



Sustainable Content: A Framework for Advancing Sustainability in Social Media Content Production and Digital Media Resilience

Tracy Mae Ildefonso¹

Abstract

The digital world is significantly contributing to environmental destruction from the production of digital content and the behaviours of producers and consumers. The annual global carbon footprint of the social media platform TikTok alone is already comparable to that of a country like Greece (Shepherd, 2025; O'Brien, 2024). Hence, failing to address the issue now will only worsen our environment rapidly. In this piece, I further problematise this issue by making online influencers accountable for their actions in content production. I introduce the term “sustainable content” to help provide solutions in the field. Sustainable content is a discipline influencers should foster among themselves and later apply when producing social media content. Three types of content that are deemed fun but are actually detrimental to the environment are discussed: mukbang, luxury travel, and livestreaming. Three solutions in the context of sustainable content are also provided by analysing the psychology behind the fame of each content type. The goal of introducing sustainable content to academia is to integrate the digital communications field into global sustainability discussions by highlighting this issue, encouraging researchers to develop the concept further, and motivating influencers to adopt and normalise sustainable practices in their content production.

Keywords: Sustainable Content, Sustainability, Social Media Content, Online Content, Digital Content, Influencers, Resilience, Digital Media

¹ School of Communications, Dublin City University, Whitehall, Dublin, Ireland tracymae.ildefonso@dcu.ie

1. Introduction

The conversation around environmental and climate change initiatives is decisively shifting more toward sustainable practices. Defined by the United Nations Brundtland Commission, sustainability encompasses actions that meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (WEDC, 1987). The UN has advocated for global responses to reduce environmental harm through the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which address a broad range of sustainable initiatives, influencing everything from economic frameworks to individual lifestyles (General Assembly Economic and Social Council, 2024). One result that can be observed is the growing number of sustainability terminologies that have emerged to reflect specific advocacies related to the SDGs. Terms such as sustainable tourism (Zolfani *et al.*, 2015), sustainable furniture and designs (Liu *et al.*, 2025), sustainable luxury (Kunz *et al.*, 2020), sustainable entrepreneurship (Bajdor and Pawełoszek, 2020), and sustainable digital rent (Özdilek, 2024) address the worsening environmental issues of contemporary economic and cultural societies.

According to studies, understanding sustainable concepts and terminologies is crucial, as they bring awareness of history, transition periods, and core ideas that can guide decision-making toward sustainable considerations (Robertson, 2021; Mensah, 2019). While the UN sets the standard definition of the term *sustainability* used by academics and practitioners alike, its widespread use in literature and other platforms has made it somewhat cliché (Robertson, 2021). Furthermore, the term is often used in various contexts or defined imprecisely across different sources, leaving many people confused about what sustainability truly means (Robertson, 2021; Glavić & Lukman, 2007). Glavić and Lukman (2007) recognised this issue early on, prompting them to define 51 sustainable terms to help clarify their meanings. Terminology is important because naming something influences how we think and behave regarding it (Baden & Harwood, 2012). In sustainability, a clear, well-defined terminology, with a coherent concept and a solid etymological background, helps advance the paradigm further (Robertson, 2021; Glavić & Lukman, 2007).

At a conference I attended in Miami, I encountered the term "sustainable destination branding." It focused on the local government's rebranding efforts for this well-known spring break hotspot, utilising tools such as social media, to transform it into a haven of elegance and tranquillity. This shift aims to heal the destination from the negative impacts of over-tourism, including high crime rates and overcrowding (Spezzano and Lusby, 2024). This concept, along with the plethora of sustainability terminologies that emerged, piqued my interest in the implications of sustainability in my field of digital communications.

Upon a cursory search² across Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar, it became evident that there is a significant gap in research on sustainability practices in digital content creation. The majority of existing studies focus on the role of online influencers in shaping consumer behaviour, promoting sustainable purchasing, endorsing ethical brands, or distancing from non-sustainable companies and products (Verma and Kapoor, 2025; Kaivonen, 2024; Mawad and Freiha, 2024). The closest literature I encountered on sustainability in digital content production focused on regulating influencers' promotional and marketing activities (Luzak, 2024). Its

primary focus is sustainable activism, or deinfluencing on social media, in which followers are encouraged to reevaluate their purchases of overhyped products or rethink their consumption choices, rather than delving into the nuances of sustainable content creation itself. Another study focused solely on eco-influencers who embody sustainable living through practices such as minimalism, reducing food waste, and adopting or rescuing animals (Yalcin, 2020).

These findings highlight a lack in the literature regarding the accountability of online influencers who engage in unsustainable practices within digital content production, and the need to explore how influencers can be encouraged to adopt sustainability practices in their content creation. To address this critical gap, I propose introducing the term "Sustainable Content" as a conceptual framework to explore how digital content production can align with sustainability principles, and meaningfully contribute to the dialogue on environmental and social responsibility in this increasingly digital world. In my analysis, I examined three popular online content formats that have significant negative environmental impacts: mukbang, luxury flights, and livestreaming. My findings reveal that the digital media landscape plays a substantial role in harming the environment. Furthermore, the situation is likely to worsen, as even simple online activities, like scrolling through social media on mobile phones, can significantly increase an individual's greenhouse gas emissions. As such, I positioned sustainable content as a potential framework for building digital media resilience by equipping online users with behaviours that can promote sustainability. I also utilised various conceptual lenses to further my arguments, including value co-creation, and the monocausal attitude-behaviour perspective, among others.

