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The Social Construction of the Reality of Electric Car Brand Equity: A Study of the Management of Cultural Tourism Taman Mini Indonesia Indah Jakarta

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Abstract

This study explores the social construction of electric vehicle (EV) brand equity within the framework of national cultural tourism at Taman Mini Indonesia Indah (TMII), Jakarta, utilizing a qualitative case study approach. Empirical field observations reveal that EVs operate not merely as technological artifacts, but rather as salient symbols of value transformation, ecological nationalism, and destination branding strategies. Data were garnered through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation. The fieldwork engaged seven key operational and management informants, specifically the Head of Human Capital, Corporate Secretary, and managers overseeing transportation, promotion, infrastructure, and public relations, complemented by three visitors as research participants. The findings indicate that EV brand equity is collectively forged through three dialectical moments: externalization (positioning EVs as symbols of ecotourism transformation), objectification (institutional discourse and pervasive visual promotion policies), and internalization (the pragmatic meanings constructed by internal actors). Regarding the technical dimensions of brand equity, brand awareness is firmly established due to mandatory usage policies and high-visibility visual campaigns. Perceived quality yields positive assessments concerning passenger comfort, yet remains critically constrained by technical limitations in battery capacity and speed. Conversely, brand association remains narrowly tied to global technological imagery and fails to integrate local cultural values. Meanwhile, brand loyalty remains markedly low, primarily because the implementation is perceived as a prescriptive, top-down mandate rather than an organically driven organizational initiative. To bridge these empirical gaps, this study integrates Rogers' Diffusion of Innovation theory, specifically leveraging innovation attributes and the optimization of communication channels to accelerate user adoption. Through this theoretical synthesis, this study conceptualizes a socio-cultural communication model engineered to reconcile top-down narrative tensions and internalize indigenous wisdom within cultural tourism missions. Ultimately, these insights underscore the strategic imperative of aligning brand management, national identity, and sustainable transport agendas within Indonesia's emerging greenomics framework.

Keywords: *Brand Equity, Social Construction, Electric Vehicles, Cultural Tourism, Diffusion of Innovation.*

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Konstruksi Sosial Realitas Brand Equity Mobil Listrik: Studi pada Jajaran Pengelola Wisata Budaya Taman Mini Indonesia Indah Jakarta

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi konstruksi sosial brand equity mobil listrik dalam konteks pariwisata budaya nasional di Taman Mini Indonesia Indah (TMII), Jakarta, dengan pendekatan studi kasus kualitatif. Berdasarkan hasil observasi lapangan, mobil listrik bukan sekadar produk teknologi, melainkan simbol transformasi nilai, nasionalisme ekologis, dan strategi destination branding. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi partisipatif, dan dokumentasi, yang melibatkan tujuh informan kunci dari jajaran manajemen dan operasional, yakni: Kepala Human Capital, Corporate Secretary, serta para manajer di bidang transportasi, promosi, infrastruktur, dan hubungan masyarakat, serta 3 pengunjung sebagai partisipan penelitian. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa brand equity mobil listrik dibentuk secara kolektif melalui tiga momen dialektis: eksternalisasi (mobil listrik sebagai simbol transformasi ekowisata), objektivasi (diskursus kelembagaan dan kebijakan promosi visual), dan internalisasi (pemaknaan pragmatis oleh para aktor). Terkait dimensi teknis brand equity, kesadaran merek (brand awareness) telah terbangun dengan kuat akibat kebijakan wajib penggunaan dan promosi visual yang masif. Kualitas yang dipersepsikan (perceived quality) bernilai positif pada aspek kenyamanan, namun memiliki catatan kritis pada keterbatasan teknis baterai dan kecepatan. Sebaliknya, asosiasi merek (brand association) masih terbatas pada citra teknologi global dan belum mengintegrasikan nilai budaya lokal. Sementara itu, loyalitas merek (brand loyalty) dinilai masih rendah karena implementasinya dipersepsikan sebagai kebijakan dari atas (top-down), bukan sebuah inisiatif yang tumbuh secara organik. Untuk menjembatani kesenjangan tersebut, penelitian ini mengintegrasikan teori Difusi Inovasi dari Rogers, khususnya pada atribut inovasi serta optimalisasi saluran komunikasi untuk mempercepat adopsi pengguna. Melalui sintesis teoritis tersebut, studi ini merumuskan sebuah model komunikasi sosio-kultural yang dirancang untuk mengatasi ketegangan narasi top-down serta menginternalisasikan kearifan local dalam misi cultural tourism. Temuan ini menegaskan urgensi strategis dalam menyelaraskan manajemen merek, identitas nasional, dan agenda transportasi berkelanjutan di dalam kerangka greenomics Indonesia.

Kata Kunci: *Brand Equity, Konstruksi Sosial, Mobil Listrik, Pariwisata Budaya, Difusi Inovasi.*

Introduction

In the contemporary era of global energy transition and ecological modernization, electric vehicles (EVs) have transcended their conventional status as mere technological artifacts or mobility solutions. Within macroeconomic and environmental policy frameworks, the promotion of EVs is deeply anchored in the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), and SDG 13 (Climate Action). In Indonesia, this green transition is heavily institutionalized through national strategic agendas aimed at drastically reducing carbon emissions, optimizing energy efficiency, and establishing a sustainable green economy. However, the domestic adoption and systemic institutionali-zation of EVs are dictated not only by economic feasibility

or infrastructural readiness, but also by the complex social construction of their image, utilitarian value, and symbolic identity within public and corporate spaces (Wardhana, 2020) (Tamitiadini et al., 2019) (Narvaez Rojas et al., 2021).

As a state-managed epicenter for national education and cultural tourism, Taman Mini Indonesia Indah (TMII) in Jakarta operates as a strategic institutional microcosm that directly operationalizes governmental mandates. TMII acts as a living laboratory for state policy execution, where future-oriented sustainable development narratives and SDG targets are translated into tangible public experiences. Within this specific cultural tourism landscape, the implementation of EVs as mandatory on-site operational transport serves as an instrument of symbolic representation, projecting corporate commitments to ecological nationalism and modern sustainability. The brand equity of these vehicles, traditionally evaluated through purely consumer-centric market metrics, is dynamically constructed, negotiated, and contested through the daily communication and interactions among destination managers, visitors, and state actors (Margaretha et al., 2023)(Li et al., 2024).

