

ESG Communication, Green Marketing Mediation, and Brand Trust in Fore Coffee Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Purpose. This study examines the effect of ESG communication on brand trust among Fore Coffee Indonesia consumers and investigates the mediating role of green marketing in this relationship, addressing how ESG communication is translated into consumer trust within a local post-IPO food and beverage context. **Method.** A quantitative explanatory design was used with a purposive survey of 180 Fore Coffee consumers who had recent purchase experience and exposure to the brand's ESG-related communication. Data were analyzed using a two-stage Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) approach: Stage 1 generated latent variable scores for lower-order constructs; Stage 2 used those scores to estimate higher-order structural relationships among ESG communication, green marketing, and brand trust. **Findings.** Results indicate that ESG communication significantly strengthens green marketing practices, which in turn have a strong positive effect on brand trust. The direct effect of ESG communication on brand trust is relatively weak, while the indirect effect through green marketing is significant, confirming green marketing as a key mediating mechanism. **Conclusion.** ESG communication enhances brand trust primarily when operationalized through credible green marketing practices; sustainability communication alone is insufficient to build consumer trust without consistent implementation in the marketing mix. The study clarifies the mechanism linking ESG communication and brand trust and offers practical guidance for integrating ESG strategies with green marketing execution.

Keywords: ESG communication, green marketing, brand trust, sustainability, Fore Coffee

ABSTRAK

Pendahuluan. Penelitian ini mengkaji pengaruh komunikasi ESG terhadap brand trust konsumen Fore Coffee di Indonesia serta peran mediasi pemasaran hijau dalam mekanisme tersebut. **Tujuan.** Menganalisis apakah komunikasi ESG berdampak langsung terhadap brand trust dan apakah pengaruhnya dimediasi oleh praktik green marketing. **Metode.** Penelitian kuantitatif eksplanatori dengan survei purposif terhadap 180 konsumen yang baru membeli dan terpapar komunikasi ESG Fore Coffee; data dianalisis menggunakan PLS-SEM dua tahap (stage 1: skor variabel laten lower-order; stage 2: estimasi struktur higher-order). **Temuan.** Komunikasi ESG berpengaruh signifikan terhadap praktik green marketing; praktik green marketing memiliki pengaruh positif kuat terhadap brand trust; efek langsung komunikasi ESG pada brand trust relatif lemah sementara efek tidak langsung melalui green marketing signifikan, menunjukkan mediasi parsial/indirect-dominant. **Kesimpulan.** Komunikasi ESG efektif membangun brand trust bila diwujudkan melalui praktik pemasaran hijau yang kredibel dan konsisten pada elemen produk, harga, distribusi, dan promosi; narasi ESG tanpa implementasi tak cukup untuk memperoleh kepercayaan konsumen. Rekomendasi praktis diberikan bagi merek F&B lokal pasca-IPO untuk menyelaraskan komitmen ESG dengan eksekusi marketing.

Kata kunci: komunikasi ESG; pemasaran hijau; kepercayaan merek; keberlanjutan; Fore Coffee

INTRODUCTION

FORE Coffee was established in 2018 with a “new retail” business model that integrates online and offline services, embodying the spirit of sustainability (“forest”) while offering high-quality local coffee at affordable prices (Fore Coffee, n.d.). In 2023, Fore Coffee became one of the local coffee brands in Indonesia to enter the public market through an initial public offering (IPO). The IPO was oversubscribed by 200.63 times, attracting 114,873 investors, with the share price rising by 34.04% to Rp 252 on the first day of trading (Fore Coffee, n.d.), (Supriyatna, 2025). The IPO proceeds were allocated for the expansion of 140 new outlets (Rp 275 billion), the launch of a donut subsidiary business (Rp 60 billion), and operational working capital (Rp 44 billion) (Fore Coffee, n.d.). Post-IPO, Fore Holdings retained 78.9% ownership, while the public held 21% (Ariyanti, 2025). Backed by East Ventures, which holds 36.3% of Fore Holdings’ shares, and led by Willson Cuaca, FORE strengthened its capital structure and growth strategy in the post-IPO phase (Sufa, 2025). This transition marked an important phase in the company’s growth, increasing its public visibility and intensifying stakeholder expectations regarding transparency and sustainability practices.

The company’s primary challenge has now shifted toward maintaining and enhancing brand trust amid intensifying competition in the food and beverage (F&B) industry and growing public awareness of ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) principles. Since 2022, FORE Coffee has launched the #FOREsponsible campaign on Instagram, encouraging consumers to bring their own tumblers in exchange for cashback incentives, an initiative also implemented by competitors such as Starbucks and Kopi Kenangan.