2. Why Problematise Digital Content Creation in the Name of Sustainability?

To achieve sustainability objectives, it is essential to implement a holistic approach that holds all stakeholders accountable for their contributions to carbon emissions, encompassing not only lifestyle choices but also professional practices. As an interdisciplinary researcher in social sciences and media communications, who sees the impact of the latter on society, I propose that it is time to hold the digital and social media field accountable in the name of sustainability. I assert that with the right encouragement, it can play a pivotal role in advancing sustainability initiatives within the field by addressing the sustainability practices of today's leading players: social media, digital content, and online influencer culture.

Data mining and fashion influencing are two of the most controversial forms of digital content that compromise sustainability. The large-scale nature of data mining leads to unsustainable practices, as larger sources are required for operation and distribution, resulting in high energy consumption, significant greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and increased electronic waste (Zewe, 2025). For example, it will require a tremendous amount of streaming data or an online algorithm to gather real-time predictions, particularly for disaster management and risk assessment (Morik *et al.*, 2012). In addition, online fashion influencing will remain sustainably challenging due to social media's rapid demand for change and tendency to glamourise everyday life (Suh, 2020). Influencers quickly discard newly purchased clothing that has already been featured in their content, buy unnecessary home

² Keywords used in these platforms: (1) ALL=(sustainable online content influencer), (2) ALL=(sustainable digital content influencer), (3) ALL=(sustainable online content creator), and (4) ALL=(sustainable digital content creator).

products and appliances to keep up with aesthetic trends, and receive monthly PR subscription boxes that contribute to the hundreds of metric tonnes (Mt) of carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions and significant product waste produced annually in a country (Luu *et al.*, 2018; Faye, 2019). Along with the poly mailers, plastic, bubble wraps, and boxes used for deliveries and returns, all these lead to excessive waste in manufacturing (Luu *et al.*, 2018).

In this section, I discuss three types of social media content that, while deemed fun and engaging, are actually damaging the environment for future generations.

Mukbang = Food Waste

Mukbang is a video content in which influencers super-indulge in eating vast amounts of food, accompanied by the sounds of eating, known as the autonomous sensory meridian response (ASMR), to add a multisensory aspect to the content. Mukbang viewers watch and listen as the influencer eats and finishes their food. Several reasons were identified for this online phenomenon's popularity. For example, people are gratified by watching someone eat (Anjani *et al.*, 2020). In China, having this amount of food is considered a sign of affluence and personal prestige (Qu, 2021). In South Korea, it is the youth's way of expressing their disappointment with their society's pressure to maintain slim bodies (*ibid.*). It also serves as a source of connection among fellow watchers during a mukbang livestream (Lee and Wan, 2023), helping people living alone have company while eating, as eating alone is considered atypical in South Korea (Sayekti and Butar, 2024).

What perplexes me is the substantial food waste generated by mukbang creators, despite global poverty. In Indonesia, food loss and waste are estimated to be 15 to 184 kilograms per capita annually, while approximately 19.4 to 20 million individuals are struggling with hunger (*ibid.*). China also experienced a food shortage during the pandemic. Hence, its government enforced the 'Clean Plate' campaign in 2020, in which people browsing for mukbang content online were served warning notices (Tidy, 2020). In 2022, the country recorded food waste of up to 35 million tons, prompting the Chinese government to start fining content creators, including TV shows, up to more than USD 15,000 if food waste is featured (Kong, 2022).

"I Flew Business Class..." = Increase in CO₂ Emission

Flight travel is the most significant contributor to each individual's GHG emissions, accounting for 5% of global warming each year (Kingston, 2020). The frequent fliers, comprising 1% of the world's population, contribute half of those emissions annually (Stüben and Cantoni, 2024). Passengers using private planes contribute 7,500 tons of CO₂ per passenger per year (*ibid.*). However, the social media sphere appears to be oblivious to these issues.

A quick search for "business class flight influencer" on YouTube reveals a wealth of content from online creators who highlight their experiences in business and first-class travel. These videos often focus on the flight's premium features such as gourmet meal options, luxurious amenities, top-tier service, and overall comfort. Many influencers travel across various airlines and destinations to generate content from their experiences, comparing business- and first-class features to determine which airline and route offer superior service or the most delectable cuisine. At this rate, predictions of a 110% increase in CO₂ emissions from the aviation industry by 2050, rising from 416 Mt in 2005 to between 876 and 1013 Mt, could actually come true (Macintosh and Wallace, 2009).

Livestreamers, Gamers, Podcasters = Greenhouse Gas Emissions

"Data is energy, and energy creates emissions" (Bonsignore, 2023, p. 87).