Recent scholarship has increasingly recognized that EV adoption and brand valuation are highly dependent on socio-perceptual frameworks rather than basic functional performance. Applying a social constructivism perspective, Li et al. (2024) demonstrated that the adoption of electric vehicles is heavily dictated by the social identity of consumers and symbolic group memberships rather than utilitarian advantages alone. From a consumer psychology standpoint, Cornelia & Pasharibu (2020) integrated customer-based brand equity (CBBE) with the theory of planned behavior, highlighting how structural brand variables predict EV adoption under the moderating influence of market factors like perceived price. Furthermore, empirical data confirms that corporate trust, brand equity, and design aesthetics significantly influence market purchase intentions (Wahyudi et al., 2023), while multidimensional analyses of corporate brand extensions show how consumer perceptions radically shift when non-automotive tech giants venture into the electric mobility market (Rahmat & Erdiansyah, 2024).

Despite these valuable contributions to commercial marketing and individual consumer behavior literature, a notable empirical and theoretical gap persists. Current communication and tourism studies have yet to investigate how EV brand equity is socially constructed and institutionalized within state-affiliated cultural tourism destinations, where commercial brand assets intersect with political narratives of national identity, technological nationalism, and public governance. In these unique settings, highly idealized, top-down narratives promoted by state regulators and the automotive industry often encounter significant communicative gaps at the grass-roots operational level. This creates a sharp analytical tension between institutional symbolism and operational pragmatism, leading to narrative fragmentation, limited local cultural contextualization, and low organic loyalty among field operators.

To bridge this critical literature gap, this study explores how TMII managers act as central agents of meaning-making in constructing, validating, and disseminating EV brand equity. Moving beyond technical and purely commercial market frameworks, this study utilizes Berger and Luckmann's social construction theory (Prinada, 2021) alongside a Quad Helix approach to address three overarching research questions:

1. How is EV brand equity socially constructed by institutional managers within the structural context of national cultural tourism?
2. How are institutional symbols, top-down narratives, and organizational communication practices deployed to build the symbolic brand value of EVs?
3. How do internal management actors and audiences perceive, internalize, and respond to the technological and ecological meanings of EVs within an educational tourism environment?

Literature Review

To systematically map the current landscape of empirical research surrounding this topic, a comprehensive literature search was executed using the Publish or Perish application with the filter parameter set to "social construction of electric vehicles" restricted to the period 2020–2025. This systematic search strategy successfully identified six pivotal national and international journals that establish the baseline for contemporary scholarship.

The first of these studies, a phenomenological study on the construction of green-mobility meaning among electric vehicle users in Bandung, provided critical qualitative insights into how individual drivers subjectively interpret eco-friendly transporta-tion. This is complemented by a quantitative analysis of factors influencing the intention to purchase electric vehicles, which rigorously evaluated the intersecting dynamics of consumer attitude, the New Ecological Paradigm, economic benefits, social influence, and charging infrastructure. Shifting the focus toward digital media channels, an analysis of audience reception toward electric vehicle content on the Fitra Eri YouTube Channel investigated how public perceptions are mediated and decoded through popular online automotive influencers (Prastowo et al., 2025). In a similar vein of consumer behavior, an empirical study titled The Influence of Brand Image and Price on Electric Vehicle Purchase Intention through lifestyle as an intervening variable in Malang City, East Java (Setiawan & Lahindah, 2025) demonstrated the complex psychological mechanisms that dictate regional green purchasing choices.

On the international front, a study titled research on Brand Equity of Intelligent Connected Vehicles in China explicitly noted that academic research on Connected-Based Electric Vehicle (CBEV) brand equity remains limited, particularly regarding influencing factors from the consumer perspective and the functionality of smart connectivity (Chen & Hou, 2025). This Chinese study aimed to address this critical gap by investigating the determinants of brand equity for CBEVs from a consumer perspective, ultimately revealing that consumer attitudes, trust, and smart connectivity features positively affect brand

equity, which underscores the absolute importance for CBEV manufacturers to focus on enhancing brand equity by fostering positive consumer attitudes, building trust, and offering fully connected smart features. Lastly, a study examining the opportunities and challenges of adopting electric and hybrid vehicles in tourism road transportation in Egypt concluded that most travel agencies in Luxor and Aswan recognize and are willing to participate positively in implementing Egypt's vision of sustainable green road transportation using electric and hybrid vehicles instead of gasoline-powered vehicles, noting that legislative and economic incentives can influence them to participate more positively (Hossam Fouad Arafa, 2021) (Luxor and Aswan, 2020).

To build a more rigorous theoretical foundation for each primary keyword as requested by international reviewers, these six core papers are cross-examined with broader frameworks in sociology, marketing, and communication. Grounded in the Social Construction of Technology (SCOT) framework, modern vehicles are no longer viewed as mere technical artifacts. Beyond the consumer identity paradigms identified by Sergeeva & Liu (2020), classic social construction theory establishes that systemic societal integration depends entirely on a tripartite social dialectic, externalization, objectification, and internalization, which dictates how any novel framework transitions from a subjective concept into a shared objective reality (Alwi et al., 2022; Putri & Suyanto, 2021).

When analyzing the technical dimensions of brand equity within sustainable transportation, the commercial, customer-centric paradigms dominant in the literature (Huang et al., 2022; Chen & Hou, 2025) show that variables such as brand awareness, brand associations, and perceived quality collectively dictate long-term market trust. This fluid nature of equity is particularly evident when multi-dimensional corporate ecosystems expand into the automotive mobility market (Nur Ilham & Amalia Oesman Palapah, 2022).

However, within green tourism ecosystems and macro-policy frameworks like the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy) and SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities), these commercial assets must merge with destination branding strategies. In state-managed spaces, executing these eco-tourism transformations requires multi-actor collaboration, which is best understood through Quad Helix dynamics that synchronize the roles of government, industry, academia, and local communities (Sitinah & Sofiawati, 2021; Rahman et al, 2020; Fitriasari et al., 2020).