Figure 1. A compilation of the #FOREsponsible campaign posts on Fore Coffee’s official Instagram account. Image collage created by the researcher.



Source: Fore Coffee Instagram posts, image collage created by the researcher (2025).

In 2023, through the #FOREsentiallyYou campaign, Fore Coffee appointed Cinta Laura Kiehl as its social and sustainability ambassador, further strengthening its ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) commitment. The company also partnered with Robries to launch a Green Store at Kuningan City, featuring furniture made from 450 kilograms

of recycled plastic, reducing plastic usage by 78–80%, and selling upcycled products such as bags, tumblers, and coasters (Fore Coffee, 2023) and (Elmira, 2023). Additionally, Fore Coffee cups, made from polypropylene (PP) code 5, are designed for reuse up to five times and are safe for high temperatures, steam, and chemical exposure (Fore Coffee, 2022).

Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG).

This study conceptualizes ESG communication as a higher-order construct composed of three lower-order dimensions: environmental communication, social communication, and governance communication. This hierarchical conceptualization reflects the theoretical understanding that stakeholders perceive ESG as a unified corporate orientation, while still evaluating specific aspects within each pillar (Sarstedt et al., 2019). Numerous studies emphasize that the implementation of ESG not only enhances reputation and purchase intention, but also fosters brand trust through practices of transparency and social responsibility (Kwak & Cha, 2022) and (Ji et al., 2025). The UN Global Compact (2004) highlights the importance of a systematic response to non-financial factors as a prerequisite for sustainable growth (Hair et al., 2016). In the coffeehouse industry, environmental and social ESG initiatives have been shown to strengthen brand image and customer loyalty, although the governance dimension often exerts a more limited influence on consumer perception (Wan, 2023) and (Garcia, 2020).

Sustainability communication encompasses two primary approaches: green advertising, which is persuasive and one-directional, and the deliberative model, which emphasizes collaboration and stakeholder engagement (Golob et al., 2022). Fore Coffee integrates all three aspects of ESG into its business model through recycling and upcycling initiatives for the environmental dimension, empowerment of MSMEs and collaborations with local designers for the social dimension, and carbon management and offset programs in partnership with non-profit organizations for the governance dimension (Fore Coffee.). These efforts align with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 12, which promotes responsible consumption and production patterns (United Nation, n.d.).

Although existing literature has discussed the impact of ESG on brand trust and customer loyalty, there remains limited empirical research examining the mediating role of green marketing in the relationship between ESG communication and brand trust, particularly within local post IPO F&B companies. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the influence of ESG communication on Fore Coffee consumers' level of brand trust and to explore the mediating role of green marketing practices within this mechanism.

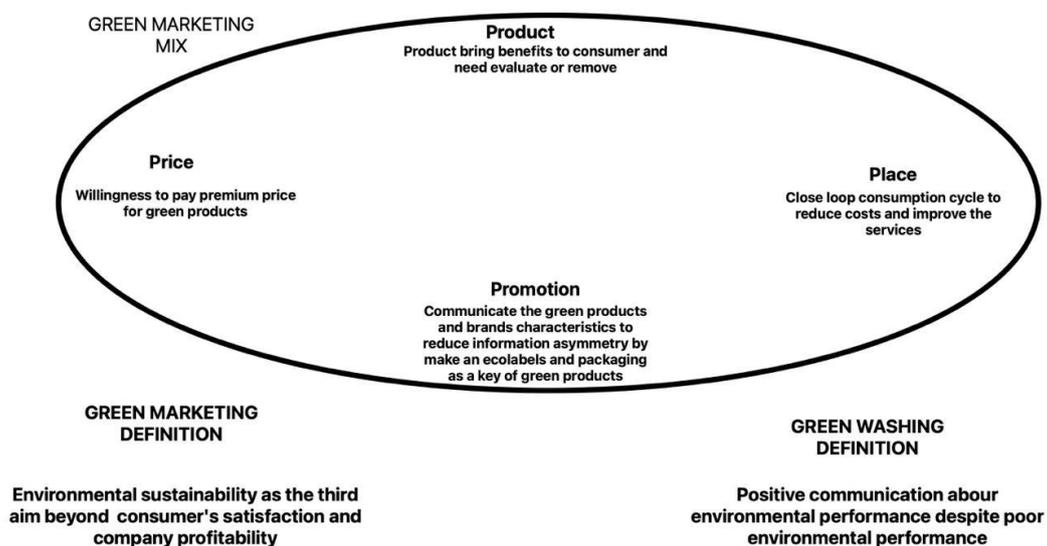
In this study, ESG communication is defined as a form of strategic corporate communication that conveys a firm's policies, commitments, and performance related to environmental, social, and governance issues to a broad group of stakeholders. ESG communication operates at the corporate and strategic level, focusing on what the company communicates about its sustainability orientation (Braga et al, 2024). Accordingly, the researcher proposes the following hypotheses:

