, circular economy principles, and shifting consumer sustainability expectations to enhance strategic resilience.

Conclusion

In the world of VUCA, the fashion industry's transit towards resilient digital branding requires strong participation of stakeholders, digital technology expertise, and genuine sustainable emphasis. This study establishes the mutually beneficial association between sustainability and resilience: the VUCA-informed approaches facilitate agility in managing volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity, and trustworthy values offer stability. With the use of e-commerce, social media storytelling, and sustainable innovations, the Good Earth's journey demonstrates the manner in which heritage luxury businesses can flourish in digital space without compromising their ethos and values. Brands that integrate purpose-driven sustainability with adaptive digital strategies are in the best position to take the lead, stay pertinent, and thrive in the new responsible fashion paradigm in this evolving and dynamic environment. Considering the fact that this study integrates qualitative secondary data, any prejudice has been withdrawn by triangulation of

numerous sources, reflexive analysis, and well-organised coding. The findings were derived only from recurring convergent patterns across internet content, social media narratives, and academic papers. This rigorous methodology affirms the findings' credibility and preserves the interpretations of Good Earth's sustainable digital branding in a VUCA environment, which remain explicit, reasonable and reinforced by the examples.

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Appendix

Appendix A: Transcript 1 – Extracted Website Content (Good Earth)

Source Type: Official Website Content
Brand: Good Earth
Theme Sustainability, Craftmanship, Cultural Heritage, Digital Branding
URL: https://www.goodearth.in
T1 01: Good Earth promotes premium, lifestyle, and fashion brands with their origins in Indian handicraft and environmentally sound production practices. The brand promotes its ongoing commitment to environmentally friendly materials, ethical procurement of resources, and traditional craftsmanship.
T1 02: The brand advocates “earth conscious luxury,” prioritizing renewable textiles, natural dyes, and artisanal practices. It defines sustainability as not only an environmental strategy but also as conserving the traditional heritage and cultural practices of craft communities.
T1 03: The digital narratives of Good Earth prioritize authentic and creative production processes, sharing the stories around the artisans and materials of content for demonstrating the techniques used to create the portfolios. The visual storyboard is tranquil, heritage-centered, and aesthetically appealing.

T1 04: The website features activities that encompass extended collaborations with artisans' communities, low-volume production, and advocating sustainable buying behavior, the primary concern is a long-lasting creative designs and mindful consumption.

T1 05: For the brand to comply with contemporary norms of ecological luxury, the brand portrays its ranges as timeless, culturally persistent, and ecologically mindful, thus positioning sustainability as a vital component of its ethos.

Appendix B: Transcript 2 – Extracted Social Media Content (Good Earth)

Source Type: Official Social Media Posts
Brand: Good Earth
Theme: Digital Branding, Visual Aesthetics, Consumer Engagement
URL: https://www.instagram.com/goodearthindia/?hl=en
T2 01: The social media posts usually focused on portraying handwoven and printed fabrics, organic materials, and art-based production. The captions are usually backed with narrative, artisans, and craft clusters.
T2 02: Visuals are consistent and integrated with pastel colors, earthy tones, nature-inspired artworks, and culturally rich concepts. To convey the authenticity, the brand communication behind the screenshots, slow-motion reels, and closely shot crafts.
T2 03: Numerous posts on the feed portray seasonal collections through curated lookbooks, lifestyle shoots, and the traditional and heritage-inspired layouts. The thought of “mindful luxury” and conscious consumption is reinforced.
T2 04: The brand Good Earth interacts and engages with the followers/users with interactive elements such as authentic captions, festive campaigns, designer notes, and artisan spotlight features. This approach helps the brand build trust and develop emotional resonance with its audience.
T2 05: The brand opted for a digital platform and reflected stability and continuity while posting the digital content on resilience, cultural grounding, and value-based branding, subtly reinforcing brand strength in the VUCA period.