The most relevant information I could locate regarding content creators' accountability for their energy use and GHGs is presented by Bonsignore (2023). The study states that we emit 5 pounds of greenhouse gases per GB of data that we use. How content creators affect this is the file size of their audio or video output. Based on calculations by Forret (2022, as cited in *ibid.*), a half-hour YouTube video at 24 frames per second is roughly equivalent to 1.73 GB, contributing approximately 5+ pounds of GHG emissions. For a podcast of the same length, mono-channel, and talk-only style, the typical file size is measured at 23 MB (Blubrry, 2021, as cited in *ibid.*).

In the current digital era, where everyone aspires to be an online influencer, people are posting a staggering 34 million TikTok videos per day (Shepherd, 2025). As a result, an estimated yearly global carbon footprint of 50 million Mt of CO₂e was recorded from TikTok alone. This data is comparable to Greece's annual carbon footprint (51.67 million Mt of CO₂ equivalent) or to "an extra 123 miles in a gasoline-powered car each year" (O'Brien, 2024, para. 1).

3. The Psychology of Sustainable Content

At this point, I propose the term "Sustainable Content" to flag this issue. It is defined as any online or digital content produced using sustainable materials or practices. Sustainable content goes beyond merely promoting the sustainable initiatives of brands, organisations, or groups. It is not simply about swaying public opinion, encouraging a shift away from unsustainable practices, or sharing information.

Sustainable content is a *discipline* that online influencers and digital content creators should cultivate among themselves and religiously apply in their practices to ensure that their actions do not compromise future generations' planetary, economic, social, and related conditions for the sake of producing social media content.

In healing Miami through "sustainable destination branding," its purpose and roles are clear: to transform the city's image and attract tourists who contribute positively rather than detract from its environment. The terminology's etymology is also clear: to mitigate the adverse effects of being a once-renowned spring-break hotspot for young partygoers from across the United States into a sophisticated, luxurious, and safe destination. With the help of digital and social media campaigns, the initiative is shifting the narrative of Miami visitors' characteristics, moving away from ravers toward more sustainability-conscious, socially responsible, and sophisticated visitors (Spezzano and Lusby, 2024).

Sustainable content is not far from that. The *discipline* should always be at the forefront of content creation, reflecting the influencer's environmental awareness and intelligence, and potentially changing the field towards sustainability. In cultivating the *discipline* to embody sustainable practices in digital content creation, the psychology behind the activity should be identified, tapped and then shifted.

The following discussion is my attempt to analyse the psyche behind each type of content, initially examining the factors surrounding it, and providing suggestions for future research to further enrich sustainable content as a *discipline*.

4. Sustainable Content Reflects the Influencer's Intelligence and Humility

Regarding business and first-class content creators, suggesting that they refrain from flying to reduce carbon emissions will not make a substantial impact on the airline industry as a whole, as flights will continue regardless of their absence. To truly change the culture around air travel, a more substantial effort is needed than merely purchasing carbon offset credits with airline tickets. Nonetheless, researchers can begin exploring initiatives that promote sustainable content among influencers of this online content. For instance, Finnair plans to implement electric or hybrid aircraft to reduce its carbon footprint in the coming years (Setälä *et al.*, 2025). However, widespread adoption of such practices will require time.

Hence, I propose facilitating a shift in the prevailing mindset surrounding the display of luxurious travel on social media. This can be examined through the conventional moncausal attitude-behaviour perspective, which suggests that enhanced understanding of climate change will naturally lead to changes in travel behaviour (Lassen, 2010). This can be achieved by promoting the mindset that sustainable travel is far superior to luxury travel. It is essential to cultivate the understanding that being environmentally conscious reflects a person's intelligence and humility; that these qualities are not easily handed to influencers of this content. It is a refined, cultured, and educated feature unique to an influencer who has genuinely mastered the sustainable content discipline in their content production. Brettmo and Williamson's (2020) study, which examines interactions and relationships between the urban freight industry and influencers, can serve as a valuable starting point for this discussion.

A practical recommendation for online influencers on actions they can undertake now is to seek travel options that actively prioritise sustainability. Airlines such as Lufthansa and KLM offer alternatives to those with connecting flights through train or bus services. This approach can effectively reduce influencers' carbon footprints by encouraging them to use more sustainable transportation to reach their next destinations rather than taking additional flights. Furthermore, online travel agencies are increasingly providing sustainability information about flights available on their platforms, which can help cultivate environmentally conscious travellers moving forward (Stüben and Cantoni, 2024). However, the study recommends that further exploration is still needed for this intervention to gain broader acceptance and usage.

5. Sustainable Content Protects Your Mental Health

Analysing the cause of the mukbang phenomenon can reveal the psychology behind it and may offer ways to address it. A study by Kircaburun *et al.* (2021a) examined this from various perspectives, including sociolinguistic, coping-style theory, feminist viewpoints, and content analysis. Although several pieces of evidence were collected, the study revealed that the primary reasons for the persistence of this phenomenon were twofold: it serves as a coping mechanism for loneliness and provides gratification for multiple reasons.