Finally, Rogers' Diffusion of Innovation theory explains the structural adoption of these sustainable paradigms, showing that attributes of innovation, such as *relative advantage* and *compatibility,* dictate how communities accept or resist top-down administrative mandates (Sasongko, 2021; Khatami & Nurjanah, 2022; Sa'idu, 2021).

Research Methods

This study employed a qualitative approach (Fadli, 2021) using a case study method to explore the social construction of electric vehicle (EV) brand equity within the institutional context of Taman

Mini Indonesia Indah (TMII), Jakarta. The selection of a qualitative case study was based on the assumption that brand equity in this context is not merely a marketing variable, but a socially constructed reality produced through communication processes, institutional discourse, and interactions among organizational actors. Accordingly, the study was designed to capture the subjective meanings, symbolic interpretations, and communicative practices that shape the presence of electric vehicles as both technological innovations and cultural tourism symbols. The research was grounded in the social construction perspective of Berger and Luckmann, which conceptualizes reality as a dialectical process involving externalization, objectification, and internalization.

The empirical locus of this research was Taman Mini Indonesia Indah (TMII), Jakarta, a national cultural tourism destination that has implemented electric vehicles as the primary operational transportation system within its tourism ecosystem. TMII was selected purposively because it represents a unique institutional environment where sustainable transportation policies intersect with cultural tourism management, destination branding, ecological narratives, and public communication. The site, therefore, provides an appropriate setting for examining how EV brand equity is socially constructed within a state-affiliated tourism organization.

Based on the provided study regarding the social construction of electric vehicle (EV) brand equity at Taman Mini Indonesia Indah (TMII), research participants were selected through purposive sampling based on their direct involvement in policy formulation, operational management, communication activities, and the utilization of electric vehicles within the destination. The study rigorously engaged a total of ten informants, comprising seven key informants from the managerial structure and three supporting informants from the visitor demographic. The managerial cohort specifically consisted of the Head of Human Capital, Corporate Secretary, Transportation Manager, Infrastructure Manager, Promotion Manager, Public Relations Manager, and one additional managerial representative tasked with operational implementation. Meanwhile, the inclusion of three visitors served to enrich the depth of empirical data concerning audience perceptions. By synthesizing these institutional and public viewpoints, the methodology effectively empowered the researcher to capture both formal organizational narratives and broader interpretive public insights regarding EV brand equity within a cultural tourism framework.

Data collection was conducted through three complementary techniques: in-depth inter-views, participant observation, and documentation studies. In-depth interviews were used to explore the experiences, interpretations, and communication practices of managers concerning the implementation and promotion of electric vehicles. Participant observation was undertaken to examine the actual operation of EVs, the interaction patterns among stakeholders, and the symbolic representation of EVs within the tourism environment. Documentation studies included the analysis of organizational reports, promotional materials, policy

documents, visual campaigns, institutional publications, and other relevant records related to electric vehicle implementation and branding activities at TMII. The triangulation of these methods enhanced the credibility and richness of the empirical findings.

Data analysis followed an interactive model consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The analytical process was conducted continuously throughout the research period. First, interview transcripts, field notes, and documentary materials were organized and reduced according to emerging themes. Second, the data were categorized into conceptual clusters corresponding to the dimensions of social construction and brand equity. Finally, interpretative conclusions were formulated through a process of theoretical dialogue between empirical findings and relevant conceptual frameworks.

To strengthen theoretical interpretation, the analysis integrated three complementary frameworks. First, Berger and Luckmann's Social Construction Theory was employed to identify the dialectical processes of externalization, objectification, and internalization through which EV brand equity is socially produced. Second, Aaker's Brand Equity dimensions, comprising brand awareness, perceived quality, brand association, and brand loyalty, were utilized to evaluate the communicative formation of EV brand value. Third, Rogers' Diffusion of Innovation Theory was incorporated to explain the adoption process of electric vehicles, particularly through innovation attributes, communication channels, and organizational acceptance mechanisms. The integration of these frameworks enabled a comprehensive understanding of how technological innovation, institutional communication, and symbolic meaning interact in shaping EV brand equity within a cultural tourism context.

Results and Discussion

Managerial Perceptions and Institutional Narratives of Electric Vehicles

This section presents the empirical findings in accordance with the three research questions formulated in the introduction. The analysis integrates evidence obtained from in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation to explain how electric vehicle (EV) brand equity is socially constructed within the institutional environment of Taman Mini Indonesia Indah (TMII).

Participant observation conducted throughout the research period revealed that electric vehicles have become a highly visible component of the tourism landscape. EVs operate continuously along designated transportation routes connecting major cultural pavilions and public facilities, while supporting communication artifacts, including electric vehicle route signs, charging stations, promotional banners, information boards, and destination branding materials, consistently communicate TMII›s commitment to environmentally sustainable tourism.

Moreover, visitors were frequently observed taking photographs of the vehicles and sharing their experiences through social media, indicating that EVs function not only as transportation facilities but also as symbolic attractions, reinforcing the

destination›s modern ecological identity. These observational findings complement the interview data by demonstrating that institutional narratives are materialized through tangible communication environments and everyday organizational practices.

Figure 1: EV operational activities

Figure 2: promotional signage

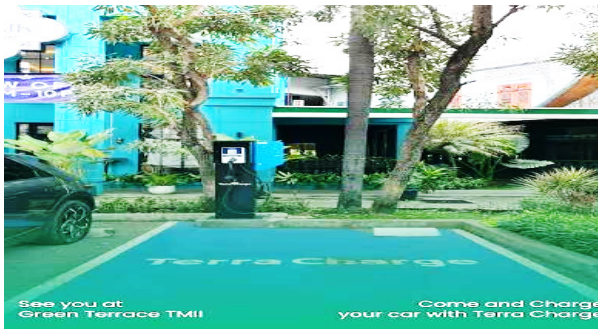


Figure 3: charging facilities

Addressing the first research question concerning how EV brand equity is socially constructed, the interview findings reveal that managerial actors construct different meanings regarding the presence of electric vehicles within TMII. Senior management consistently frames EVs as symbols of organizational transformation, sustainable tourism, and national technological advancement, whereas operational personnel primarily interpret them through their practical and functional performance.