H1: ESG Communication (X) has a positive effect on Fore Coffee consumers' Brand Trust (Y)

Green Marketing

In contrast, green marketing is conceptualized as the application of sustainability principles within the marketing mix, including product, price, distribution, and promotion. Green marketing operates at a tactical and market level, shaping how sustainability values are translated into concrete marketing practices that can be directly experienced by consumers (Dangelico & Vocalelli, 2017). In emerging markets such as Indonesia, research has shown that consumers’ perceptions of environmentally friendly initiatives including sustainable packaging, green promotion, eco-friendly distribution, and in-store atmosphere significantly enhance customers’ emotional attachment and purchase intention toward coffee brands (Jang et al., 2015) and (Sihombing & Tobing, 2023). Moreover, factors such as satisfaction, trust, and perceived benefits have been found to drive loyalty and green brand equity (Mogaji et al., 2022). Several studies on Fore Coffee confirm the positive influence of eco-friendly packaging and upcycling practices on consumers’ purchase decisions (Ismail & Aldiansyah, 2024), (Putri & Dermawan, 2024) and (Sihombing & Tobing, 2023).

Figure 2. *the Green Marketing Mix*



Source: Dangelico and Vocalelli (2017), adapted by the researcher.

As the theoretical foundation, this study operationalizes green marketing through the 4P framework (Product, Price, Place, Promotion) within the context of sustainability (Dangelico & Vocalelli, 2017) and (Vaitone et al., n.d.). While prior literature has mapped the relationships between ESG and brand trust, as well as the impact of green marketing on consumer loyalty, there remains a research gap regarding the mediating role of green marketing practices in the relationship between ESG communication and brand trust, particularly within the local post-IPO F&B industry. Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H2: ESG Communication (X) has a positive effect on Green Marketing (M) practices at Fore Coffee.

Brand Trust

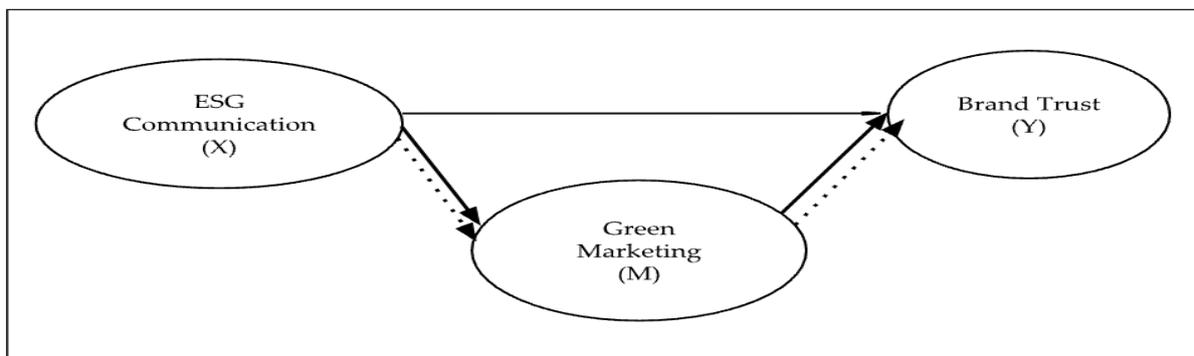
Brand trust is defined as consumers' confidence in a brand formed through both direct experiences (such as product use and satisfaction) and indirect experiences (such as advertising, word of mouth, and brand reputation) (Atulkar, 2020; Bae, 2023). As the foundation of long-term relationships, brand trust fosters brand loyalty and brand equity through emotional attachment (brand love), the strength of digital storytelling, and sustainability practices (ESG) (Bae, 2023; Bernanto et al., 2020; Puspaningrum, 2020; Wardhana & Yulia, n.d.).

Recent studies have developed a conceptual model of brand trust based on green marketing practices, incorporating five key variables: Information Credibility, Customer Engagement, Communication Tools, Green Purchase Intentions, and Eco-labeling (Jamal et al., 2023). Although this model offers relevant insights, it has so far been tested only within the property industry context. Therefore, further exploration is needed within the food and beverage (F&B) sector, particularly for local brands such as Fore Coffee, to better understand how brand trust is shaped by sustainability communication combined with green marketing practices. Accordingly, the researcher proposes the following hypothesis:

H3: Green Marketing (M) has a positive effect on Fore Coffee consumers' Brand Trust (Y).