The loneliness epidemic, stemming from factors like living alone or social anxiety, leads viewers to combat isolation by watching mukbang. The platform offers a social eating experience by allowing users to interact with fellow livestream viewers (Ocklenburg, 2022; Kircaburun *et al.*, 2021; Kircaburun *et al.*, 2021a). Gratifications include sexual (fetishising slim women who eat a lot), entertainment (through the ASMR produced while eating), stress alleviation, satisfying food cravings (for those on a diet), and compensating for what is lacking in their offline lives (the freedom to create an online persona that differs from reality) (Kircaburun *et*

al., 2021a). Several proven health problems arise from mukbang viewing and influencing, such as nutrient deficiencies, eating disorders, and depression (Ocklenburg, 2022; Kircaburun *et al.*, 2021; Kircaburun *et al.*, 2021a). Despite these issues, mukbang continues to thrive. The US-based eating disorder clinic *Seeds of Hope* identifies 'food noise' as one issue clients are advised to avoid when watching mukbang videos (2025).

Food noise is a "heightened and/or persistent manifestations of food cue reactivity, often leading to food-related intrusive thoughts and maladaptive eating behaviours" (Hayashi *et al.*, 2023, p. 23). Exposure to harmful food cues, such as mukbang videos, can alter brain mechanisms that lead to unhealthy food consumption and cravings, particularly among content creators who consume excessive amounts of food (Hayashi *et al.*, 2023; Kircaburun *et al.*, 2021). The effects extend to audiences, potentially influencing them to binge-eat despite lower hunger levels or triggering those with eating disorders.

To manage food noise, Dhurandhar *et al.* (2025) suggest identifying its underlying causes among individuals. They recommend using Uher's (2021) technique, which involves pinpointing the signifier (written or spoken content), the referent (information or experience related to the phenomenon), and the signified (the meaning of the signifier) in the behavioural analysis. By adopting both Dhurandhar *et al.* (2025) and Uher's (2021) perspectives, the phenomenon can be interpreted as follows: mukbang as ASMR or binge-eat content is the signifier, the coping mechanism or source of gratification is the referent, and food noise is the signified. Hence, I propose that in identifying the underlying cause of the mukbang phenomenon, a negative effect, such as food noise from mukbang videos, is fueled by the viewer's desire for coping or gratification (see Figure 1).

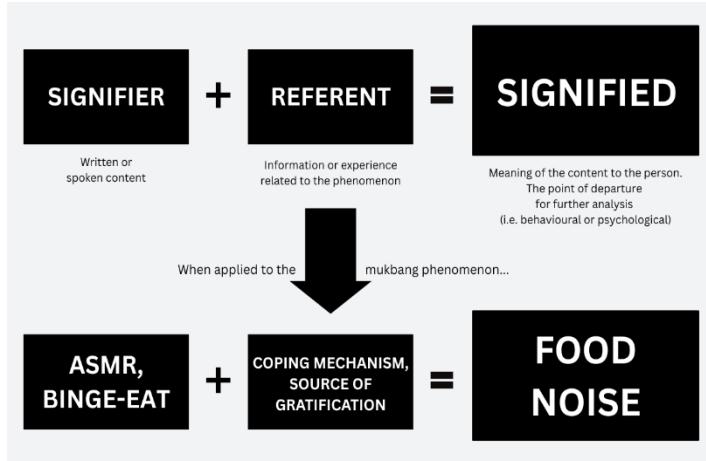


Figure 1- Analysing the Behaviours Surrounding the Mukbang Phenomenon

Therefore, to create sustainable mukbang content, I recommend shifting the signifier to a more sustainable perspective. Rather than traditional binge-eating that leads to food waste or ASMR causing food noise, mukbang should be rebranded as a companion to one's eating experience, without the intent to waste food. Similar to 'study with me' videos on YouTube, where people study and take breaks with fellow livestreamers to inspire productivity, mukbang can be rebranded as an 'eat with me' video. Since the primary motivations for mukbang subscribers are to alleviate loneliness or seek gratification, we should retain these elements while reducing food waste. This format would involve a livestream where the presenter eats a normal amount of food while interacting with viewers. The renewed mukbang content will aim to share a meal, swap stories, or discuss the day with other people, akin to a typical family dinner. Through this shift in mukbang approach,

not only can it inspire content creators to adopt sustainable practices and reduce food noise and waste, but it will also not harm their revenue, as the purpose of viewership remains intact despite the rebranding.

6. Sustainable Content is Redefining the Field

Similar to mukbang, influencers and their audiences connect in livestreaming content to feel a sense of connection despite physical distance (Wang *et al.*, 2024). During these livestreams, influencers can also generate revenue through partnerships with various companies. These companies aim to create demand for their products and encourage quick purchases by featuring their items during livestreams. This sales technique is proven effective (*ibid.*). Hence, recommending a circular economy approach to product sales or encouraging viewers to recycle technological materials or buy refurbished products may not be ideal for influencers, as it would result in fewer brand sponsorships.

In this case, I propose focusing on what influencers can do on their end to reduce their carbon footprint while livestreaming, without endangering their revenue streams or brand sponsorships, while still having a significant impact on promoting sustainability practices among their followers. This can be achieved through redefining environmental value and value co-creation (Jin *et al.*, 2025).