The Head of Human Capital explained that electric vehicles represent not merely transportation facilities but also instruments for transforming employees› environmental awareness and organizational culture. According to her, EVs symbolize TMII›s commitment to becoming a national ecotourism ecosystem, although many operational staff still perceive them as purely technical equipment rather than communicative symbols of sustainability. This finding demonstrates that the process of social construction remains uneven across organizational levels, reflecting Berger and Luckmann›s proposition that organizational reality is continuously negotiated through different social experiences rather than being uniformly accepted by all institutional actors.

The second research question explores how institutional symbols, organizational communication, and managerial narratives are employed to construct EV brand equity. The findings indicate that institutional communication remains predominantly driven by top-down narratives originating from governmental policies and the automotive industry.

The Corporate Secretary acknowledged that communication concerning electric vehicles has largely adopted official governmental discourse emphasizing modernization, sustainability, and environmental responsibility. However, local cultural narratives have not yet been adequately incorporated into the institutional communication strategy. Similar patterns were identified during field observations, where promotional banners, visual campaigns, transportation signage, and digital promotional materials consistently highlighted environmental sustainability and technological innovation but rarely integrated Indonesian cultural values into the branding messages. Likewise, the Promotion and Event Manager emphasized that promotional activities have successfully positioned TMII as a modern and environmentally friendly tourism destination, although the symbolic association between electric vehicles and Indonesian cultural identity remains relatively weak. These findings suggest that institutional discourse has successfully strengthened brand awareness and environmental associations but has yet to fully contextualize electric vehicles within the broader narrative of Indonesian cultural tourism.

The third research question examines how managerial actors and visitors perceive and internalize the meanings of electric vehicles in everyday organizational practice. Interview findings demonstrate that operational experiences strongly influence individual evaluations of EV implementation. The Transportation Manager acknowledged that although electric vehicles provide comfortable, quiet, and energy-efficient transportation, operational staff frequently express concerns regarding battery capacity, charging duration, and vehicle speed. Similar concerns were expressed by the Infrastructure and Tourism Facilities Manager, who emphasized that the limited number of charging stations and incomplete route integration occasionally reduce service quality and influence visitor experiences. These observations correspond closely with field evidence showing that charging infrastructure remains concentrated in only several operational areas, thereby reinforcing managerial concerns regarding long-term operational effectiveness. Consequently, technical limitations occasionally weaken the institutional sustainability narrative by creating inconsistencies between organizational communication and service delivery.

Visitor perceptions similarly demonstrate a process of partial internalization. The Public Relations and Public Communication Manager explained that visitors generally respond positively to electric vehicles because they provide a unique, enjoyable, and environmentally friendly tourism experience. During participant observation, many visitors were observed photographing the vehicles, recording short videos, and voluntarily uploading these experiences to various social media platforms, thereby functioning as informal advocates of TMII›s environmental branding. Nevertheless, both interview and observational findings indicate that these positive experiences have not yet developed into strong emotional attachment or long-term brand

loyalty. Most visitors continue to perceive electric vehicles primarily as attractive tourism facilities rather than as symbols of Indonesian ecological identity. This finding explains why brand awareness and brand association have developed more rapidly than brand loyalty, which remains constrained by the predominance of policy-driven implementation and the limited integration of local cultural narratives into institutional communication.

Overall, the integration of interview evidence, participant observation, and documentary analysis demonstrates that electric vehicle brand equity at TMII is socially constructed through the continuous interaction between institutional discourse, organizational communication, technological implementa-tion, and visitor experiences. While managerial narratives have successfully institutionalized electric vehicles as symbols of modernization and environmental sustainability, the empirical findings also reveal communicative tensions between official institutional discourse and everyday operational realities. The incomplete integration of Indonesian cultural values into EV branding and the persistence of technical constraints indicate that the social construction process remains ongoing rather than fully institutionalized. These findings provide a comprehensive empirical foundation for the subsequent analysis of Berger and Luckmann›s dialectical process of externalization, objectification, and internali-zation, as well as the discussion of the four dimensions of brand equity presented in the following sections.

The interview findings reveal that the social construction of electric vehicle (EV) brand equity at TMII is shaped by diverse interpretations among organizational actors. While senior management tends to frame EVs as symbols of institutional transformation, sustainability, and national technological advancement, operational teams often emphasize practical and technical considerations. These differing perspectives illustrate how organizational realities are negotiated through communication processes and everyday experiences.

The Head of Human Capital emphasized that EVs represent a broader organizational transformation rather than merely a transportation facility. She explained: "*We see electric vehicles not merely as transportation within TMII, but as part of transforming our employees' mindset. They symbolize TMII's commitment to becoming a national ecotourism ecosystem. However, I admit that many operational staff still perceive them as merely a technical matter. In fact, they should also become communicators of ecotourism, not just operators of electric vehicles*."

This statement demonstrates that management seeks to position EVs as symbolic instruments for fostering environmental awareness and organizational identity. However, the uneven understanding among staff indicates that the internalization process remains incomplete.

A similar perspective was expressed by the Corporate Secretary, who highlighted the dominance of external narratives in shaping institutional communication about EVs: "*Communication regarding electric vehicles has largely come from above, particularly from the government and the*

automotive industry. We then transmit that narrative to visitors. However, Indonesian cultural narratives have not been sufficiently incorporated. There should be messages linking electric vehicles with local wisdom and national identity, not merely portraying them as global symbols. That aspect is still lacking."

From an operational perspective, the Tourism Transportation Manager emphasized that technical factors significantly affect employees' attitudes toward EV implementation: "*Technically, electric vehicles are comfortable and energy-efficient. However, staff often complain about battery limitations and speed constraints. If these technical issues are not addressed, loyalty toward the program will remain low. People will continue to see it merely as a top-down policy rather than a genuine necessity.*"

This statement indicates that perceived quality and brand loyalty are closely connected to the practical experiences of users. Technical shortcomings may undermine the symbolic value promoted by institutional narratives.