H4: Green Marketing (M) mediates the relationship between ESG Communication (X) and Brand Trust (Y).

Figure 3. Conceptual Framework



Source: Developed by the researcher.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a quantitative approach with an explanatory research design, aiming to examine the causal relationships among ESG communication, green marketing, and brand trust variables. Data were collected using a purposive sampling survey technique, a method used to identify all possible cases within a highly specific and hard-to-reach population (Neuman, 2014). Purposive sampling was employed to ensure that respondents had relevant and recent experience with the brand and its sustainability-related initiatives. The inclusion criteria required respondents to have purchased Fore Coffee within the past three months and to have been exposed to at least one form of the company's sustainability or ESG-related communication.

These criteria were designed to enhance content validity and reduce recall bias by focusing on consumers who were sufficiently familiar with the brand's practices. While purposive sampling limits statistical generalization, it is appropriate for studies examining perceptual and evaluative responses to specific corporate communication strategies. The data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The research is grounded in the post-positivist paradigm, which recognizes that truth is provisional and always open to refinement (Creswell, 2014).

The advantage of using PLS-SEM lies in its ability to provide robust solutions even with relatively small sample sizes. Although larger samples are generally preferred, researchers can use estimated assumptions ($p < .05$) for path coefficients ranging from 0.21 to 0.30, allowing valid conclusions to be drawn with sample sizes between 69 and 112 (Hair & Alamer, 2022). Therefore, this study adopted a recommended sample size of 100 respondents.

These criteria were established with the justification that recent purchasers possess fresher experiential memory, thereby reducing recall bias and ensuring that participants are active consumers of Fore Coffee. Furthermore, respondents exposed to the brand's eco-friendly campaigns can provide meaningful insights into the effectiveness of Fore Coffee's sustainability messages. Demographic data of the survey respondents were collected in the first section of the questionnaire. Subsequently, five-point Likert-scale questions were used to assess the main elements of the proposed conceptual model.

For the ESG Communication construct, which comprises three pillars Environmental, Social, and Governance, the researcher adopted 12 items (4 for Environment, 4 for Social, and 4 for Governance) adapted to the context of communication. Brand Trust was measured using six items adopted from previous research (Tripopsakul & Puriwat, 2023). Meanwhile, the Green Marketing instrument adopted and modified 27 items from the External Green Marketing Tactical Level of the Green Marketing Scale, consisting of 8 items for Green Product, 4 for Green Price, 4 for Green Place, and 11 for Green Promotion (Vilkaite-Vaitone et al., 2022). Wording modifications were made to reflect the consumer perspective, ensuring the items captured perceived green marketing practices of Fore Coffee. The detailed list of questionnaire items is presented in the following table.

Table 1. Questionnaire Constructs

Variable	Dimension	Item	Indicators	Source
ESG Communi cation (X)	Environment al	EC 1	Fore Coffee menunjukkan upaya nyata untuk mengurangi atau menghilangkan dampak negatif terhadap lingkungan	(Tripopsaku & Puriwat, 2023)
		EC2	Fore Coffee menyampaikan komitmen untuk menggunakan sumber daya secara efisien tanpa membahayakan lingkungan	

	EC3	Fore Coffee secara aktif mengomunikasikan penggunaan material ramah lingkungan
	EC4	Fore Coffee menekankan pengelolaan limbah dan aktivitas daur ulang secara efektif
Sosial	SC1	Fore Coffee menghargai budaya, tradisi dan norma sosial dalam setiap aktivitasnya
	SC2	Komunikasi Fore Coffee menonjolkan upaya dalam meningkatkan kesejahteraan masyarakat dan kualitas hidup jangka panjang.
	SC3	Fore Coffee menyatakan peranannya dalam membantu pertumbuhan sosial dan ekonomi.
	SC4	Fore Coffee mendukung dan menyampaikan dukungannya terhadap lembaga sosial atau amal yang membantu kelompok rentan.
<i>Governance</i>	GC1	Fore Coffee menyampaikan bahwa mereka patuh pada hukum dan peraturan dalam seluruh aktivitas bisnisnya.
	GC2	Komunikasi Fore Coffee menunjukkan fokus pada tanggung jawab terhadap mitra bisnis dan pemegang saham.
	GC3	Fore Coffee mengutamakan standar etika yang dikomunikasikan secara terbuka dibandingkan kinerja keuangan.
	GC4	Fore Coffee secara aktif menyatakan komitmen untuk menghindari dan mencegah korupsi dalam segala bentuk.