In redefining the environmental value of livestreaming, livestreamers can exclusively use green technology gadgets in their content creation. This refers to a gadget that is either produced using recycled materials, has a minimal carbon footprint, or utilises renewable energy. For example, using refurbished gadgets, power banks with built-in solar panels, or recycled furniture (i.e. gaming chairs). However, livestreamers often consume significant power while streaming, as they must remain connected to a power source for hours. This specific problem should be addressed and largely redefined by the livestreaming community.

Practically, utilising renewable energy sources, such as solar power from solar panels, can address this. This can help them save 50% to 80% on annual electricity costs and the opportunity to sell excess electricity generated back to the grid (Energia, 2025; ePower, 2024). This is highly feasible for more established gaming livestreamers and podcasters, as mid- to high-tier influencers typically earn between US\$1,000 and US\$500,000 monthly (StreamYard, 2025; Friel, 2024).

Influencers can play a pivotal role in redefining the environmental value of livestreaming by normalising these approaches, encouraging fellow livestreamers to adopt the same sustainable practices, and framing this as the defining characteristics of the new generation of smarter livestreamers. To seal the deal and influence viewers to adopt the same lifestyle, they should be a significant part of the redefinition through value co-creation (Jin *et al.*, 2025). In this approach, viewers are actively part of reconstructing the environmental value of livestreaming through feedback and live engagement. For example, when a livestreamer demonstrates consistent, real-time use of green technology and sustainable practices, with commentary from professionals, it builds viewers' trust in adopting the same lifestyle and further increases their confidence in the value the community is collectively redefining (*ibid.*). Unlike one-sided traditional media, where audiences are reduced to passive content consumers, value co-creation fosters a community with a voice in redefining what sustainable content in the livestreaming sphere should be, which is pivotal to establishing the *discipline* of sustainable content in this context.

7. Sustainable Content as a Coping Mechanism

The non-exhaustive data on the harmful effects of digital media presented in previous sections highlight a troubling possibility: future generations may face dire environmental challenges that could force them into survival mode. Just as we implement mitigation strategies to reduce the impact of extreme natural disasters on communities, such as protecting lives and properties, the risk of environmental degradation from harmful digital content production practices can be viewed in a similar light. The key difference is that, while we cannot control natural disasters, which have developed an increased resilience among survivors and people living in disaster-prone areas, we do have complete control over the effects of digital media. Hence, in building resiliency in the current digital environment, I propose utilising sustainable content as a coping mechanism to alleviate anxiety about future environmental problems, while also actively taking steps to mitigate the issue at hand.

DeMello and colleagues (2020) define resilience as the ability to cope with what has already occurred through positive adjustment or transformation. Given the current state of the consequences of digital media, resilience-building practices should be tapped as soon as possible. In linking value co-creation to resilience building in the *discipline* of sustainable content, online influencers are in the best position to catalyse this reflection as they have a platform and audiences for it. Developing new habits or altering behavioural patterns to build resilience is well-studied. Moreover, resilience is best developed when practised in groups (*ibid.*). For example, peer support among men in building mental health resilience has been shown to be effective, particularly in tackling isolation caused by significant events in men's lives, such as unemployment (Robinson *et al.*, 2015).

Studies show that providing people with coping mechanisms can reduce vulnerabilities among individuals and groups, and enhance resilience (Simarsl *et al.*, 2025; Moles *et al.*, 2014). This is because individuals were given tools to survive and bounce back from the hardships they experienced and will continue to experience (*ibid.*), while feeling relieved to know they are not alone in what they are going through (George *et al.*, 2023).

Hence, I argue that linking sustainable content to resiliency can help in solving the problem at hand. Sustainable content not only provides people with a coping mechanism but also increases their awareness and understanding of sustainable practices, equipping them to make better, conscious choices in their digital behaviours. These informed decisions will not only reduce people's vulnerabilities to environmental change but also foster a community of creators and users who actively promote sustainability. This collective approach can transform how we interact with and utilise digital platforms through fostering a generation of online users who are more responsible in their digital practices, ultimately leading to stronger, more environmentally responsible digital ecosystems. Thus, I argue that through the practices I have recommended in this article, sustainable content can play a promising role in developing resilience in the digital media field to mitigate its direct link to environmental problems.

The crucial point is that for sustainable content to succeed in fostering resiliency, influencers must genuinely commit to practising this *discipline*, while encouraging their followers to follow suit. Such individual-led resiliency can contribute to a larger community-based movement towards sustainability in the digital media field, as evidenced by various studies, which can be a good starting point for researchers interested in furthering the discussion

of resiliency (see Weber, 2023; Helgeson et al., 2022; Roostaie et al., 2019; Wilkinson and King-Okumu, 2019).

The interconnectedness promoted on this platform can lead to long-term resilience at the community level. This exchange of knowledge and practices not only enables collective efforts to mitigate the harmful environmental impacts of digital media but also helps stabilise digital consumption practices across the ecosystem. The long-term sustainability of these practices can be strengthened by the understanding that engaging in sustainable content practices can lead to tangible improvements in life, such as reduced energy costs and further financial savings from energy efficiency driven by renewable resources. Furthermore, as highlighted by Simarasl et al. (2025), Moles et al. (2014), and George et al. (2023), behavioural changes and lasting positive impacts are more likely to occur when individuals work together in groups. Hence, promoting adaptive capacity within the community, such as regularly holding meetings to exchange ideas on sustainable content and how to build digital media resiliency in everyday life, can foster responsible online behaviours that keep digital consumption within ecological limits. Therefore, it is highly probable that community-level resilience in digital media will be achieved through the framework of sustainable content and practices, ultimately reducing long-term vulnerability and enhancing the overall stability of our digital ecosystem.