The Promotion and Event Manager further explained the role of communication activities in constructing brand awareness and brand associations: "*We frequently feature electric vehicles in promotional materials, such as posters and TMII videos. This has successfully built an image of TMII as a modern and environmentally friendly destination. However, when it comes to cultural values, the connection remains weak. Electric vehicles are still viewed more as a global technology than as a symbol of Indonesia's cultural identity.*"

The statement demonstrates that promotional efforts have effectively strengthened associations with modernity and sustainability, yet have not fully connected EVs with the cultural identity of the destination. Meanwhile, the Infrastructure and Tourism Facilities Manager highlighted the importance of supporting infrastructure in shaping visitor perceptions: "*Supporting infrastructure remains limited. Charging stations are available only at a few locations, and transportation routes are not yet fully integrated. This affects the quality of the visitor experience. Therefore, promoting electric vehicles must be accompanied by infrastructure improvements so that the message being communicated is not perceived as merely a gimmick.*"

This finding reinforces the argument that symbolic communication alone is insufficient. The credibility of environmental branding depends heavily on the consistency between promotional narratives and actual service quality.

Finally, the Public Relations and Public Communication Manager described the positive response from visitors while simultaneously identifying limitations in long-term attachment: "*Visitor responses have generally been positive. Many consider electric vehicles to be a new and exciting experience. They often take photographs and share them on social media, which helps promote TMII. However, visitor loyalty remains low. They enjoy the experience once or twice, but they do not yet feel a particular emotional attachment to electric vehicles as a symbol.*"

This finding indicates that visitors have begun to function as informal brand advocates through social media engagement. Nevertheless, the absence of strong emotional attachment suggests that brand loyalty has not yet developed to the same extent as brand awareness and brand association.

Social Construction of Electric Vehicle Brand Equity at TMII

The findings reveal that electric vehicle (EV) brand equity at Taman Mini Indonesia Indah (TMII) is not merely constructed through technical attributes of the vehicles but through a dynamic social process involving institutional actors, organizational commu-nication, and visitor experiences. The analysis demonstrates that different managerial groups construct different meanings regarding EV implementation. Senior management predominantly perceives EVs as symbols of modernity, ecological tourism, and technological nationalism, while operational staff tends to emphasize their pragmatic functions, such as energy efficiency and environmental friendliness.

This distinction is reflected in the statement of the Head of Human Capital, who emphasized that EVs represent a broader transformation of organizational culture and environmental commitment rather than simply a transportation system. According to her, EVs symbolize TMII's aspiration to become a national ecotourism ecosystem. However, she acknowledged that many field personnel still interpret EVs primarily from a technical-operational perspective. This finding indicates that the process of meaning construction remains uneven across organizational levels, suggesting the existence of multiple realities surrounding the same innovation.

Similarly, the Corporate Secretary explained that the dominant communication narrative regarding EVs originates from governmental and automotive industry discourses. While such narratives successfully position EVs as symbols of sustainability and modernization, they have not yet been adequately linked to Indonesian cultural values and local wisdom. Consequently, EVs are often perceived as global technological symbols rather than cultural symbols embedded within the Indonesian tourism identity.

These findings support the argument of Berger and Luckmann that reality is socially produced through continuous interactions among actors who negotiate meanings within institutional settings. In the TMII context, EVs function not merely as transportation technologies but as socially constructed symbols whose meanings vary according to actors' organizational positions and experiences.

Construction of Brand Equity Dimensions

To better understand how institutional policies have shaped electric vehicle (EV) brand equity at Taman Mini Indonesia Indah (TMII), the findings were comparatively analyzed against the organizational condition before and after the implementation of the electric vehicle policy, as well as within the broader framework of Indonesia›s national sustainable transportation agenda. Rather than examining brand equity solely as a static marketing construct, this study interprets the four dimensions proposed by Aaker, brand awareness, perceived quality, brand association, and brand loyalty, as dynamic outcomes of institutional policy implementation and organizational communication. The comparative analysis demonstrates that the introduction of mandatory EV operations has substantially strengthened brand

awareness and environmental brand associations compared with the previous transportation system, which relied primarily on conventional fuel-powered vehicles without explicit sustainability branding.

However, improvements across the four dimensions have not occurred uniformly. While governmental policies promoting low-carbon transportation have successfully institutionalized the visibility of EVs within TMII, the operational implementation reveals persistent gaps between national policy objectives and everyday organizational practices, particularly regarding technical infrastructure, cultural integration, and long-term stakeholder commitment. Consequently, the findings indicate that the institutional policy has generated stronger symbolic recognition of EVs than genuine organizational internalization, suggesting that policy-driven brand equity remains more successful in creating awareness than in cultivating emotional attachment and enduring loyalty.

Based on this comparative perspective, the analysis identified four interrelated dimensions of EV brand equity proposed by Aaker, namely brand awareness, perceived quality, brand association, and brand loyalty. Each dimension reflects a different level of institutional policy adoption and illustrates how national sustainability narratives are translated into organizational communication and operational realities at TMII.

Brand Awareness

Among all dimensions, brand awareness emerged as the strongest component. Both employees and visitors demonstrated high levels of awareness regarding the existence and purpose of EVs within TMII. This awareness has been reinforced by mandatory usage policies and extensive visual promotion through posters, videos, and tourism campaigns.

Compared with the period prior to the implementation of the mandatory EV policy, brand awareness has increased considerably. Before the adoption of electric vehicles, transportation within TMII functioned merely as a supporting operational facility and did not constitute a distinctive element of destination branding. Following the implementation of national policies promoting electric mobility and TMII›s organizational commitment to sustainable tourism, EVs became highly visible through mandatory operations, promotional campaigns, environmental signage, and public communication activities. This indicates that national and institutional policies have successfully transformed EVs into recognizable symbols of environmentally responsible tourism.