Green Marketing (M)	<i>Green Product</i>	GP2	Produk ramah lingkungan dapat memberikan peluang diferensiasi bagi Fore Coffee (Vilkaite-Vaitone et al., 2022)
		GP3	Fore Coffee berupaya untuk menghadirkan produk dan layanan ramah lingkungan yang inovatif ke pasar.
		GP4	Fore Coffee menggunakan bahan yang dapat didaur ulang atau digunakan kembali dalam produknya.
		GP5	Bahan baku produk Fore Coffee aman bagi lingkungan dan kesehatan.
		GP6	Fore Coffee menyediakan produk yang ramah lingkungan.
		GP7	Fore Coffee menggunakan bahan kemasan yang ekologis dan bersih.
		GP8	Produk ramah lingkungan Fore Coffee diminati oleh pelanggan.
		<i>Green Price</i>	GPR1
GPR2	Saya bersedia membayar lebih untuk produk yang ramah lingkungan.		
GPR3	Saya bersedia membayar lebih jika sebagian harga produk didonasikan untuk kegiatan lingkungan.		
GPR4	Menurut saya, Fore Coffee menetapkan harga produknya dengan mempertimbangkan aspek lingkungan.		
<i>Green Place</i>	GPL1	Saya melihat bahwa Fore Coffee mempertimbangkan aspek ramah lingkungan dalam pengantaran dan distribusi produk.	

	GPL2	Saya merasa Fore Coffee mengajak konsumen bersikap ramah lingkungan saat melakukan pembelian langsung.
	GPL3	Fore Coffee mendorong penggunaan pemesanan online karena dinilai lebih ramah lingkungan.
	GPL4	Saya percaya Fore Coffee berusaha memilih sistem pengantaran yang lebih ramah lingkungan.
<i>Green Promotion</i>	GPM1	Menurut saya, komunikasi pemasaran Fore Coffee mencerminkan komitmen terhadap lingkungan (<i>Sustainability</i>).
	GPM2	Saya melihat Fore Coffee menginformasikan komponen produk yang ramah lingkungan kepada konsumen.
	GPM3	Saya melihat Fore Coffee menggunakan pesan-pesan yang menekankan nilai ramah lingkungan dalam komunikasinya.
	GPM4	Fore Coffee menggunakan media promosi yang ramah lingkungan.
	GPM5	Saya melihat Fore Coffee lebih memilih metode promosi digital karena dinilai lebih ramah lingkungan.
	GPM6	Fore Coffee bekerja sama dengan organisasi lingkungan untuk mempromosikan citra ramah lingkungan (<i>Green Image</i>).
	GPM7	Saya merasa penggunaan label lingkungan (<i>eco-labelling</i>) pada produk Fore Coffee

	GPM8	efektif dalam memperkuat promosi ramah lingkungan. Fore Coffee mencantumkan label ramah lingkungan (<i>eco-labelling</i>) pada kemasannya.
	GPM9	Fore Coffee menampilkan label ramah lingkungan (<i>eco-labelling</i>) di situs web perusahaan.
	GPM10	Fore Coffee memberikan informasi kepada konsumen tentang pengelolaan lingkungan yang dilakukannya.
	GPM11	Saya mengetahui bahwa Fore Coffee memberikan dukungan atau sponsor kepada kegiatan atau organisasi yang peduli lingkungan.
Brand Trust (Y)	BT1	Saya merasa bahwa janji atau komitmen Fore Coffee dapat dipercaya. (Tripopsakul & Puriwat, 2023)
	BT2	Saya percaya pada kualitas produk dari Fore Coffee.
	BT3	Produk Fore Coffee memberikan jaminan mutu yang konsisten.
	BT4	Saya merasa bahwa Fore Coffee peduli terhadap pelanggannya.
	BT5	Fore Coffee bersikap jujur terhadap konsumennya.
	BT6	Fore Coffee menunjukkan sikap menghargai konsumennya.

Source: Adapted items from Tripopsakul & Puriwat (2023) and Vilkaite-Vaitone et al. (2022), instrument wording modified by the researcher.

The Green Marketing scale initially included 27 items to capture comprehensively the tactical translation of sustainability across the 4P marketing mix (product, price, place, promotion). This breadth was deliberate to preserve conceptual completeness at the lower-order level. Empirically, items with weak outer loadings were evaluated and removed based on standard PLS-SEM criteria to balance parsimony and content coverage. Importantly, application of the two-stage HOC approach mitigates the risk that a large number of lower-

order items dominate the model: Stage 1 condenses each 4P dimension into a latent score, and Stage 2 uses only these aggregated scores as indicators of Green Marketing, thereby preventing indicator inflation in the final structural estimation.