8. Conclusion

In today's society, where a growing focus on sustainability is encouraged, the digital media field has yet to catch up. In this piece, I highlighted the content-creation or production practices of social media and online influencers that undermine sustainability by problematising three content types: mukbang, luxury travel, and livestreaming. In offering a solution, I proposed the term "sustainable content", which is not merely the production of a new sustainability terminology but a starting point for identifying a specific problem in the field and devising solutions tailored to it.

I further proposed the following ideas as a foundation for enhancing this conceptual framework: that *sustainable content is a discipline* influencers should master in content creation, and that the key to enforcing this discipline is to determine the psychology behind various types of content. Hence, I analysed the rationale behind the popularity of the three problematised social media content I discussed, enabling me to develop three approaches to shift the mindset of influencers and viewers to foster sustainable content. First, sustainable content reflects the influencer's intelligence and humility. Second, it can help protect one's mental health in content consumption. Lastly, it is a tool that allows influencers to redefine the environmental meaning of their content speciality by demonstrating practicality through sustainable approaches and fostering a community with enhanced knowledge of sustainability, which can ultimately lead to resilience-building practices in the field.

It is clear that additional work is needed to further strengthen the arguments presented. For example, what are the other implications of sustainable content to influencers and viewers? Are there other psychological foundations that are more appropriate in this discussion? Future research can capitalise on that by introducing new disciplines to the framework. In conclusion, I encourage the academic community to prioritise the problematisation of digital content creation in order to inspire researchers and experts to develop solutions that contribute to sustainable content and resilience before the situation worsens. While this article introduces the etymology of sustainable content, it is also evident that a thorough examination of the topic is required. Hence, I advocate for studies exploring strategies to persuade current and future online influencers to adopt sustainable practices in their content creation. The insights presented here can serve as a point of departure for advancing sustainable content within a conceptual and theoretical framework, thereby

integrating the field of digital media communications into discussions surrounding global sustainable development goals.

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank the SHINE Research Project for sponsoring my trip to Miami for the sustainability and climate conference.