According to the Promotion and Event Manager, EVs frequently appear in promotional materials portraying TMII as a modern and environmentally friendly destination. Consequently, visitors easily recognize EVs as part of the TMII tourism experience. This finding indicates that organizational communication strategies have successfully institutionalized EVs as a visible symbol within the destination branding framework.

Perceived Quality

Perceived quality was generally evaluated positively. Respondents

consistently highlighted passenger comfort, cleanliness, low noise levels, and environmentally friendly operations as major strengths of EVs. However, several practical limitations were also identified.

Although the implementation of government-supported EV policies has improved perceptions regarding environmental quality and passenger comfort, the findings also reveal a gap between policy expectations and operational realities.

The Transportation Manager emphasized that operational personnel often express concerns regarding battery limitations and relatively low vehicle speeds. Similar concerns were raised by the Infrastructure Manager, who noted that charging facilities and route integration remain insufficient to fully support visitor experiences. These findings suggest that although symbolic value and environmental benefits contribute positively to perceived quality, technical and infrastructural constraints continue to influence users' evaluations.

Brand Association

Brand association has been formed around three dominant images: modernity, environmental sustainability, and global technological advancement. Both employees and visitors associate EVs with TMII›s transformation into a contemporary tourism destination.

However, the findings also reveal an important limitation. Although EVs are strongly associated with global environmental values, they are not yet strongly linked to Indonesian cultural identity. As stated by the Promotion and Event Manager, EVs are still perceived primarily as global technologies rather than symbols reflecting Indonesia's cultural heritage. This gap indicates that destination branding efforts have not fully integrated ecological narratives with local cultural narratives.

Brand Loyalty

The weakest dimension identified in this study is brand loyalty. While respondents generally support the implementation of EVs, their commitment remains largely compliance-based rather than emotionally driven.

Unlike brand awareness, brand loyalty has not shown comparable development following the implementation of the EV policy. The evidence suggests that compliance with institutional regulations does not automatically generate emotional commitment among employees or visitors.

The Transportation Manager explicitly stated that many employees perceive EV implementation as a managerial mandate rather than an organizational necessity. Likewise, the Public Relations Manager observed that visitors enjoy EVs primarily because they provide a novel tourism experience rather than because they feel a long-term attachment to the EV brand itself.

These findings indicate that loyalty remains relatively low because adoption is predominantly driven by top-down policy mechanisms rather than organic user engagement. From a brand equity perspective, awareness and associations have developed more rapidly than emotional attachment and long-term commitment.

Institutional Discourse and Social Construction Process

Applying Berger and Luckmann's Social Construction Theory, the findings reveal three interconnected dialectical moments that explain the formation of EV brand equity within TMII.

Externalization

The first stage involves externalization, where institutional actors actively produce meanings regarding EVs. Management continuously communicates EVs as symbols of ecotourism transformation, environmental responsibility, and sustainable mobility. Through speeches, policies, promotional campaigns, and organizational narratives, EVs are projected as evidence of TMII's commitment to future-oriented tourism development.

Objectification

The second stage is objectification, whereby these narratives become institutional realities. The mandatory use of EVs, visual promotional campaigns, dedicated transportation routes, and supporting regulations transform abstract environmental values into tangible organizational practices. Through this process, EVs become an objective reality that is widely recognized by employees and visitors alike.

Internalization

The final stage is internalization, where individuals interpret and absorb these institutional meanings according to their own experiences. Management members generally internalize EVs as symbols of sustainability and organizational transformation. Operational staff tend to internalize EVs through practical considerations such as efficiency and convenience. Visitors, meanwhile, internalize EVs as attractive tourism experiences that enhance the image of TMII as a modern destination.

The existence of different interpretations among actors confirms Berger and Luckmann's proposition that social reality is never fully uniform but continuously negotiated through communication and everyday experiences.

Visitor Responses and Brand Advocacy Potential

The study also found that visitors generally respond positively to the presence of EVs. Most participants perceive EVs as innovative attractions that enhance their tourism experience. Many visitors actively photograph EVs and share their experiences through social media platforms.

This behavior demonstrates the emergence of informal brand advocacy, where visitors voluntarily disseminate positive narratives regarding TMII's environmental initiatives. Although loyalty remains limited, the willingness of visitors to share experiences online represents a strategic opportunity for strengthening destination branding and electronic word-of-mouth communication.

From a communication perspective, visitors function as secondary communicators who amplify institutional messages beyond the physical boundaries of the tourism destination. Their role becomes increasingly important in contemporary digital tourism ecosystems.

Quad Helix Dynamics in the Construction of EV Brand Equity

The empirical findings demonstrate that the Quad Helix within TMII does not operate as a static collaboration among government, industry, management, academia, and society. Instead, EV brand equity is continuously negotiated through an interconnected communication process in which each actor simultaneously produces, translates, validates, and reconstructs institutional meanings. Rather than functioning independently, these stakeholders create a recursive communication system in which the effectiveness of one actor depends upon the communicative performance of the others.

The first mechanism identified in this study concerns "governmental narrative initiation". National policies promoting electric mobility, green tourism, and sustainable transportation provide the initial institutional legitimacy for EV implementation at TMII. However, field interviews revealed that governmental communication largely emphasizes environmental policy compliance and technological modernization without sufficiently translating these macro-policy objectives into locally meaningful cultural narratives. Consequently, government functions primarily as the producer of regulatory legitimacy rather than as the constructor of contextual public meaning.

The second mechanism involves "industrial technological mediation". Electric vehicle manufacturers do not merely supply transportation technology but indirectly shape public perceptions through the technological characteristics of the vehicles themselves. Managers consistently explained that passenger comfort, silent operation, and environmental friendliness strengthen positive perceptions of EVs. Nevertheless, operational limitations, including battery capacity, charging duration, and limited driving speed, simultaneously generate communicative contradictions that weaken the sustainability narrative promoted by institutional campaigns. Thus, technology itself becomes a communication medium that either reinforces or undermines institutional credibility depending on users› everyday experiences.