To ensure conceptual and statistical coherence for higher-order constructs, ESG Communication was modeled as a reflective–reflective higher-order construct (HOC) composed of Environmental, Social, and Governance lower-order dimensions. Following recommended PLS-SEM practice for reflective–reflective HOC (Sarstedt et al., 2019), a two-stage approach was used: Stage 1 assessed and purified all lower-order constructs and generated latent variable scores; Stage 2 used these latent scores as indicators of the HOC and estimated the structural relationships. This procedure prevents indicator-level dominance and preserves theoretical multidimensionality while maintaining parsimony for hypothesis testing.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results section focuses on testing the reliability and validity of the research instruments, with findings presented as follows.

Sample Profile

The profile of survey respondents is presented in Table 2. The survey was conducted online, and after excluding responses that did not meet the eligibility criteria, a total of 180 valid respondents ($n = 180$) were retained for further analysis. The demographic characteristics of the participants indicate that the majority were female (74%), aged between 23 and 27 years (48%), and employed as private-sector employees (40%).

Table 2. Descriptive Statistic

Item	Description	Sample	%
Gender	Female	134	74%
	Male	46	26%
Age	<18	3	2%
	18 - 22	44	24%
	23 - 27	86	48%
	28 - 3	33	18%
	33 - 37	11	6%
	38 >	3	2%
Occupation	Students	50	28%
	Civil Servants (ASN)	7	4%

Private Employee	72	40%
Self-employed/Entrepreneur	11	6%
Profesional (doctor, lecturer, lawyer, dll.)	4	2%
Freelance	18	10%
Unemployed	8	4%
Intern	4	2%
Others	10	6%

Source: Survey data collected by the researcher (2025).

Evaluation of the Measurement Model

After following the procedural guidelines for conducting Partial Least Squares–Based Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) using SmartPLS version 4, the findings of the measurement model assessing internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity are presented in the following table.

Table 3. Validity And Reliability Assessments for the Data

Constructs	Items	Outer Loadings	Cronbach's α	CR	AVE
ESG Communication	EC1	0,760	0,922	0,924	0,934
	EC2	0,765			
	EC3	0,682			
	EC4	0,761			
	SC1	0,632			
	SC2	0,741			
	SC3	0,672			
	SC4	0,735			
	GC1	0,755			
	GC2	0,765			
	GC3	0,790			
	GC4	0,756			
Green Marketing	GP2	0,435	0,968	0,970	0,552
	GP3	0,513			
	GP4	0,526			
	GP5	0,730			
	GP6	0,715			
	GP7	0,679			
	GP8	0,697			
	GPR1	0,523			
	GPR2	0,411			
	GPR3	0,439			
	GPR4	0,636			
	GPL1	0,697			
	GPL2	0,622			
GPL3	0,488				

GPL3	0,488			
GPL4	0,604			
GPM1	0,740			
GPM10	0,586			
GPM11	0,616			
GPM2	0,787			
GPM3	0,728			
GPM4	0,733			
GPM5	0,739			
GPM6	0,739			
GPM7	0,602			
GPM8	0,646			
GPM9	0,672			
Brand Trust	BT1	0,748	0,922	0,924 0,541
	BT2	0,828		
	BT3	0,821		
	BT4	0,793		
	BT5	0,818		
	BT6	0,795		

Source: Survey data collected by the researcher (2025).

As part of robustness checks, inner collinearity was assessed using full collinearity VIF; all VIF values were below 3.3, indicating that multicollinearity and common method bias are unlikely to affect the structural estimates. HTMT values were below 0.85, further supporting discriminant validity (see Table 4).

Table 4. Fornell–Larcker Criterion

	BRAND TRUST	ESG COMMUNICATION
BRAND TRUST ($\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$)	0.801	
ESG COMMUNICATION	0.648	0.735

Source: SmartPLS 4 output; author's analysis (2025).

For the validity and reliability tests, Cronbach's Alpha was employed to measure the internal consistency of the research instrument, such as the questionnaire items (Bonett & Wright, 2014). Convergent validity was used to assess the extent to which the statements within the questionnaire accurately represent the intended construct (latent variable) (Amora, 2021).