Reference

- Anjani, L., Mok, T., Tang, A., Oehlberg, L., & Goh, W. B. (2020). Why do people watch others eat food? An Empirical Study on the Motivations and Practices of Mukbang Viewers. In *Proceedings of the 2020 CHI conference on human factors in computing systems* (pp. 1-13). <https://doi.org/10.1145/3313831.3376567>.
- Baden, D., & Harwood, I. A. (2013). Terminology matters: A critical exploration of corporate social responsibility terms. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 116(3), 615-627. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-012-1498-9>.
- Bajdor, P., & Pawełoszek, I. (2020). Data mining approach in evaluation of sustainable entrepreneurship. *Procedia Computer Science*, 176, 2725-2735. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.procs.2020.09.284>.
- Bonsignore, A. (2023). It's Not Just What You Say, It's How You Say It: Mitigating the Impacts of Greenhouse Gas Emissions with Effective Content. *Technical Communication*, 70(1), 83-95. <https://doi.org/10.55177/tc344445>.
- Brettmo, A., & Williamsson, J. (2020). The role of 'influencers' as drivers of a more sustainable urban freight sector. *Sustainability*, 12(7), 2850. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12072850>.
- DeMello, A., Egan, R., & Drew, J. (2020). Resilience-building by community health organizations: a guiding model for practice. *Journal of the Royal Society of New Zealand*, 50(4), 552-571. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03036758.2020.1772324>.
- Dhurandhar, E. J., Maki, K. C., Dhurandhar, N. V., Kyle, T. K., Yurkow, S., Hawkins, M. A., ... & Allison, D. B. (2025). Food noise: definition, measurement, and future research directions. *Nutrition & diabetes*, 15(1), 30. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41387-025-00382-x>.
- Energia. (2025, August 07). Solar panel cost in Ireland: A 2025 guide. *Energia*. <https://www.energia.ie/about-energia/latest-news/solar-panels-cost>.
- ePower. (2024, August 01). Solar Power: Maximise ROI and Boost Disposable Income with Home Solar Panels in Ireland. *ePower*. <https://www.epower.ie/news/solar-power-maximise-roi-boost-disposable-income-home-solar-panels-ireland/>.
- Faye, M. (2019, February 04). The ugly truth about those PR Haul videos you love. *Medium*. https://medium.com/@hello_57048/the-ugly-truth-about-the-pr-haul-videos-you-love-cab37c7b294e.
- Friel, L. H. (2024, December 31). How Much Money Do Podcasters Make? (& How Much Can You?). *The Podcast Host*. <https://www.thepodcasthost.com/monetisation/how-much-do-podcasters-make/>.
- General Assembly Economic and Social Council. (2024, May 02). Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals Report of the Secretary-General, UN. <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>.
- George, J. O., Elayan, S., Sykora, M., Solter, M., Feick, R., Hewitt, C., Liu, Y., & Shankardass, K. (2023). The Role of Social Media in Building Pandemic Resilience in an Urban Community: A Qualitative Case Study. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 20(17), 6707. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph20176707>.
- Glavić, P., & Lukman, R. (2007). Review of sustainability terms and their definitions. *Journal of cleaner production*, 15(18), 1875-1885. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2006.12.006>.
- Hayashi, D., Edwards, C., Emond, J. A., Gilbert-Diamond, D., Butt, M., Rigby, A., & Masterson, T. D. (2023). What is food noise? A conceptual model of food cue reactivity. *Nutrients*, 15(22), 4809. <https://doi.org/10.3390/nu15224809>.
- Helgeson, J., Glynn, P., & Chabay, I. (2022). Narratives of sustainability in digital media: An observatory for digital narratives. *Futures*, 142, 103016. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.futures.2022.103016>.
- Jin, J., Zhang, D., & Hao, Y. (2025). Optimizing the environmental value transmission chain of green agricultural products: An evolutionary game analysis with livestream e-commerce. *Computers & Industrial Engineering*, 207, 111359. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cie.2025.111359>.
- Kaivonen, I., Mesiranta, N., & Närvenäen, E. (2024). "I do what I do to drive change": The social-symbolic work of sustainable fashion influencers. *Fashion Theory*, 28(1), 85-115. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1362704X.2024.2327252>.
- Kingston, C. (2020). *Out of a Clear Green Sky: Online dialogues surrounding commercial passenger air travel & sustainability, post-COVID*. [Master's Thesis, OCAD University, Canada].
- Kircaburun, K., Balta, S., Emirtekin, E., Tosuntas, S. B., Demetrovics, Z., & Griffiths, M. D. (2021). Compensatory usage of the internet: the case of mukbang watching on YouTube. *Psychiatry investigation*, 18(4), 269. <https://doi.org/10.30773/pi.2019.0340>.
- Kircaburun, K., Harris, A., Calado, F., & Griffiths, M. D. (2021). The psychology of mukbang watching: A scoping review of the academic and non-academic literature. *International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction*, 19(4), 1190-1213. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11469-019-00211-0>.
- Kong, S. (2022, April 14). Why China Cracks Down on Mukbang Influencers?. *Fair Planet*. <https://www.fairplanet.org/story/why-china-cracks-down-on-mukbang-influencers/>.
- Kunz, J., May, S., & Schmidt, H. J. (2020). Sustainable luxury: Current status and perspectives for future research. *Business Research*, 13, 541-601. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40685-020-00111-3>.
- Lassen, C. (2010). Environmentalist in business class: An analysis of air travel and environmental attitude. *Transport Reviews*, 30(6), 733-751. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01441641003736556>.
- Lee, D., & Wan, C. (2023). The impact of mukbang live streaming commerce on consumers' overconsumption behavior.

- Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 58(2-3), 198-221. <https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1177/10949968231156104>.
- Liu, W., Ishak, S. M. M., & Yahaya, M. F. (2025). Sustainable furniture rental that enhances the furniture experience of young migrants: A literature review. *Helijon*, 11(2), e41968. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.helijon.2025.e41968>.
- Luzak, J. (2024). 3Rs of Sustainable Activism on Social Media: Relatability, Reliability and Redress. *Journal of Consumer Policy*, 47, 511–532. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10603-024-09574-x>.
- Macintosh, A., & Wallace, L. (2009). International aviation emissions to 2025: Can emissions be stabilised without restricting demand?. *Energy policy*, 37(1), 264-273. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.enpol.2008.08.029>.
- Mawad, J. L. J., & Freiha, S. S. (2024). The Role of Influencers in Shaping the Economic Decisions of Consumers Using the Logistic Regression Approach—Does the Generation Factor Matter?. *Sustainability*, 16(21), 2071-1050. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su16219546>.
- Mensah, J. (2019). Sustainable development: Meaning, history, principles, pillars, and implications for human action: Literature review. *Cogent social sciences*, 5(1), 1653531. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2019.1653531>.
- Moles, O., Caimi, A., Islam, M. S., Hossain, T. R., & Podder, R. K. (2014). From local building practices to vulnerability reduction: building resilience through existing resources, knowledge and know-how. *Procedia Economics and Finance*, 18, 932-939. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2212-5671\(14\)01020-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2212-5671(14)01020-X).
- Morik, K., Bhaduri, K., & Kargupta, H. (2012). Introduction to data mining for sustainability. *Data Mining and Knowledge Discovery*, 24(2), 311. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10618-011-0239-5>.
- O'Brien, I. (2024, December 12). TikTok's annual carbon footprint is likely bigger than Greece's, study finds. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2024/dec/12/tiktok-carbon-footprint>.
- Ocklenburg, S. (2022, October 23). Why Do Some People Enjoy Watching Other People Eat?. *Psychology Today*. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/ie/blog/the-asymmetric-brain/202210/why-do-some-people-enjoy-watching-other-people-eat>.
- Özdilek, Ü. (2024). Sustainable digital rent: a transformative framework for value dynamics in the digital age. *Frontiers in Sustainability*, 5, 1442311. <https://doi.org/10.3389/frsus.2024.1442311>.
- Qu, L. (2021). Waste on the tip of the tongue: Social eating livestreams (Chibo) in the age of Chinese affluence. *Asiascape: Digital Asia*, 8(1-2), 43-69. <https://doi.org/10.1163/22142312-12340131>.
- Robertson, M. (2021). *Sustainability principles and practice*. Routledge.
- Robinson, M., Raine, G., Robertson, S., Steen, M., & Day, R. (2015). Peer support as a resilience building practice with men. *Journal of Public Mental Health*, 14(4), 196-204. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JPMH-04-2015-0015>.
- Roostaie, S., Nawari, N., & Kibert, C. J. (2019). Sustainability and resilience: A review of definitions, relationships, and their integration into a combined building assessment framework. *Building and Environment*, 154, 132-144. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.buildenv.2019.02.042>.
- Sayekti, C., & Butar, F. B. (2024). Sustainable Food Movement: Regulating Food Loss and Waste in Indonesia. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Legal Issues*, 1(2), 54-79.
- Seeds of Hope. (2025, January 21). The Psychology Behind the Popularity of Mukbangs and ASMR Eating Videos. *Seeds of Hope*. <https://www.seedsofhopesupport.com/the-psychology-behind-the-popularity-of-mukbangs-and-asmr-eating-videos/>.
- Setälä, K., Aarikka-Stenroos, L., Wright, S. J., & Grundström, M. (2025). How stakeholders respond to airline sustainability signaling—a social media analysis. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 30(2), 276-293. <https://doi.org/10.1108/CCIJ-12-2023-0180>.
- Shepherd, J. (2025, March 26). 25 Essential TikTok Statistics You Need to Know in 2025. *Social Shepherd*. <https://thesocialshepherd.com/blog/tiktok-statistics>.
- Simarasl, N., Tabesh, P., & Jessri, M. (2024). Navigating hardships: Resilience-building coping strategies and actionable techniques for entrepreneurs. *Business Horizons*, 65(5), 589-600. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2024.07.001>.
- Spezzano, W., & Lusby, C. (2024). Mitigating overtourism in Miami Beach through sustainable destination branding: A tourism discourse analysis of the anti-spring break marketing campaign. In *Proceedings of the 21st SIM Conference: Brands and Purpose in a Changing Era*.
- StreamYard. (2025). How Much Money Do Twitch Streamers Make in 2025?. *StreamYard*. <https://streamyard.com/blog/how-much-do-twitch-streamers-make>.
- Stüben, J. M., & Cantoni, L. (2024). Sustainability Nudges While Booking a Flight on an OTA Website. In *ENTER e-Tourism Conference* (pp. 287-298). https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-58839-6_31.
- Suh, S. (2020). Fashion everydayness as a cultural revolution in social media platforms—Focus on fashion Instagrammers. *Sustainability*, 12(5), 1979. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12051979>.
- Tidy, J. (2020, August 20). Mukbang: Why is China clamping down on eating influencers?. *BBC*. <https://www.bbc.com/news/technology-53840167>.
- Uher, J. (2021). Problematic research practices in psychology: Misconceptions about data collection entail serious fallacies in data analysis. *Theory & Psychology*, 31(3), 411-416. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09593543211014963>.
- Verma, S., & Kapoor, D. (2025). Sustainability on the plate: how influencers and social norms transform food choices. *British Food Journal*, 127(6), 1942-1958. <https://doi.org/10.1108/BFJ-11-2024-1202>.

- Wang J., Shi, Y., and Shi, V. (2024). Should we keep the tradition or follow the trend? The optimal live-streaming e-commerce mode selection in a sustainable and circular supply chain under competition. *Annals of Operations Research*, 1-29. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10479-024-06397-4>.
- WCED. (1987) Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future, UN. <https://www.un.org/en/academic-impact/sustainability>.
- Weber, M. M. (2023). The Relationship between Resilience and Sustainability in the Organizational Context—A Systematic Review. *Sustainability*, 15(22), 15970. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su152215970>.
- Wilkinson, E., & King-Okumu, C. (2019). Building resilience from the ground up. *Disasters*, 43 Suppl 3(Suppl 3), S233–S244. <https://doi.org/10.1111/dis.12345>.
- Yalcin, T., Nistor, C., & Pehlivan, E. (2020) Sustainability influencers: Between marketers and educators. *Business Forum*, 28(1), 1-11.
- Zewe, A. (2025, January 17). Explained: Generative AI's environmental impact. *MIT News*. <https://news.mit.edu/2025/explained-generative-ai-environmental-impact-0117>.
- Zolfani, S. H., Sedaghat, M., Maknoon, R., & Zavadskas, E. K. (2015). Sustainable tourism: a comprehensive literature review on frameworks and applications. *Economic research-Ekonomska istraživanja*, 28(1), 1-30. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1331677X.2014.995895>.