The third mechanism represents "organizational narrative translation", which emerged as the central finding of this study. Rather than simply implementing government policy, TMII management acts as an interpretive intermediary that translates national sustainability agendas into destination branding, operational procedures, promotional campaigns, and employee communication. Interview data indicate that managers continuously reinterpret governmental discourse according to organizational realities, visitor expectations, and operational constraints. This translation process explains why managerial narratives frequently differ from official governmental discourse, particularly regarding the need to integrate Indonesian cultural identity into environmental communication. The findings therefore suggest that organizational communication functions as the critical bridge connecting macro-level public policy with micro-level organizational practice.

The fourth mechanism concerns "public validation and narrative recirculation". Visitors do not merely receive

institutional messages passively but actively evaluate, reinterpret, and redistribute them through digital communication. Participant observation showed that visitors frequently photographed electric vehicles, created digital content, and shared their experiences through social media platforms. Consequently, visitors function as secondary communicators whose digital interactions determine whether institutional narratives gain wider social legitimacy. However, the study also found that repeated online exposure has generated strong brand awareness but has not yet produced comparable emotional attachment, indicating that narrative circulation alone is insufficient to establish long-term brand loyalty.

Most importantly, the findings reveal that these four communication mechanisms do not operate sequentially but recursively. Weaknesses occurring at one level immediately influence the effectiveness of the entire communication ecosystem. For example, when technological limitations reduce service quality, managerial communication becomes less persuasive despite strong governmental support. Similarly, when organizational narratives fail to integrate Indonesian cultural values, visitors tend to perceive EVs as symbols of global technology rather than as representations of national ecological identity. This recursive interaction explains why improvements in brand awareness have not been accompanied by equivalent growth in brand loyalty.

Based on these findings, this study proposes a conceptual refinement of the conventional Quad Helix framework. Rather than viewing the Quad Helix as a collaboration among four institutional sectors, the present findings demonstrate that EV brand equity emerges through a "Communicative Quad Helix", in which value creation depends on four interconnected communication functions: policy legitimation (government), technological mediation (industry), organizational translation (TMII management), and public validation (society/visitors). The effectiveness of EV branding therefore depends not on the presence of these actors individually, but on the quality of communication linking them into a coherent system of shared meaning.

This refined model also provides an important implication for future sustainable tourism policy. As Indonesia continues to accelerate electric mobility and green tourism initiatives, strengthening technological infrastructure alone will be insufficient. Future implementation should prioritize collabora-tive communication strategies that integrate environmental sustainability, technological innovation, and Indonesian cultural identity. Such an approach is expected to transform electric vehicles from policy-driven transportation facilities into culturally embedded symbols of sustainable national tourism, thereby generating stronger organizational commitment, deeper public engagement, and more enduring brand equity.

Nevertheless, the existing collaboration remains predominantly government-industry-management oriented. The participation of academic institutions and community organizations is still relatively limited. Consequently, the current ecosystem resembles a partial Quad Helix model rather than a fully integrated one.

Strengthening the involvement of universities, researchers, local cultural communities, and environmental organizations could significantly enhance the social legitimacy of EV implementation. Such collaboration would facilitate the development of a more holistic narrative integrating environmental sustainability, technological innovation, and Indonesian cultural identity.

Proposed Grounded Socio-Cultural Communication Model of Electric Vehicle Brand Equity

Based on the empirical findings and theoretical synthesis, this study proposes a grounded socio-cultural communication model for the construction of electric vehicle (EV) brand equity within the context of cultural tourism management at Taman Mini Indonesia Indah (TMII). Unlike conventional brand equity models that primarily emphasize consumer perceptions and market performance, the proposed model emerged inductively from field data obtained through interviews, observations, and document analysis. Consequently, the model reflects the lived realities, communication practices, and institutional experiences of TMII management in implementing electric vehicles as part of its sustainable tourism agenda.

The preceding analysis revealed several recurring patterns. First, there is a persistent tension between institutional symbolism and operational pragmatism in the interpretation of electric vehicles. While senior management tends to construct EVs as symbols of ecological modernization, sustainable tourism, and technological nationalism, operational personnel are more likely to evaluate them through practical considerations such as efficiency, battery performance, and infrastructure availability. Second, although brand awareness and positive brand associations have been successfully established through organiza-tional policies and promotional activities, brand loyalty remains relatively weak due to the predominance of top-down implementation mechanisms. Third, the study identified communicative tensions between global technological narratives and local cultural values, indicating that EV branding has not yet been fully integrated with Indonesian cultural identity.

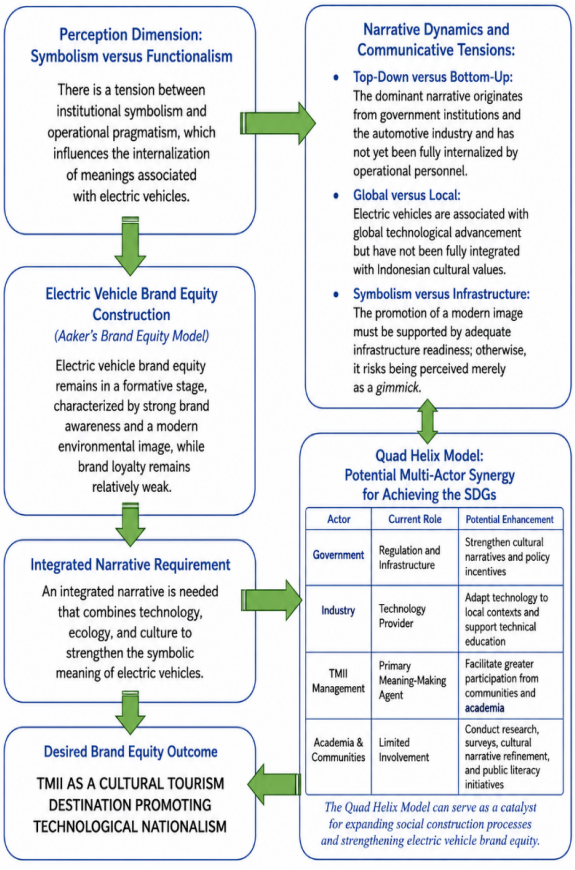
These empirical findings suggest that strengthening EV brand equity requires more than technological adoption or promotional campaigns. It requires the development of an integrated communication framework capable of connecting technology, environ-mental sustainability, and cultural values into a coherent symbolic narrative. Therefore, the proposed model positions communication as the central mechanism through which meanings are created, negotiated, institutiona-lized, and internalized by various stake-holders.