The results of the reliability and convergent validity tests indicate that all constructs in the model demonstrate a high level of reliability. The Cronbach's Alpha value for Brand Trust was 0.889, with a Composite Reliability (ρ_c) of 0.915. Meanwhile, the Cronbach's Alpha for ESG Communication was 0.922, and the Composite Reliability (ρ_c) was 0.934. Both values exceed the minimum threshold of 0.70 as recommended by (Hair et al., 2021), indicating that the internal consistency of the indicators for each construct is very good. Therefore, both constructs meet the reliability criteria within the PLS-SEM measurement model.

In addition, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for both constructs were above the 0.50 threshold, signifying that the constructs exhibit adequate convergent validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Hence, the instrument used in this study can be considered both valid and reliable. Regarding discriminant validity, following (Hair & Alamer, 2022), the Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) approach was applied with a recommended threshold of < 0.85 . Conceptually, cross-construct correlations should be low, while correlations among indicators within the same construct should be high. The HTMT value between *ESG Communication* and *Brand Trust* was 0.708, indicating that the criterion for discriminant validity was satisfactorily met.

This study employed a two-stage partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) approach to examine the relationships among ESG Communication, Green Marketing, and Brand Trust. In the first stage, latent variable scores were generated for all lower-order constructs. In the second stage, these latent variable scores were used to estimate the higher-order structural relationships, allowing a parsimonious and theoretically coherent model as recommended for hierarchical component models.

Table 5. Direct Effects

Hypothesis	Path	Path Coefficient (β)	t-value	p-value	Result
H1	ESG Communication → Green Marketing	0.754	19.713	0.00	Supported
H2	Green Marketing → Brand Trust	0.673	14.637	0.00	Supported
H3	ESG Communication → Brand Trust	0.508	10.109	0.00	Not or weakly supported

Source: Author's analysis (PLS-SEM two-stage) (2025).

The results indicate that ESG Communication has a significant positive effect on Green Marketing, supporting the argument that firms' ESG-related communication strengthens their green marketing implementation. In addition, Green Marketing shows a significant positive influence on Brand Trust, confirming its role as a key driver of trust formation. However, the direct effect of ESG Communication on Brand Trust is relatively weak, suggesting that ESG communication alone is insufficient to directly enhance brand trust without being translated into concrete marketing practices.

To examine the mediating role of Green Marketing, a bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 subsamples was conducted. The indirect effect of ESG Communication on Brand Trust via Green Marketing was assessed using bias-corrected confidence intervals.

Table 6. Indirect Effects

Path	Indirect Effect (β)	t-value	p-value	Mediation Type
ESG Communication → Green Marketing → Brand Trust	0.508	10.109	0.00	Partial or indirect-dominant mediation

Source: Bootstrapping results, SmartPLS 4; author's analysis (2025).

The bootstrapping results reveal a significant indirect effect of ESG Communication on Brand Trust through Green Marketing. This finding confirms that Green Marketing mediates the relationship between ESG Communication and Brand Trust. The relatively weaker direct effect, combined with a significant indirect effect, indicates that ESG Communication contributes to Brand Trust primarily by shaping and reinforcing green marketing practices rather than through communication alone.

Table 7. Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

Endogenous Construct	R^2 Value	Interpretation
Green Marketing	0.453	Meaningful explanatory power
Brand Trust	0.568	Substantial explanatory power

Source: Author's analysis (PLS-SEM) (2025).

The results indicate that ESG Communication explains a meaningful proportion of variance in Green Marketing. Furthermore, the combined effects of ESG Communication and Green Marketing explain a moderate proportion of variance in Brand Trust, suggesting that the proposed model provides substantial explanatory power in understanding how ESG-related strategies influence consumer trust.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study set out to examine how ESG communication influences brand trust among Fore Coffee consumers, with green marketing positioned as a mediating mechanism. The findings provide several important theoretical and practical insights, particularly within the context of a local post-IPO food and beverage (F&B) brand operating in an emerging market.

First, the results demonstrate that ESG communication has a significant and positive effect on green marketing practices. This finding supports prior studies suggesting that sustainability-oriented corporate communication serves as a strategic signal that shapes how sustainability values are translated into market-facing activities (Braga et al., 2024; Golob et al., 2022). In the case of Fore Coffee, ESG communication related to environmental responsibility, social engagement, and governance transparency appears to strengthen the implementation of green product design, pricing considerations, distribution practices, and promotional strategies. This confirms that ESG communication functions not merely as symbolic messaging, but as an upstream driver that informs tactical marketing decisions.