Furthermore, the proposed model incorporates the Quad Helix framework through four interrelated forms of communicative collaboration that emerged from the empirical findings. *First*, government institutions provide regulatory support and sustainability policies while facilitating public communication concerning green tourism and electric mobility. *Second*, industry actors contribute technological innovation, operational maintenance, and

co-branding activities that strengthen the credibility of EV implementation. *Third*, TMII management translates national policy into organizational communication through destination branding, employee engagement, visitor services, and promotional campaigns. *Fourth*, academic institutions and local communities jointly support knowledge dissemination, environmental education, research-based evaluation, cultural interpretation, and community participation to ensure that electric vehicles are understood not only as technological innovations but also as symbols of Indonesia›s sustainable cultural tourism. These complementary communication functions collectively transform policy implementation into socially shared meanings, thereby strengthening the institutional construction of EV brand equity.

Through this multi-actor collaboration, the social construction of EV brand equity can evolve from a policy-driven initiative into a collectively shared cultural project. The ultimate objective is to establish TMII as a cultural tourism destination that simultaneously promotes environmental sustainability, technological innovation, and Indonesian technological nationalism. The conceptual structure of the proposed model is presented in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Proposed Grounded Socio-Cultural Communication Model for the Social Construction of Electric Vehicle Brand Equity at TMII



Source: Developed by the Researcher Based on Empirical Findings (2025)

Table 1 below demonstrates more details that the effectiveness of the Quad Helix framework does not depend solely on the presence of multiple stakeholders, but rather on the quality of communication and collaboration among them. The findings reveal that government policies have successfully established regulatory legitimacy for electric vehicle implementation, while the industry has strengthened technological credibility through innovation and operational support.

Table 1. Empirical of the Quad Helix Framework

Quad Helix Actor	Form of Synergy	Evidence from Findings
Government	Regulatory policy, sustainability communication, green tourism campaign	National EV policy translated into TMII operational regulations
Industry	Technology support, charging infrastructure, maintenance, co-branding	Managers highlighted vehicle comfort but also battery and charging limitations
TMII Manage-ment	Internal communication, employee engagement, destination branding, promotional campaigns	Interviews with HR, Promotion Manager, PR Manager
Academia	Environmental education, research evaluation, innovation recommenda-tions	Proposed future collaboration to strengthen evidence-based policy
Community & Visitors	Social media advocacy, cultural participation, feedback, word-of-mouth	Observation showed visitors sharing EV experiences on social media

On the other hand, TMII management has played a pivotal role in translating these macro-level policies into destination branding and organizational communication, whereas academic institutions and local communities remain underutilized despite their strategic potential to enhance environmental education, cultural interpretation, and public engagement. Consequently, the current implementation reflects a partially integrated Quad Helix ecosystem in which strong policy communication and promotional activities have generated high brand awareness but have not yet produced comparable improvements in cultural attachment and long-term brand loyalty. This study therefore argues that future EV branding strategies should move beyond policy compliance toward a communicative and participatory collaboration model that integrates regulatory support, technological innovation, organizational communication, knowledge dissemination, and community participation. Such an integrated approach is expected to transform electric vehicles from merely sustainable transportation facilities into culturally embedded symbols of Indonesia›s ecological tourism identity, thereby strengthening the long-term institutional brand equity of TMII.

Conclusion

This study concludes that the brand equity of electric vehicles (EVs) at Taman Mini Indonesia Indah

(TMII) is socially constructed through a dynamic interaction between institutional discourse, organizational communication, technological implementa-tion, and visitor experiences. EVs are not merely perceived as transportation facilities but have evolved into symbolic representations of modernity, ecological tourism, and technological nationalism. However, the meanings attached to EVs vary across organizational actors. Senior management tends to interpret EVs as strategic symbols of sustainability and destination transformation, whereas operational staff emphasize their practical functions, such as energy efficiency and environmental benefits.

From the perspective of brand equity, the findings reveal that brand awareness has been successfully established through mandatory usage policies and intensive visual promotion. Perceived quality is generally positive, particularly regarding comfort, cleanliness, and environmental friendliness, although technical limitations related to battery capacity, charging infrastructure, and vehicle speed remain important concerns. Brand association has developed around the image of TMII as a modern, globally oriented, and environmentally responsible tourism destination. Nevertheless, these associations remain weakly connected to Indonesian cultural identity. Meanwhile, brand loyalty constitutes the weakest dimension because EV adoption is largely perceived as a top-down policy initiative rather than an organically developed commitment among employees and visitors.

Using Berger and Luckmann's Social Construction Theory, the study demonstrates that EV brand equity is produced through three dialectical stages. First, externalization occurs when management promotes EVs as symbols of ecotourism transformation and sustainable development. Second, objectifi-cation takes place through organizational policies, infrastructure provision, and visual communication that institutionalize EVs as an objective reality within TMII. Third, internalization emerges as managers, employees, and visitors interpret and assign meanings to EVs based on their own experiences and social positions.

The study further identifies a significant communicative tension between official institutional narratives and everyday operational realities. While organizational discourse successfully promotes EVs as symbols of environmental modernization, it has not yet fully integrated local cultural values into the branding process. As a result, EVs are still predominantly perceived as global technological products rather than as representations of Indonesian ecological and cultural identity.

Finally, the research highlights the strategic potential of a Quad Helix approach involving government, industry, academia, and community stakeholders. Although collaboration among government agencies, TMII management, and EV manufacturers has been established, the involvement of academic institutions and cultural communities remains limited. Strengthening this broader collaboration can facilitate the development of a more integrated socio-cultural communication model that combines ecological sustainability, technological innovation, and Indonesian cultural values. Such a model would contribute not only to

stronger EV brand equity but also to the advancement of sustainable tourism and Indonesia's greenomics agenda.

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