Second, the findings confirm that green marketing has a strong and positive effect on brand trust. This result aligns with previous research emphasizing that consumers develop trust primarily through tangible and experiential cues, such as eco-friendly products, transparent pricing, sustainable distribution, and credible green promotion (Dangelico & Vocalelli, 2017; Jang et al., 2015; Mogaji et al., 2022). For Fore Coffee, initiatives such as recyclable packaging, green store concepts, and sustainability-focused promotions appear to play a critical role in reinforcing consumers' confidence in the brand. These results support the argument that brand trust in sustainability-oriented contexts is built less through abstract corporate claims and more through consistent, observable marketing actions.

Third, and most importantly, the mediation analysis reveals that green marketing significantly mediates the relationship between ESG communication and brand trust, with a Variance Accounted For (VAF) value of 69.1%, indicating strong partial mediation. This finding addresses a key gap in the existing literature, which has often examined ESG communication and brand trust as a direct relationship without sufficiently explaining the underlying mechanism. The results suggest that ESG communication alone is not sufficient to directly build brand trust; rather, its effectiveness depends on how well ESG values are operationalized through green marketing practices. In other words, ESG communication influences brand trust primarily by shaping consumers' perceptions of the brand's marketing mix, rather than by functioning as a standalone trust signal.

This mediation finding also contributes to the ongoing debate on greenwashing risks. Prior studies have warned that ESG communication may backfire if it is perceived as symbolic or disconnected from actual practices (Braga et al., 2024). The present study empirically supports this concern by showing that the direct effect of ESG communication on brand trust is relatively weak, while the indirect effect through green marketing is substantial. This implies that consumers are likely to evaluate the credibility of ESG claims by assessing whether such claims are reflected in concrete marketing actions. For a post-IPO brand like Fore Coffee, where public visibility and stakeholder scrutiny increase significantly, aligning ESG narratives with authentic green marketing practices becomes especially crucial.

From a contextual perspective, this study extends ESG and green marketing research to the Indonesian F&B sector, which remains underrepresented in sustainability communication studies. Unlike multinational brands with long-established ESG reputations, local brands such as Fore Coffee must actively build legitimacy and trust among consumers who may be more skeptical of sustainability claims. The findings suggest that green marketing serves as a critical trust-building bridge between corporate-level ESG communication and consumer-level brand evaluations in emerging markets.

The post-IPO status of Fore Coffee likely amplifies the effects observed in this study. Following listing, firms face increased public visibility and investor scrutiny, which raises stakeholder expectations for transparency and authentic ESG implementation. Under such conditions, consumers may evaluate ESG claims more sceptically and look for tangible evidence in the firm's marketing mix; hence, ESG communication translates into trust chiefly when operationalized via concrete green marketing actions. This context helps explain why the

direct effect of ESG communication on Brand Trust was weaker while the indirect (via Green Marketing) effect was substantial.

CONCLUSION

This study provides empirical evidence that ESG communication influences brand trust among Fore Coffee consumers primarily through the mediating role of green marketing. Using a two-stage PLS-SEM approach, the findings show that ESG communication significantly enhances green marketing practices, which in turn have a strong positive impact on brand trust. While ESG communication alone exhibits a weaker direct effect on brand trust, its indirect effect through green marketing is substantial, indicating strong partial mediation.

These results highlight the importance of translating ESG commitments into tangible marketing actions that consumers can directly experience. For Fore Coffee, and similar local F&B brands operating in a post-IPO context, sustainability communication must be supported by consistent green marketing practices to effectively foster consumer trust. ESG narratives that are not operationalized through product, price, place, and promotion strategies risk being perceived as superficial and may fail to generate the intended trust outcomes.

From a theoretical standpoint, this study contributes to the sustainability communication and branding literature by clarifying the mechanism through which ESG communication affects brand trust. By positioning green marketing as a mediating variable, the research advances understanding beyond direct-effect models and offers a more nuanced explanation of how sustainability-oriented communication works in practice.

Practically, the findings suggest that managers should focus not only on communicating ESG commitments, but also on ensuring that such commitments are embedded in the marketing mix. Investments in eco-friendly products, transparent pricing, sustainable distribution, and credible green promotion are essential to transforming ESG communication into brand trust. For policymakers and practitioners, this study underscores the need for integrated ESG strategies that align corporate communication with market-level execution.

Despite its contributions, this study has limitations. The use of purposive sampling limits the generalizability of the findings beyond Fore Coffee consumers, and the cross-sectional design does not capture changes in trust over time. Future research could extend this model to other F&B brands, employ longitudinal designs, or explore additional mediators such as perceived authenticity or greenwashing skepticism to further enrich understanding of ESG-driven trust formation.

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